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PORTRAITS OF A POLITICAL WORLD: THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST PARTY
SYSTEM IN NEW YORK, 1777-1822

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ABSTRACT

We tend to take for granted the existence and operation of electoral parties in modern democracies. But where did they come from? This dissertation is a study of party formation in the theoretically important case of the United States where parties emerged pretty much from scratch. Drawing on several novel datasets, I examine the emergence and structure of the first party system in the pivotal state of New York, focusing on the crucial years between the ratification of the U.S. constitution in 1788 and the election of 1800. I first show that the Federalists and Republicans in New York cannot be understood as the politicization of pre-existing social master categories like class or region. The product of divisions within the political elite, both parties looked very much alike in terms of the sociodemographic characteristics of their members. This opened up opportunities for skilled political elites to form new and complex webs of alliances. To understand these alliances, I turn to the social networks political elites were embedded in. Existing social ties pulled and pushed elites to one side or the other. But as social “bricoleurs,” they also actively used them to form new networks of political support. Even though the structure of elite social networks goes a long way towards explaining the structure of the emerging party system, these networks do not fully explain it. Very early on, the political field in New York was so well-developed that it produced sophisticated political actors who were not tied down by their positions in social space. Their actions were underdetermined by the social, and there was room for an endogenous political process irreducible to pre-existing social structures. I first examine this process through an analysis of roll call voting in the state assembly. I demonstrate that parties in the sense of voting blocs formed at three moments in time and appeared most clearly around procedural issues that had to do with access to public office. I then provide a systematic analysis of office-holding to show that competition for control of the state, and the alliances it produced, was at the core of party formation. As political actors tried to build their careers in a rapidly changing institutional structure, they increasingly sorted

themselves into two opposing camps that both contemporaries and historical social scientists have come to understand as the first political parties in American history. I end with a look at those who switched parties during their careers. The analysis of party switching highlights that ambitious political actors were able and willing to cut existing social relationships when this was required to advance politically.

CHAPTER 1

PARTY FORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Although political parties figured prominently in the work of early political sociologists like Ostrogorsky, Weber, and Michels, during the second half of the twentieth century sociology turned its attention elsewhere (Mudge and Chen 2014). It tended to focus on the choices made by voters, the state, and the organizations used to pursue social movements outside of the party structure, but it largely ignored the development of the sorts of organizations that are used to mobilize citizens for electoral competition. Recent years, however, have led to a new interest not only in political parties as organizations (Mudge 2018; Desai 2002; de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2015) or networks of elites (Parigi and Sartori 2014) and interest groups (Cohen et al. 2008; Bawn et al. 2012), and party systems as organizational fields (Parigi and Bearman 2008), but also the processes whereby parties form (Slez and Martin 2007; Martin 2009; de Leon 2010; McLean 2011; Hoffman 2019; Ackerman 2020).

Despite their central role in modern democracies (Schattschneider 1942), we tend to take for granted the existence and operation of electoral parties. But where did they come from? When and how did they emerge? Going from a world without parties to a world with parties required forming alliances among elites that spanned across space and across different levels of government and that were able to systematically mobilize popular followings. The wish to understand how this happened is what motivated this dissertation.

Of particular interest for theoretical purposes is the party system of the United States. Not only was a new country cobbled together rather quickly, without much in the way of pre-existing partisan alliances across the colonies (Taylor 2021), but, given the novelty of a new western democracy, there were not even understandings of what a modern political party would be (Hofstadter 1969; Sartori 1976). The American case, thus, allows us to study

the formation of political parties more or less from scratch. Despite widespread anti-party sentiment (Hofstadter 1969; de Leon 2010), parties formed almost instantly. Most scholars argue that by 1800, only seventeen years after the end of the War of Independence and only twelve years after the ratification of the U.S. constitution, two political parties had taken shape—the Federalists and the Republicans—that permeated the nation from the federal all the way down to the local level.

Most scholars of the first American party system have focused their attention on the national level (e.g., Dauer 1968; Cunningham 1957; Chambers 1963; Buel 1972; Hoadley 1986; Aldrich 1995). As a result, their accounts have been largely based on famous political elites who bubbled up into the national sphere. But given that state building in America involved the piecing together of already existing structures in the individual states, there are good reasons to believe that some of the most interesting dynamics of party formation have to do with the sorting of state level political formations into the emerging national party system. The national view must therefore be complemented by studies of state politics (Formisano 1974, 1981). Historians, of course, have produced numerous studies of state politics after independence. Given their focus on newspapers, organizational minutes, and letters as data sources, we know a great deal about how eighteenth-century elites thought about the role of parties in government, about the ideological differences between the two parties and the issues that gave rise to them, about coordination among famous elites, and about the various ways in which parties attempted to mobilize voters. But because in many cases we lack systematic data on those who by sorting themselves into opposing political groups created the first parties, much less is known about the bases on which political elites, especially the less famous ones, affiliated with one party or the other and the processes by which parties mobilized cadre. It is, thus, time to revisit the old question of party formation with new kinds of data and new theoretical orientations.

A full understanding of the processes of party formation would require studying and

comparing multiple, if not all, states in the union at the birth of the republic. But given the difficulty of gathering and analyzing a wide range of primary historical data, I instead focus on a single state: New York. For reasons that will become apparent throughout this work, New York was the most important state level case for understanding the first American party system. In other words, what follows is a study of a pivotal case of a pivotal case.

What, then, was the structure of the first party system in the state of New York? It is this question that my dissertation seeks to answer. The goal for the empirical chapters that follow is to paint a series of pointillist portraits of the political world in the state after the War of Independence and the creation of a national political arena (focusing on the years between 1788 and 1801). Portraits because the goal is to show politics from a range of perspectives, looking both at different aspects of politics as well as different moments in time. Pointillist because the goal is to present novel data in such a way as to give the reader the ability to zoom in and out from the large structures of the political system to the small pieces those structures are made of. If I succeed, these portraits will provide insight into the nature of politics during the early republic.

To accomplish this, I have constructed several novel datasets. The first one contains individual-level data for more than 750 political elites who were active between 1788 and 1801. The second one contains social network data for those elites. The third one contains data on roll call voting in the state assembly between 1788 and 1803. The fourth one comprises all civil and military offices at the county and state level as well as all federal offices held by New Yorkers covering the time period from 1777 to 1822.

1.2 Chapter Overview

This first chapter sets the stage for the empirical analyses. After defining the object of study, I justify why the United States, and New York in particular, are useful cases to study the emergence of parties. I then describe party development both at the federal level and in

New York from the end of the colonial period to 1820. After that I discuss existing theories of party formation against the background of these developments, which demonstrates the limits of our existing theoretical frameworks. I end with a brief sketch of the approach taken in this work.

After discussing the several datasets used in this work in chapter 2, I turn to the empirical analyses. The original idea was to understand the structure of the first party system in New York by mapping parties onto master categories like class and region. But this turned out not to work. Chapter 3 looks at the social characteristics of more than 750 political elites who affiliated with the Federalist and Republican parties of the 1790s and finds that both parties look very similar in social terms. This suggests that the process of party formation cannot be understood as the politicization of preexisting social cleavages like class or region. A different account is necessary, and such an account must pay attention to the political process that gave rise to parties.

Because of that, chapter 4 turns to an analysis of roll calls in the state assembly between 1788 and 1803. I find that parties in the sense of voting blocs formed at three moments in time: around the Constitutional Convention in 1788, in the early 1790s, and around 1800. I also show that partisan divisions appeared most clearly around procedural issues that had to do with access to public office, suggesting that it was the endogenous struggle for control of the state that gave rise to parties.

Chapter 5 tries to understand the structure of the first party system by mapping parties onto pre-existing social networks. Using data on kinship and professional relations and membership in elite institutions, I investigate to what extent parties were put together out of pre-existing social relations. I theorize party builders as social “bricoleurs” who used their existing social ties to form networks of political support, but who were also constrained by these relationships and, so, as political actors, had to sometimes cut them. Although much more successful than the previous attempt of relating party formation to pre-existing

social categories, it still demonstrates the limits of an analysis that focuses exclusively on the social. Very early on, the political field in New York was so well-developed that it produced sophisticated political actors who were not tied down by their positions in social space. There was room for politics, because politics was underdetermined by the social. This means that what is required is an analysis that pays close attention to the institutional framework in which politics unfolded. Political actors need to be embedded not only in their social world, but also the world of political institutions that shaped their ambitions and actions, and the specifically political processes that gave rise to partisan opposition need to be taken into account.

This is done in chapters 6 and 7, where I look at partisan competition for office. In chapter 6 I study the Council of Appointment, the body that distributed almost all political patronage in New York, both at the state and county level. I show that appointments were especially partisan around transitions of power when control of the Council went from one party to another. Not all politically ambitious New Yorkers were tied into the party system through pre-existing social relationships. Many made new alliances and broke old ones based on the career opportunities it afforded. The analysis in this chapter suggests that many, and especially the little people, were tied into the emerging party system through political patronage.

Chapter 7 examines the structure of political offices as a way to understand the institutional structure in which elites operated and parties formed. In the absence of exogenous interests that united partisans and that pre-existed elites' entrance into politics, it may have been that the interests that united the two parties were endogenous political interests. This is all the more plausible given that the key issue dividing the national parties appeared to be support for the new federal government, and it would be natural if those who had a position in such government tended to be those supporters. I first describe the overall structure of the system of offices and then look at how competition for office shaped the division between

the two parties. While in the aggregate both parties look strikingly similar, there are important temporal differences that provide insight into the dynamics that brought about the two parties.

Finally, chapter 8 takes a look at those individuals who affiliated with both parties throughout their life. The main finding that emerges from this analysis is that party switchers were more elite than those who affiliated with only one side. This is the case both in terms of their social characteristics and in terms of the offices they held. This suggests that the formation of political parties involved a process of partisan sorting which was not restricted to actors on the periphery of the political system, but included primarily powerful political elites at the center of politics. Importantly, an analysis of the spatial and temporal patterns of party switching shows that people switched in both directions in the same place and around the same time, thus providing evidence that switching was not simply the response to changes in voter preferences. While chapter 5 shows how parties were assembled out of preexisting relationships, this chapter emphasizes the importance of cutting social relationships when this was needed to advance politically.

1.3 What Are Parties?

Political parties have been defined in many ways (see J. K. White 2006 for a list of definitions). Most scholars of political parties would accept Sartori's definition: "A party is any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or nonfree), candidates for public office" (Sartori 1976, 63; see Downs 1957 for a similar definition). Thus, parties seek control of the state by capturing offices within the state, and they gain access to these offices through elections. While Sartori characterizes this definition as minimal, it essentially defines *modern* parties and excludes certain political groups that are sometimes referred to as parties. Most importantly, it excludes purely legislative parties, that is, groups that form in the legislature but do not

systematically reach out to mobilize voters. These types of parties, common, for example, in eighteenth-century England, are quite different from the electoral parties Sartori has in mind. Note also that the party proper only includes leaders and cadre, but not voters; voters appear as the environment in which parties operate.

Beyond this minimal definition, there is disagreement in the literature as to how organized and how durable these groups must be to be classified as parties, and the degree to which they need to have developed some sort of in-group perspective.¹ According to Chambers (1967, 5), for example, whose work focuses on the American case, “a political party in the modern sense may be thought of as a relatively durable social formation which seeks offices or power in government, exhibits a structure or organization which links leaders at the centers of government to a significant popular following in the political arena and its local enclaves, and generates in-group perspectives or at least symbols of identification or loyalty.”

Taken together, these two definitions identify the following characteristics or dimensions of a political party: party labels, the nomination of candidates, the ability to elect candidates, an (informal or formal) organizational structure that links leaders to a popular following, and symbols of identification. Below we will see that by 1800 all of these characteristics had developed in New York, at least in rudimentary form.

But we will also discover that these first American parties were not formal organizations. They did not leave charters, notices of incorporation, membership lists, formal communications, or minutes, and their records are not kept in orderly party archives. They were informal organizations, networks of political elites who began to coordinate their actions and systematically mobilize voters. They were, in the words of Bourdieu (2014, 269–70), “the product of thousands of infinitesimal little actions.” It is the patterning of these actions and the resulting informal structures that were recognized by contemporaries as political parties

1. Many argue that modern parties are characterized first and foremost by their organizational structure and must therefore have a well-developed organizational apparatus (Friedrich 1937; Duverger 1963; Chambers 1963; Sorauf 1967).

and that built the foundation for the more formal party organizations that would follow. As a result, an investigation of the emergence of parties cannot proceed at the analytical level of parties themselves, but must be situated at a level below parties. This is most fruitfully done by examining the structure of the actions of political elites as embedded in multiple social relations.

1.4 Case Selection

1.4.1 *Why North America?*

Studying the emergence of parties is difficult. Once parties existed and successfully organized politics in one place, they likely became organizational templates that began to spread, leading us to think about the problem in terms of diffusion rather than emergence. The history of the United States provides a rare example of party formation from scratch. Most historians locate the origin of the first American parties in the 1790s and argue that by 1800 a two-party system existed (Cunningham 1957; Chambers 1963; Reichley 1992; Aldrich 1995). When the Federalist and Republican parties began to form, they did so in the absence of successful models that could be imported from other countries or blueprints in the political theories of the time that could simply be implemented (Hofstadter 1969; Sartori 1976). In addition, these parties formed in a decisively *anti*-party environment. In the eyes of eighteenth-century Americans, parties violated the republican ideal, according to which the purpose of political institutions consists in the realization of the general will of the people. Interests, factions, and parties were seen as particularistic and, thus, as a threat to democracy and the Union—not as a solution to problems of governance.

England was the only country in the western world where party development began earlier than in America. Unlike continental Europe, which was dominated by absolutism, England had a long tradition of parliamentary government—a condition that, as we will see

below, was conducive to the formation of parties.² While there is considerable debate among historians about the timing of party formation in England (O’Gorman 1981), most seem to agree that the importance of parliament gave rise to parliamentary parties at the end of the seventeenth and at multiple points throughout the eighteenth century. What is much less clear is the extent to which these parties reached outside the walls of parliament and into the electorate. Clearly, elections existed and party labels were used to mobilize voters, although the suffrage was much more restrictive than in America until the reform acts of 1832 and 1867. While some argue that elections were fundamentally local and organized by networks of notables, not by parties, others suggest that the eighteenth century saw at least the precursor of electoral parties. Holmes’ (1987) study of England under Queen Anne (1702-1714), for instance, demonstrates that party loyalties were not restricted to Parliament but permeated clubs, coffee houses, financial institutions, military appointments, and the press (see also Plumb 1956). While the subsequent years during the Hanoverian succession (1714-1760) were much less partisan, O’Gorman (1981, 455) still argues that “parties appealed to the public for support, inevitably forcing the government to do the same. In such ways the basis of Hanoverian politics was broadened and an extra-parliamentary political nation brought to involve itself in politics.” Finally, Ginter (1966) provides evidence for the engagement of parties in electoral politics between 1783 and 1793. During that period, the Whig party developed a party apparatus with headquarters, political clubs, newspapers and pamphlets, party agents that were sent from London into local constituencies to coordinate activities, and party funds, obtained through annual contributions, that were used to pay for these activities.³

2. The French parliament, for example, although it existed, never met between 1614 and the revolution of 1789 (Loewenstein 1967, 54).

3. Party development in England was disrupted at multiple points in time. According to O’Gorman (1981), parties appeared during times of political instability and disappeared during quieter times. They existed during the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), in the 1780s, and after 1815; they were weak or nonexistent in the 1750s, the late 1790s, and the late 1820s. Formisano (1981) makes a similar argument about parties in America prior to the Jacksonian era.

But party development in England concerns us here only to the extent that it was perceived by Americans. In order to be able to argue that the American case provides a laboratory in which we can study the formation of parties from scratch, we need to rule out that the American parties were simply imported from England, the result merely of a process of diffusion.

Hofstadter (1969) identifies three archetypical views of party that eighteenth-century American writers could have borrowed from English thought. The first, exemplified by Bolingbroke in England and Hamilton in America, saw parties as an evil that must and can be suppressed, even if ultimate suppression can only be accomplished through the temporary creation of a national party apparatus. Parties were regarded as a means to create a party-less government. The second view, associated with Hume and Madison, agrees that parties are evil, but argues that they cannot be avoided in a free nation. Good government, according to this view, means checking the evils that arise from party divisions. Only the third view, which Hofstadter associates with Burke in England and for whom he finds no representative in eighteenth-century America, ascribes a positive role to parties. Parties are seen not only as inevitable but necessary and even good compared to a government without an organized opposition. In addition, parties become increasingly distinguished from factions and slowly dissociate themselves from their negative connotations. According to Burke, who felt the need to justify the existence of parties as his own group found itself in the opposition, a “[p]arty is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed” (cited in Sartori 1976, 9). The promotion of the national interest is what distinguishes the party from a mere faction. While factions struggle for their own particular interests, parties have the interest of the nation as a whole at heart.

But while Burke clearly articulated a positive idea of party, he did not have electoral parties in mind. “Burke’s party organized ‘connections’ in parliament; it did not, nor was it

intended to, organize members outside of parliament” (Sartori 1976, 20). Furthermore, his ideas had little impact on American political thought (Hoadley 1986, 11). Overall, then, the American party builders of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century could not hark back to existing models of electoral parties. They had to build parties from scratch.

1.4.2 Why New York?

With the exception of the city-state, all democratic polities involve some sort of geographical nesting. While federal systems like that of the United States or Germany are the most extreme form, all involve the re-insertion of partisan differences at the national level in subnational political contests. Thus, the development of a modern, democratic party system involves a transformation of state and local politics, and we can only resolve theoretical questions about the national party system when we understand its interrelations with state level party systems.

One such system, that of New York, is the focus of this dissertation. Some political historians like Formisano (1974) have argued that we should understand the years of the early republic as a transitional period between the traditional notable-oriented politics of the colonial era and the mass party politics of the Jacksonian era. New York, I argue, is the harbinger of this transition (see also Bonomi 1971). New York’s importance results from the following four factors. First, the middle states in general were understood as the crucial swing states at the federal level, and therefore became more hotly politicized. Politicization was further driven by New York’s diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, and types of livelihood, in part due to the Hudson River which encouraged settlement farther inland than in many other colonies (Bonomi 1971, 54). Politics in New York was also neither dominated by one group (as was the case in Pennsylvania under the Quaker party) nor one locality (as was the case with Boston in Massachusetts), which could dampen political conflict. But unlike in Virginia, where elites were spread out so that each controlled their respective areas

(Martin 2009, 303), New York's elite was concentrated enough to lead to local conflict within counties. These differences, coupled with the importance of speculative and often conflicting land claims requiring political adjudication, led to a greater degree of politicization than in most other colonies: there was much to fight over, and very different interests poised against one another.

Second, because of its economic and political importance, the state of New York was also understood as a key pivot for federal level party formation. The initial formula for a winning ticket was a president from Virginia and a vice president from New York. While many other states produced important national political leaders, New York is unusual in producing significant national level figures like Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr who were innovators in their capacity to bring partisan organization to their own localities.

Third, there is reason to think that New York had developed the most sophisticated and elaborated party system of any of the states.⁴ The fact that in New York it was the county and not the town (as in New England) that was the area of local politics meant that more extensive organization was required than in some other cases. Party tickets were used by both parties (Dinkin 1982, 68, 83), and both parties created hierarchies of committees ranging from a state central committee to district committees to county and town committees (Cunningham 1957, 159–61; A. F. Young 1967, 578; Fischer 1965, 61; Nichols 1967, 222). Even more, the very ideological divisions—the notion that the sides were devoted to abstract principles, and not simply good behavior or patriotism—that were later to characterize the first federal party system first emerged in New York. Indeed, the word *Republican* was first used not to characterize the Jefferson circle, but that of New York governor George Clinton (Kaminski 1993, 125). Thus, New York had a head start in terms of the degree to which the political system had developed. This continued after 1800. While in most states party activity was muted after the War of 1812, in New York it blossomed and led to ascendancy

4. I here disagree with Formisano's (1981) assessment that parties in New York were less developed than in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

of the Albany Regency. This group built a powerful political machine that would dominate state politics in the years to come. Given these developments, it is no surprise that the great party builder under Andrew Jackson and eventually president himself—Martin Van Buren—grew up in the world of New York politics that I study in this dissertation.

Fourth, my argument, developed in more detail below, is that New York played its leading role in the development of the first party system in part because here politics was not structured by preexisting social master categories like class or region that were simply politicized and mobilized into parties. This opened up opportunities for skilled political elites to form complex webs of alliances. Such a system makes it difficult for us as sociologists to predict who was going to be on what side. At the same time, it provides an intriguing case that takes the theoretical frameworks that we have for understanding party formation to their limits and challenges the ways in which we think about politics.

1.5 Party Development in New York and the Nation

1.5.1 The Colonial Era

During the colonial period, political power in New York was concentrated along the New York City-Albany axis. With its harbor, New York City was the mercantile center of the state. The counties surrounding it were largely agricultural and produced for New York City markets or for export. Albany was another important commercial city and due to its distance from New York City understood itself as its own city state (Brooke 2010). Along the Hudson River between New York City and Albany, especially on the east bank, lived New York's large landowners and their tenants. Yeoman farmers dominated the counties west of the Hudson like Orange and Ulster as well as in the north and west of the state (to the extent that these regions had been settled).

Unlike other states such as Virginia, colonial politics in New York was not shaped by a

clear regional divide. Instead it was characterized by a contest among prominent families for access to power (Wood 1993, 87). These families formed constantly shifting factions that vied for the favor of the colonial governor, the main source of power at the time (Bonomi 1971). The “outs,” those not supported by the governor, were forced into the position of the popular faction as they had to seek power in the assembly by appealing, albeit grudgingly, to voters. Factions were formed through alliances with other families as well as horizontal ties to “friends”⁵ and vertical, deference-based ties to tenants and other followers. Candidates were nominated as individuals or members of family clans, not members of a party. Political competition, while still relatively low, occasionally forced these families to engage in electioneering by going from door to door and talking to voters, treating voters to food and drink, and publishing pamphlets and broadsides (Dinkin 1989).

This pattern reminds us of England. Land was divided by large landowners who controlled their areas through vertical patron-client ties to their tenants and formed temporary horizontal relationships of alliance (Beeman 2004), and the struggle between ins and outs resembles the English court-country model (Elkins and McKittrick 1993, 13–8). We will see below, however, that after the War of Independence this model was no longer sufficient to make sense of the way politics was organized in New York.

As more and more power was transferred to the assembly towards the end of the colonial period, factional struggles and electioneering intensified. During the last decade before the war with England, colonial politics was dominated by a division between a group of landed interests under the leadership of the Livingston family and a group of mercantile interests under the leadership of the DeLanceys. When, following the death of Governor Moore in 1769, Cadwallader Colden returned as acting governor of the Province of New York, he sided with the DeLancey faction that had gained a majority in the assembly in the election of 1768.

5. Political allies were called “friends” in order not to violate republican ideals and aristocratic norms. For a gentleman it was inappropriate to engage in electioneering (Taylor 1993). As William Livingston explained in 1753, “To ask a man for his vote is a confession in the candidate that he is suspicious of his own merit” (cited in Beeman 2004, 114).

Although at this point the Livingstons and their allies were still loyal to the Crown, “they were being squeezed inexorably to the ‘left’ as the Assembly majority, which Colden now approvingly dubbed the ‘Friends of Government,’ took over much of their former territory” (Bonomi 1971, 266). And so it happened that as the American colonies declared their independence from England, the DeLanceys and their friends found themselves on the side of those loyal to the Crown, forcing their rivals to join forces with a more radical Whig faction against the British. There was nothing inherently revolutionary about the Livingston faction. They became Patriots because their opponents became Loyalists (Minty 2014; Countryman 1989; Martin 2009, 300).

New York was unique in the degree to which factionalism shaped politics during the colonial era. While politics was organized around wealthy landholders in the south and town meeting leaders in New England, in New York two groups had emerged that represented different interests and competed for control of the state government (Nichols 1967). Some historians even go so far as to claim that by 1770 the state had two well-defined political parties (A. C. Flick 1969).

1.5.2 The First State Constitution

In 1777, less than a year after the Declaration of Independence, New York adopted its first state constitution, which provided the institutional framework in which the two state parties would form. The document was a compromise between democratic and aristocratic elements in the state (A. F. Young 1967, 17–22). On the one hand, it established annual elections for the state assembly, increased the number of seats in the assembly from 31 to 70, and lowered the provincial voting requirement of a £40 freehold to owning a freehold worth £20 or renting one for 40 shillings a year. It also made the governor and the state senate elective (but with a property requirement of a £100 freehold) and required the written ballot for gubernatorial elections. Without these changes, someone like George Clinton would have never become

governor. It also abolished the three manor seats in the assembly which allowed the manor lords to send their own representatives to the state legislature. On the other hand, the framers of the constitution enshrined two conservative elements that limited the power of the legislature. A Council of Revision, composed of the governor, the chancellor, and the judges of the State Supreme Court, had the power to veto legislation, and a Council of Appointment, composed of the governor and four senators, had the power to hand out all appointive positions in the state. Although the constitution was a compromise, there can be no doubt that New York's old aristocratic families, who formed the conservative wing of the revolution and who took leadership of its course, were largely able to preserve their positions of power.

The state constitution also established a more powerful legislature which was chosen by popular election. Further, looser suffrage restrictions that were tied to landownership in a context in which land was cheap, created a sizable electorate. According to the 1790 census of electors, "58 per cent of the adult white males and 70.7 per cent of the heads of families could vote for assembly, but only 28.9 per cent of the adult males could vote for senators and governor" (A. F. Young 1967, 84; see also Ratcliffe 2013, 225). These numbers were lower than the national average,⁶ but in a relatively large state still produced large numbers of eligible voters. In absolute terms, there were 38,366 eligible voters in 1790, 64,017 in 1795, and 85,907 in 1801. By 1821, the end of my period, there were over a quarter million electors in the state (Hough 1857, ix; the numbers for 1790 have been corrected as discussed by A. F. Young 1967, 585–6). The number of actual votes cast tended to be smaller than the number of eligible voters, but only slightly so. For instance, 89% of eligible voters cast a vote in the gubernatorial election in 1801.⁷ And McCormick (1959) finds that turnout for

6. Dinkin (1989) suggests that across the nation as a whole, about 80% of adult white males were eligible to vote in the late 1780s (see also Ratcliffe 2013).

7. Data on the number of votes cast come from the *A New Nation Votes* database (American Antiquarian Society 2007).

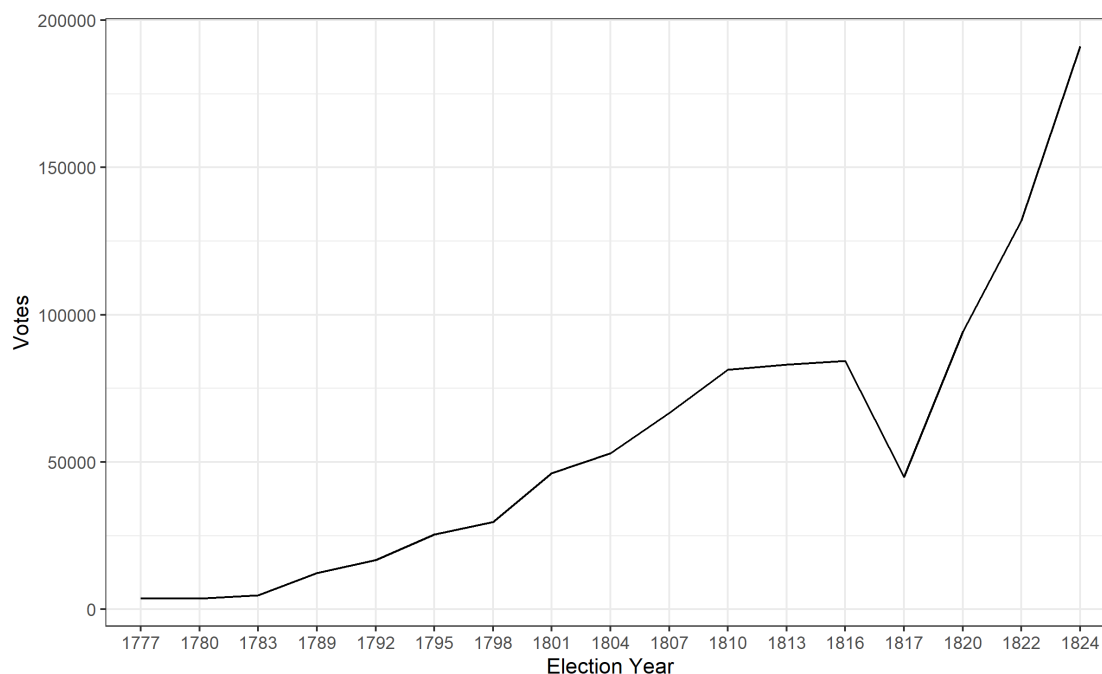


Figure 1.1: Number of votes cast in gubernatorial elections, 1777 to 1824

the gubernatorial elections in 1807 and 1814 reached 93% and 95%, respectively. Figure 1.1 shows data from the *A New Nation Votes* database (American Antiquarian Society 2007) on the total number of votes cast in gubernatorial elections from 1777 to 1824. The number of votes increases 12-fold between 1777 and 1801 (from less than 4,000 to over 45,000) and 50-fold between 1777 and 1824 (from less than 4,000 to over 190,000).

One of the most consequential creations of the constitution was the Council of Appointment. Because all state and county level offices except for the governor, lieutenant governor, state senate, assembly and a few local offices were appointive, the constitution created the foundation for what would later become the center of New York's first patronage machine. When the council was finally abolished in 1821, it was responsible for filling approximately 7000 civil and 8000 military positions in the state of New York (McBain 1907; H. M. Flick 1934).

The constitution provided that the council consist of the governor and four senators, one

from each of the four senatorial districts.⁸ This institutional arrangement had an important consequence. It tied the appointment power of the Council to electoral success. In order to capture all four seats on the Council, parties had to be able to ensure the election of one of their men to the senate in each senatorial district and then have enough votes in the assembly to elect these men to the Council. During the colonial era, the appointment power rested solely in the governor who himself was appointed by the British government. This produced a pattern where family factions struggled to gain the favor of the governor and those who lost were forced into the position of the “popular” party that appealed to the voters in order to be elected to the assembly (Bonomi 1971; Martin 2009). By tying elective and appointive positions together, the constitution prevented this pattern of ins and outs. But it nonetheless created a two-pronged system in which ambitious New Yorkers competed for both popular support in elections and the patronage bestowed by the Council. And, thus, New Yorkers could use both elective and appointive offices to cobble together their careers.

1.5.3 Political Divisions After the Revolution

The War of Independence altered New York’s social structure. Many Loyalists, including powerful elites like the DeLanceys in southern New York and the Johnsons in the Mohawk Valley, left the state,⁹ creating a vacuum that could be filled by new men. In addition, the war helped disseminate democratic values and erode the old style of deference-based politics. Even before the revolution “many ordinary colonists were young people who took a large measure of social equality for granted, who had been schooled to believe that they

8. “The assembly shall, once in every year, openly nominate and appoint one of the senators from each great district, which senators shall form a council for the appointment of the said officers, of which the governor for the time being, or the lieutenant governor, or the president of the senate, when they shall respectively administer the government, shall be president and have a casting voice, but no other vote; and with the advice and consent of the said council, shall appoint all the said officers; and that a majority of the said council be a quorum. And further, the said senators shall not be eligible to the said council for two years successively” (article 23 of the New York State Constitution of 1777).

9. 35,000 Loyalists left the state, 18% of the prewar population (A. F. Young 1967, 66).

possessed fundamental rights, and who viewed the world through a religious lens, replete with powerful notions of divine justice, personal responsibility, and political revenge” (Breen 2010, 42). The victory over England and the fact that the war had placed many ordinary men in positions of leadership that they were now unwilling to give up, further eroded the old system of deference. Here the committees of correspondence played a particularly important role (Countryman 1989, 177–84; Brooke 2010). During the war, these revolutionary committees became interim governing bodies, and they allowed a new class of men to rise to positions of influence. Finally, the confiscation of loyalist land after the war unleashed vast land speculation which provided additional paths for upward mobility.

One important consequence of these revolution-induced changes was that ordinary men gained access to public offices (Wood 1993). The most important of these new men was war hero George Clinton, who ran as the popular candidate against General Philip Schuyler in the first gubernatorial election in 1777—and won. According to Schuyler, himself a central node in the network of New York’s elite families, Clinton’s “family and Connections do not Intitle him to so distinguished a predominance” (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 25).

Main’s (1966) comparison of the 1769 and 1785 assemblies demonstrates the relative openness of the political system after the Revolution. “In the 1769 Assembly some 57 per cent of the members had been engaged primarily in a nonagricultural occupation; by 1785 the proportion had been halved. Farmers, exclusive of large landowners, had made up 25 per cent of the total in 1769; now they furnished about 42 per cent. In contrast, one half of the 1769 legislators had been merchants and lawyers, but now such men held less than one third of the seats. Similarly the proportion of wealthy members dropped from 43 per cent to 15 per cent, whereas the ratio of men of moderate means increased from probably one seventh to nearly one half. New York’s elite families, which had contributed ten out of twenty-eight Assemblymen in 1769, contributed the same number in 1785, but in a House twice as large. Meanwhile the number of men who had started without any local family background,

newcomers to New York, increased from two to twenty-three” (Main 1966, 400). Another study of the members of the New York assembly between 1780 and 1787 paints a slightly more elitist picture, but still shows the largely democratic character of the lower house of the state legislature: 37.1% of the assemblymen were farmers, 19.4% were merchants, 18.1% were professionals, most of which were lawyers, 9.9% were mechanics, and only 8.2% were large landowners (Main 1974, 124). New York’s legislators “were either men who had acquired their high-level political experience in the heat of the Revolution or men who began gaining it in the state legislature itself” (Countryman 1989, 198).

In 1777 Robert R. Livingston, one of the largest landowners in the state, was convinced of the “propriety of Swimming with a Stream which it is impossible to stem.” Referring to the Revolution, he thought that yielding to the “torrent” was the only way to “direct its course” (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 15). And yet, after the war the torrent had carried him and his fellow New York elites in a direction that they did not like. In the words of his brother-in-law, Thomas Tillotson: “The democratical part of the government is always encroaching” (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 62). New York’s elite families had lost the governorship and felt threatened by the democratic tendencies in the state legislature.

During the second half of the 1780s, New York’s aristocracy began to consolidate its power and joined into a powerful alliance against George Clinton. Using roll call votes, Main (1974) and Countryman (1989) show that beginning in 1784 the majority of assemblymen sorted themselves into two distinct voting blocs. One group—Main calls them Localists—gathered under the leadership of George Clinton and supported his policies. The other group—the Cosmopolitans—formed in opposition to Clinton. The Clintonians tended to come from the rural areas in central and northern New York, were often farmers themselves and represented agrarian interests. They came from relatively humble backgrounds and rarely held high public office. The Anti-Clintonians, in contrast, came from the cities, towns and commercial farms and were merchants, professionals, or large landowners. They were

wealthy, members of elite families, and often held high public offices (Main 1974). These groups were not restricted to the legislature. Although state-wide party organizations did not yet exist, the two groups deployed campaign technologies that were familiar since the pre-war period, including the publication of electoral tickets in newspapers.

It was this largely horizontal class division that would shape the ratification debate in New York in 1788. But not only in New York. Similar dynamics existed in other states. The democratic developments in the various state governments deeply unsettled the old elites across the nation. And they turned to the national level and the constitution as a solution to their dilemma. In Wood's (1969, 513) words, the U.S. Constitution of 1787 was "intrinsically an aristocratic document designed to check the democratic tendencies of the period."

1.5.4 The Constitutional Convention

Historians have studied the Constitutional Convention of 1787 extensively. Yet, a consensus about the dimensions of conflict that shaped voting at the Convention has not been reached. Beard's (1915) early work suggested that voting patterns could be explained by the delegates' economic interests, producing a division between those with interests in real property (farmers, wealthy landowners) and those with interests in personal property (land speculators, financiers, owners of securities, merchants). But a replication study by McDonald (1958) found no evidence for this argument. Others have pointed to the issue of slavery and argued that it produced a regional north-south division. Yet others focused on the issue of representation and claimed that it produced a division between small and large states. Looking at the voting patterns of individual delegates instead of treating the state delegations as unitary actors, recent work by Heckelman and Dougherty (2013) found evidence for different preferences for centralization, leading to a division between localism and nationalism. According to the authors, the primary concern of the delegates was to

determine how strong the national government should be, which in turn was related to the delegates' political experience, ownership of slaves, and possession of private bank securities. Finally, Slez and Martin (2007) took a different approach to the question. Rather than assume that the delegates had fixed interests that they brought to the convention and that were then somehow aggregated, the authors argued that parties were the result of situational dynamics during the Convention. They showed that as the first issues were being decided, this changed the conditions under which future decisions were debated. Towards the end of the Convention, this process led to an alignment along two dimensions, the size of the states and a dimension that captured the structure of the party system that was to develop during the 1790s and that cannot be reduced to pre-existing interest constellations.

After the delegates left the national Constitutional Convention that had drafted the constitution in September 1787, extensive debates began in the individual states (Maier 2010). In order to resist the Federalist faction that formed in New York around Hamilton, George Clinton and his followers organized under the name "Anti-Federalists." (In some places they occasionally already referred to themselves as "Republicans.") As we saw above, the debate over the ratification of the constitution shortly suspended the struggle among the old aristocratic families that had dominated colonial politics and united them in a Federalist bloc. George Clinton was well aware of the new alliance that had formed during the 1780s. While before the Revolution "there were two great families or parties named Delancey and Livingston," now the case was different because "all the great opulent families were united in one confederacy" (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 5). In fact, all the "opulent families" were represented by at least one Federalist delegate at the New York ratifying convention at Poughkeepsie. The Schuylers and Van Rensselaers by Alexander Hamilton, Philip Schuyler's son-in-law and Stephen Van Rensselaer's brother-in-law; the Livingstons by James Duane, Robert Livingston's son-in-law, John Jay, William Livingston's son-in-law, and Robert R. and Philip R. Livingston; the Morrisises by Lewis and Richard Morris; and the Van Cortlandts

by Philip Van Cortlandt. A. F. Young (1967, 75) argues that there “was probably no other point in the second half of the eighteenth century when the great estate holders were more united.” And yet, New York elected 46 Anti-Federalists and only 19 Federalists to the ratifying convention. This was in part due to the fact that the legislature had resolved that every free male citizen of 21 years or over was able to vote, thus departing from the usual suffrage restrictions. The Federalists came from New York City and its surrounding counties Kings, Richmond, and Westchester. The Anti-Federalists won everything north and west of Westchester as well as Queens and Suffolk (Maier 2010, 341).

But despite their majority, the Anti-Federalists could not prevent the ratification of the constitution. After the delegates received notice that Virginia, besides New York the most important state for the success of the constitution, had ratified as the 10th state, several Anti-Federalists changed course. On July 26, 1788, the convention voted 30 to 27 pro ratification. The final vote showed a clear sectional divide with Federalists in the south and Anti-Federalists in the north; there were only five non-southern votes pro ratification. This sectional divide was not entirely driven by economic differences between the regions. Even though Ulster, Orange, Dutchess, Columbia, and Albany were almost as commercial as the counties surrounding New York, they opposed the constitution until the end (A. F. Young 1967, 116–7).

The Federalists had won. The ratification of the constitution created a national polity, launching New York political elites into a new political world. The First U.S. Congress began to meet in March, 1789 in New York. Less than two months later, Robert R. Livingston of New York administered the presidential oath of office at George Washington’s inauguration. When he did so, the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the Revolutionary War, dated back only six years. Loyalist land was confiscated, land speculation blossomed, tax protests erupted, settlers moved westward and established new counties, and the country had to pay off the war debt and create a functioning federal government.

1.5.5 After 1788

With this we enter the critical period of party formation from 1789 to the election of 1800. Becker (1909) famously argued that at the heart of the American Revolution were two questions: the question of home rule and the question of who should rule at home. The war answered the first question, making the second one all the more salient. Something similar occurred after the ratification of the constitution. Once the question of whether to ratify had been resolved, the new question became how strong the newly created federal government should be and who should rule under these new conditions. The divisions that had emerged over the issue of whether to create a national government now found themselves in a new political context. And because the Federalists had won, the Anti-Federalists now had to fight the Federalist fight. While many of the old Federalists would remain Federalists during the last decade of the eighteenth century and many Anti-Federalists would become Republicans,¹⁰ the 1790s also saw some major realignments.

At the national level, Hamilton, whose proposals as Secretary of the Treasury concerning the funding of the debt, tariffs, and a national bank sparked much debate, became the leading force of the pro-administration Federalists. A small group of Anti-Federalists who managed to enter Congress in 1789 provided the ground on which anti-administration sentiment could grow (Aldrich and Grant 1993). Opposition to Hamilton began to organize under the name “Republicans” first around James Madison and later Thomas Jefferson. While the term “Federalist” had been around since the ratification debates, “Republican” as a denotation of a political group instead of a philosophical position began to appear at the national level around 1792 (Pasley 2001, 68).¹¹ In contrast to “Anti-Federalist,” which was a term

10. This is certainly true for New York. Of the 46 Anti-Federalists who were elected to the 1788 Constitutional Convention in New York, only eleven affiliated with the Federalists later in their lives. Of the 19 Federalists who were elected, only two later affiliated with the Republican party. See Risjord (1978, 362) for Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina.

11. For example, on April 26, 1792, the editor of the Republican newspaper *National Gazette*, Philip Freneau, published an article entitled “Sentiments of a Republican.”

mostly used by Federalists (Maier 2010), political actors used “Republican” to describe themselves. The battles between these two parties centered around finance, the distribution of power between the federal government and the states, and whether to side with England or revolutionary France.¹² The Federalists found their support among merchants, creditors, and urban artisans in the northeast; the Republicans tended to be strong in the agricultural southern states.

With his election as governor in 1777, George Clinton had made it to the highest office in the state. But being the good politician that he was, he understood that in order to be able to achieve anything, he had to break up the cartel of the “opulent families” that had opposed him during the ratification debates. In other words, he had to restructure the network of political alliances in New York. In 1792 Clinton achieved a breakthrough that would have lasting consequences for the newly emerging state party system. For reasons that I will discuss in more detail in chapter 8, the old Livingston family felt that they were being pushed out of the elite position that they had enjoyed for so long. While other New York elites such as Philip Schuyler, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay received high-level positions in the new federal government, for the Livingstons that door was closed. As a result, in 1792 Robert R. Livingston entered an alliance with George Clinton, the dominant force in state level politics, taking a large number of his family members with him. A decade earlier, in 1783, Robert R. Livingston’s brother-in-law, Thomas Tillotson, had complained that the “democratical part of the government is always encroaching” (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 62). Now both Tillotson and Livingston were leading men of the Republican party.

12. In a letter to John Wise from February 12, 1798, Thomas Jefferson summarizes his view of the division as follows: “It is now well understood that two political sects have arisen within the US. the one believing that the Executive is the branch of our Government which the most needs support: the other that, like the analogous branch in the English government, it is already too strong for the republican parts of the Constitution, and therefore, in equivocal cases, they incline to the Legislative powers. the former of these are called Federalists, sometimes Aristocrats or monocrats and Sometimes Tories, after the corresponding sect in the English government, of exactly the same definition: the latter are Stiled Republicans, Whigs, Jacobins, Anarchists, Disorganisers &c. these terms are in familiar use with most persons [...]” (Founders Online 2022).

The central issue of my dissertation is to understand the restructuring of alliances that occurred after 1788, and to understand how this new structure of alliances was shaped by the conditions put in place by the creation of a national polity, which importantly included the creation of a new set of offices at the federal level. In chapter 3, I will take a closer look at election results to understand the strength of the two parties in New York across space and time. Here it suffices to say that the Federalists took over the state legislature the year after the Constitutional Convention of 1788 and, with a brief exception in 1792, were able to control it until the end of the 1790s. In 1798 support for the Republican party, now rooted in a broader movement (see below), began to grow and in 1800 they captured the state legislature.

Throughout the 1790s, political actors sorted themselves into two opposing groups that first emerged within the elite. Because elite competition took place in the arena of electoral politics, these groups soon began to systematically mobilize voters in order to gain control of the state. The result was that by 1800 two political parties had taken shape that competed at all levels of government, from the national all the way down to the county level (Cunningham 1957; Chambers 1963; A. F. Young 1967; Reichley 1992; Aldrich 1995; but see Formisano 1974, 1983 who argues that parties did not emerge until after 1835). And Americans experienced the first peaceful transition of power from one party (the Federalists) to another (the Republicans) (Hofstadter 1969).

1.5.6 The Party System in 1800

But what exactly had emerged by 1800? What was it that both contemporaries and historians alike referred to as parties? I will briefly discuss several answers to this question.

First, Hoadley's (1986) analysis of roll call voting in Congress between 1789 and 1803 shows that national legislative parties had formed in the sense of congressional voting blocs. Based on multidimensional scaling of roll calls in the Senate and the House, Hoadley demon-

strates that voting in the first two Congresses was dominated by factionalism and regional concerns. But starting with the Third Congress, voting patterns became increasingly polarized and congressmen began to vote along party lines instead of region, with few congressmen remaining independent. By 1797 two partisan voting blocs had taken shape, voting blocs that according to Slez and Martin (2007) resembled those during the Constitutional Convention.¹³

In addition, elites began to form informal organizational structures. Building on organizational repertoires (Clemens 1997) developed during the Revolutionary War—like Committees of Correspondence and Safety—elites began to establish committees and caucuses at different levels of government. These committees nominated candidates and coordinated votes in the legislature. At the national level, the first congressional caucus was formed by Hamilton in 1790, which the opposition responded to with their own caucus in 1795 (Harlow 1917). These caucuses, however, were still informal and met infrequently (J. S. Young 1966). At the state level, both Federalists and Republicans created a hierarchy of committees ranging from a state central committee to district committees to county and town committees (Cunningham 1957, 159–61; A. F. Young 1967, 578; Fischer 1965, 61; Nichols 1967, 222).¹⁴

Increasing competition between these emerging groups forced both parties to intensify their campaign efforts in order to mobilize voters (Dinkin 1989; Taylor 1993; J. B. Freeman 1999). Congressmen sent circular letters to local elites informing them about national politics,¹⁵ and volunteer professionals emerged as party organizers who sent out handwritten

13. In chapter 4 I will conduct a similar roll call analysis for the New York state assembly during the 1790s.

14. To give an example, in a letter from 1792 party leaders in Albany explain that “[i]n a late meeting of a respectable number of our Friends in this City John Jay Esquire was nominated as a Candidate for Governor and Stephan Van Rensselaer Esquire as a Candidate for Lt. Governor at the Ensuing Election, and we were appointed a Committee of Correspondence to make known and Support this Nomination.” The letter then asks for cooperation with the party leaders in the town of the recipients and recommends organizing a similar meeting that throws its weight behind Jay and Van Rensselaer.

15. In an unsent letter from 1804, John Williams of Washington County explains that “an address calculated to mislead a *Virginian* will not answer in this enlightened County, where we have the proceeding of Congress weekly, and can read for our selves” (John Williams Papers, New York State Library, series HY 12382).

ballots so that voters would become familiar with their candidates, and organized rallies, parades, ox roasts, and open houses where voters could obtain free beer and grog.

A letter from Alexander Hamilton to James A. Bayard from April 1802 illustrates how far party organizing had come. In this letter Hamilton acknowledges that “in the competition for the passions of the people our opponents [the Republicans] have great advantage over us.” He then argues that the Federalist party must employ the same methods and outlines his plan for the creation of “The Christian Constitutional Society.” This society should consist of a national council, sub-councils in each state, and as many local societies as possible. This structure would diffuse information through newspapers and pamphlets, promote “the election of *fit men*,” and systematically organize and mobilize Federalist voters through societies for immigrants and mechanics, thus focusing mobilization on cities because that is where, according to Hamilton, Republicans gained most of their strength (cited in J. B. Freeman 2017, 342–5). Although the Christian Constitutional Society was never realized, Hamilton’s letter illuminates how far elite thinking about party organization had come.

But the organizational structure of politics was not the only thing that had changed. People also thought about politics more and more in terms of parties. Party labels began to appear in newspapers and on party tickets, as well as in people’s private correspondence (Cunningham 1957, 48, 63, 97, 99, 103, 110, 111, 112, 144, 151, 153, 196, 213, 218; Kaminski 1993, 125, 147, 152, 170, 187, 225, 229). While prior to the Revolution the dominant way to describe political conflicts was through family names (Countryman 1989, 77–8), such an understanding of politics in local terms was no longer possible. Mobilizing voters across localities required political identities that could span across multiple settings and were able to bring together under a common label a diverse set of groups from different counties and states. Figure 1.2 plots the proportion of candidates for the assembly and the state senate who were identified by a party label during each election. The data come from the *A New Nation Votes* (American Antiquarian Society 2007) database discussed in section 2.4. The

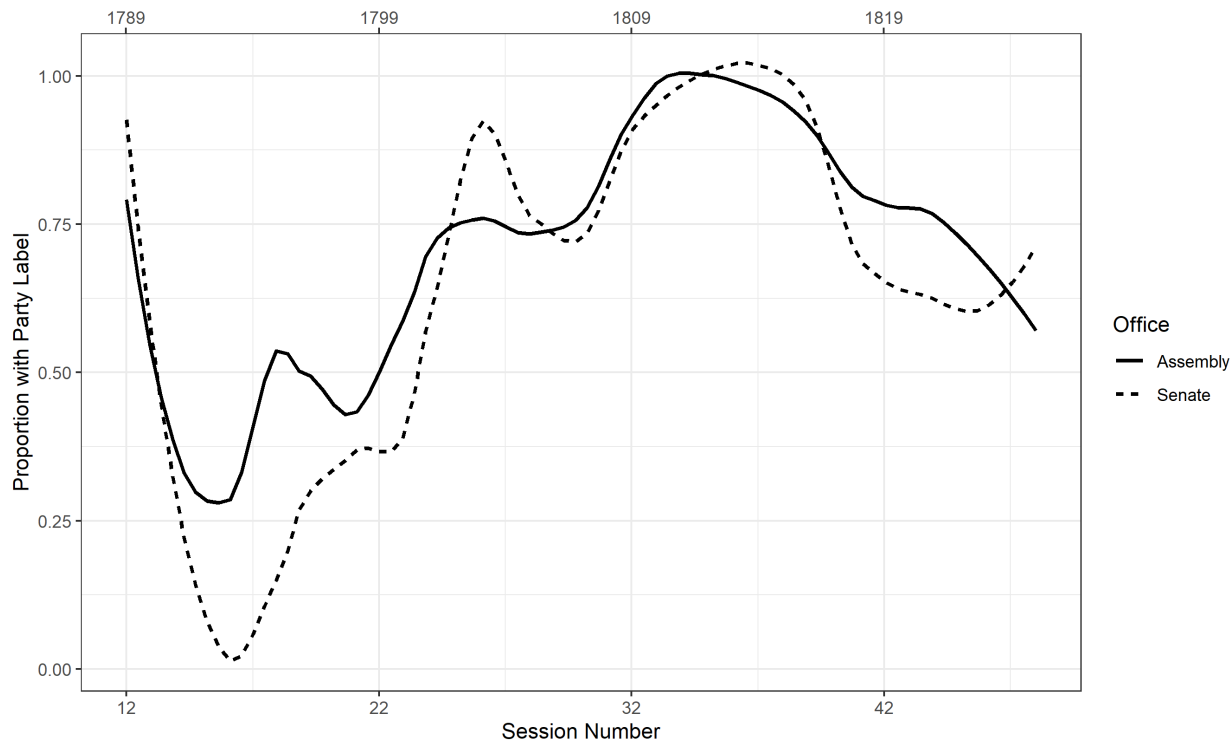


Figure 1.2: Proportion of candidates identified by a party label (smoothed)

Note: Thin lines show raw values; thick line show smoothed values based on local regressions.

information on party affiliation contained in the database is based on election returns which were obtained primarily from newspapers and original election ballots.¹⁶ The proportion of candidates who were identified by a party label was close to 1 during the ratification debates (session 12), dropped sharply right after that, but started to increase again in 1795 (session 18). By 1801 it had reached the level of 1788, providing evidence that during the 1790s candidates increasingly identified as Federalists and Republicans.

In the absence of many of the formal organizational characteristics that we associate with modern parties such as a central office, a formal organizational hierarchy, or a party platform, newspapers played a particularly important role. Pasley (2001, 9) observes that “from the 1790s on, no politician dreamed of mounting a campaign, launching a new movement, or

16. In order to appear in the data used here, three requirements had to be fulfilled: a candidate had to run on a party ticket, information on party affiliation had to be reported in a newspaper, and the election return had to be found by the author of the database, Philip Lampi.

winning over a new geographic area without a newspaper.” Newspapers were the face of the parties and the interface between political candidates and voters. The formation of many new newspapers was closely entangled with politics. Newspapers such as the *Federalist Gazette of the United States* and the Republican *National Gazette* were not only used *by* parties, but were formed *as* party newspapers and received support from political elites like Madison, Jefferson, and Hamilton in the form of donations, government contracts, or political patronage (Pasley 2001). Madison and Jefferson, who hired Philip Frenau, Madison’s former roommate at Princeton, as the editor of the *National Gazette*, even went so far as to create lists of subscribers for him. Because newspaper editors did not only live for politics, but also off of politics, they most closely resembled the idea of a professional politician.

To coordinate their activities, elites needed to communicate. While structures like the revolutionary committees of correspondence might have been enough to coordinate the activities of elites, they were insufficient to establish connections between party leaders and voters at a large scale. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1983) highlights the importance of print capitalism for the rise of nationalism in Europe. A similar argument can be made for the emergence of party identities in America. Since the Stamp Act Crisis of 1765, newspapers had become more and more political (Breen 2010, 102). They reported on elections, printed political essays discussing policies, and promoted the emerging parties and their candidates. Given a high literacy rate (80% around the time of the Revolution), newspapers provided a public space in which political identities could be forged (Robertson 2004). The number of newspapers in the nation grew from 96 in 1790 to 234 in 1800 to 861 in 1828 (Brooke 2000, 61). As far as New York is concerned, Brigham (1947) lists 137 newspapers that appeared between 1725 and 1800 and North (1884) says that 67 newspapers existed in 1810.

In addition to the creation of newspapers, the Post Office Act of 1792 allowed newspaper editors to exchange their papers by mail without charge, facilitating the rapid growth of the press. This was particularly important because over 90% of population lived in rural areas

and would otherwise have had no access to information about politics in the cities. The number of post offices rose from 73 in 1790 to 903 in 1800 and 4,500 in 1820 (John 1995, 51). The volume of newspaper copies transmitted by the postal system increased from half a million in 1790 to 1.9 million in 1800 and 6 million in 1820 (John 1995, 4).

This new public in which political issues were debated and political identifications formed was not restricted to newspapers. The 1790s also saw the rise of civic associations, famously observed by Tocqueville a few decades later, that provided the spaces in which people practiced democratic participation and in which partisans could organize. At a time when formal party organizations did not yet exist, these associations played a key role in engaging citizens and mobilizing voters (Link 1973; Schoenbachler 1998; Waldstreicher 1997; Koschnik 2007; Neem 2008). The combination of parties, newspapers, and civic associations is what led A. F. Young (1967) to call the New York Republicans a “movement.”

In short, the 1790s saw the emergence of a new logic that organized politics.¹⁷ Politics was no longer shaped by local factions organized around a small set of powerful aristocratic families. While the idea of legitimate opposition had still not taken root and the official rhetoric of republicanism still condemned parties as undemocratic (Hofstadter 1969; de Leon 2010), it was now possible and perhaps even increasingly necessary for elites to affiliate with a party. Political elites were now perceived by an audience of voters and other elites in relation to these party identities, which forced them more and more to make a choice between one side or the other. Because one’s own success increasingly depended on the fate of one’s party, this led to increased organizational efforts in an attempt to guarantee the success of one’s side.

In this context, switching from one party to another was perceived as betrayal. In a letter to John Williams of Washington County, New York, who in 1795 switched from the Republicans to the Federalists, an anonymous author writes: “Your defection, Sir, has

17. And it was not only politics, but also banking (Murphy 2015) and membership in civic associations (see Brooke 2010 on the Freemasons in Columbia County) that was increasingly organized by party affiliation.

not only destroyed the Republican Interest in Washington County but it gives your former inveterate enemies in that County an opportunity to persecute your former bosom friends. . . .” (cited in Adler 1976, 45). The actions of individual elites were now bound up with the fate of the party. This new logic is summarized by Cunningham (1957, 255): “By 1800 the idea that a candidate should be a consistent party man—a theory that a decade before would have been scorned as unpatriotic and incompatible with republican government—was widely accepted.” Status and honor were increasingly tied not to being above party politics, but being in party politics (although it would take another two decades for this idea to really establish itself).

While the Federalists and Republicans of 1800 were still relatively weak at the national level, in New York two competing parties had formed that coordinated their activities across elections, nominated candidates, engaged in electioneering, and stood for different ideas about what government in the new nation should look like.

We know a great deal about how eighteenth-century elites thought about the role of parties in government (e.g., Hofstadter 1969), about the ideological differences between the two parties and the issues that gave rise to them (e.g., Buel 1972), and about the various ways in which parties attempted to persuade voters to support them (e.g., Dinkin 1989; Pasley 2001). Much less is known, however, about the people who associated themselves with the two parties, either as candidates and elected officials or as voters.

There is generally no disagreement as to the sectional character of the first national party system: Federalist support came from the New England states, Republicans were strong in the south, and the Mid-Atlantic states were contested. If we look at the electoral college votes, this pattern is unmistakable. In 1800, Adams won all the New England states plus New Jersey and Delaware and received seven votes from Pennsylvania, five from Maryland, and four from North Carolina; Jefferson won the south plus New York and received eight votes from Pennsylvania, five from Maryland, and eight from North Carolina. The electoral

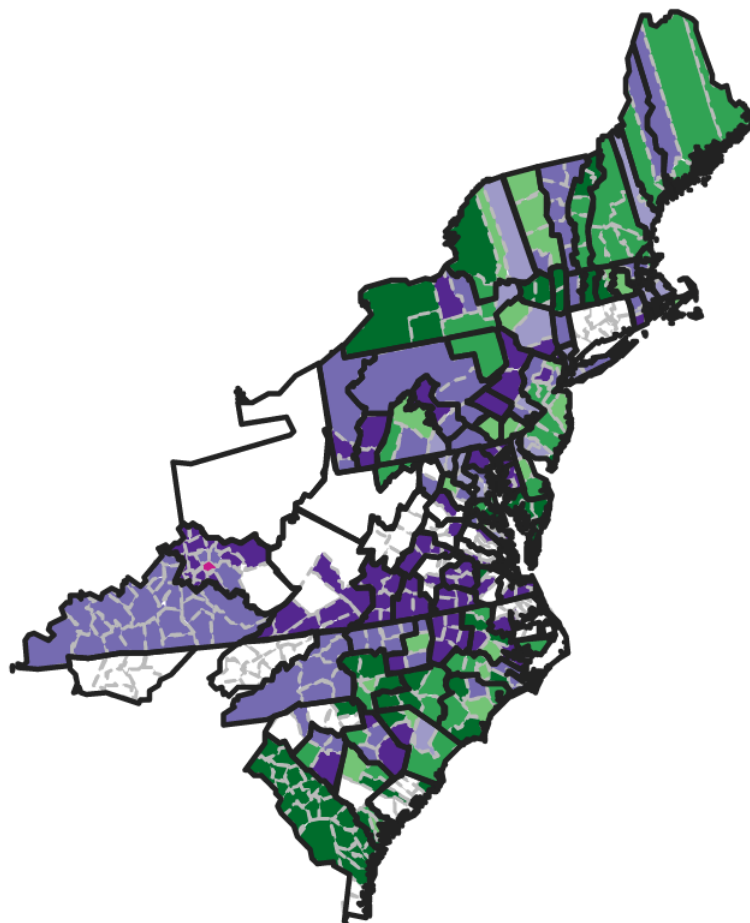


Figure 1.3: Elections to the U.S. House, 1800

Note: Source: Mapping Early American Elections, <https://doi.org/10.31835/meae>. Green = Federalist, purple = Republican.

vote, however, is a poor measure of regional party strength. In most states electors were chosen indirectly and because most delegations did not split their votes, the electoral vote only contains information on the winning party in a first-past-the-post race. Elections for the U.S. House, in contrast, allow us to examine the relative party strength in terms of the popular vote at the county-level (figure 1.3). These data paint a much more nuanced picture and show a seaboard-interior division more so than a north-south division. During the elections for the Seventh Congress (1800), we find Federalist majorities in many counties in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, and Republican counties in New England.

Beyond this sectional divide, things are less clear. Scholars find certain tendencies, but no clear difference in the social bases of the Federalists and Republicans. The Federalists were somewhat more likely to be professionals and wealthy merchants, to have a college education, and to receive support in the commercial centers; the Republicans were more likely to be farmers and receive support from rural regions. In addition, Federalists tended to be strong in regions with stable populations and thus stable social structures, while Republicans received votes from regions with high migration and less stable populations in which the power of the old elites was challenged. Yet, “[t]here was surely no simple symmetry of political conviction and economic interest, no clean-cut cleavage between wealth and poverty, between agriculture and commerce, between realty and personalty holdings, between city-dwellers and countryfolk, between northern merchants and southern planters, between subsistence and commercial farmers, between hardy frontiersmen and effete easterners, between orthodox Calvinists and other religious groups” (Fischer 1965, 201). Fischer concludes that the best way to characterize the division between Federalists and Republicans is to say that the established elites became Federalists, while their challengers became Republicans. P. Goodman (1967) makes the same argument at the state level and claims that states where the old elites remained in control were dominated by Federalists, while states where the old social structures were changed became Republican (the case of Virginia demonstrates the limits of this argument). Finally, Buel also uses the elite-challenger distinction but gives it an ideological twist. For him, Federalism was the ideology adopted by “those who felt insecure as leaders because of changes wrought by the Revolution” (Buel 1972, 85). Those who sought to challenge the old order gathered under the banner of the Republicans.

At the state level, Young’s (1967) outstanding study of party development in New York until 1797 comes to a similar conclusion. The leaders of the Federalist party were members of the landed or mercantile aristocracy, but they were joined by new men like John Williams in Washington County or William Cooper in Otsego who rose to prominence through land spec-

ulation on the frontier. The Republican party was built around George Clinton who formed an alliance with members from the old Livingston and Van Cortlandt families. Young and rising professionals could be found on both sides. As far as the parties' followings are concerned, Republican support came still primarily from the yeomanry, but Republicans had also acquired an urban wing based on mechanics (A. F. Young 1985) and gained some mercantile support. Federalist support was still centered around the New York City merchants, but the party had made significant inroads in rural areas on the frontier.

1.5.7 After 1800

The focus of this dissertation are the years from 1788 to 1801. But because, to a large extent, the developments of the 1790s can only be understood by what they left behind, let me end by taking a brief look at party development after this focal period. Republican efforts to organize a state-wide party and mobilize voters during the 1790s paid off, so much so that the party would dominate politics at the national level until the first party system disintegrated in the second half of the 1810s. Many Federalists responded to their defeat by leaving politics or switching sides in the hope that their opponents might concede an appointive office to them. In New York, too, the Federalist party spent most of the next 20 years in the minority. But it did not completely disappear and, in fact, managed to regain assembly majorities between 1809 and 1814 (Lampi 2013).¹⁸

At the same time, factional struggles began to break out in the Republican party. This is not surprising. In fact, one-party dominance often produces internal factionalism (Key 1984). For example, the complete dominance of the Federalist party in Otsego County in the 1790s produced infighting that pitted Federalist candidates against each other (Taylor 1995). The same happened in Ulster County where almost everyone was a Republican (Kaminski

18. Interestingly, now it was the Federalists who could use the lower property requirements for the assembly elections to their advantage. In state senate and gubernatorial elections, the Federalists never managed to achieve a majority after 1800 (Lampi 2013).

1993, 139). And now that same fate befell the Republican coalition that ousted the Federalist in the 1800 election. But while these new conflicts led many elites to reposition themselves, these dynamics still occurred within the two-party structure of Federalists and Republicans until the end of the 1810s.

Beginning in 1817 a new faction arose within the Republican party, called the Bucktails, which tried to oust governor DeWitt Clinton, nephew of former governor George Clinton. This group became later known as the Albany Regency. What was remarkable about this new wing of the Republican party was their commitment to party loyalty and party discipline (Wallace 1968). The party was no longer just a coalition of individuals; it had taken on a life of its own and had transformed into an organization. In 1823, the *Albany Argus*, the party organ of the Albany Regency, wrote that “individual partialities and local attachments are secondary and quite unimportant compared [...] with the INTERESTS AND PERMANENCY OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY” (cited in Wallace 1968, 461). The leading figure of the Albany Regency was Martin Van Buren, who between 1824 and 1840 helped forge a new coalition that became the Democratic party. As the following chapters will show, it was no surprise that one of the first professional politicians and proponents of political parties grew up in the world of New York politics described in this dissertation. In fact, Van Buren saw the creation of the Democratic party largely as a project of reviving the old Republican party that is the object of my study (Remini 1972; Reichley 1992).

While the parties that had formed by 1820 were not yet the mass electoral parties that formed in the 1820s, they did lay the groundwork for those later developments. And here New York, with its highly organized party politics, played a key role in producing the kinds of politicians that would expedite party building during the Jacksonian era.

1.5.8 *A Note on the Early American State*

It is useful to place this account of the emergence of parties in the context of state building, and to compare the American case to other cases. First, a comparison with Europe points to the unique timing of party formation in America. While in many European countries parties formed much later than states, in America they emerged simultaneously. Particularly important is the fact that parties formed before the creation of an independent civil service. This gave control over positions within the state to the forming parties which could distribute them as spoils (Shefter 1994). Attempts to dissociate parties from the state bureaucracy did not take place until the Pendleton Act of 1883.

Related to the previous point is Weber's (1958) observation that the timing of bureaucratization and democratization often affected the relative strength of electoral versus bureaucratic politics. In cases such as Germany, where democratization occurred in the context of a strong bureaucracy, "the interests of the prince were joined with those of officialdom *against* parliament and its claims for power" (Weber 1958, 89). In America, in contrast, parliamentarization and the extension of the suffrage occurred first. As a consequence, electoral politics became dominant and parliaments became the focus of aspiring office-holders (Borchert 2000).

Second, the American political field in the eighteenth century was already well established in that political elites agreed on the rules of the game. There was a strong belief in the legitimacy of the formal political order. While in Latin American countries like Colombia and Uruguay local war lords formed militias that waged wars against one another (López-Alves 2000), elites in New York seemed to agree that competition should be relegated to the field of politics, not the battlefield.¹⁹ The struggle for power was a struggle for political office. Because elites had access to positions within the state, they fought within the parameters of the state instead of forming networks of power independent of the formal political

19. This was different in other regions in North America as Reed's (2019, 2020) work shows.

institutions.

Third, the formation of parties occurred in a rapidly expanding political system. New York's population almost doubled from around 340,000 in 1790 to around 600,000 in 1800. In terms of eligible voter, the growth is even more impressive, growing by 125% from 38,366 in 1790 to 85,907 in 1801. Population growth was related to westward expansion. During that time, thousands of people settled in the western and northern regions of the state. With settlement came counties, and with counties political offices. Between 1788 and 1800 alone, New York created 21 new counties. How dramatic this change was can be seen in figure 1.4, which shows New York's county borders in 1788 and 1800.

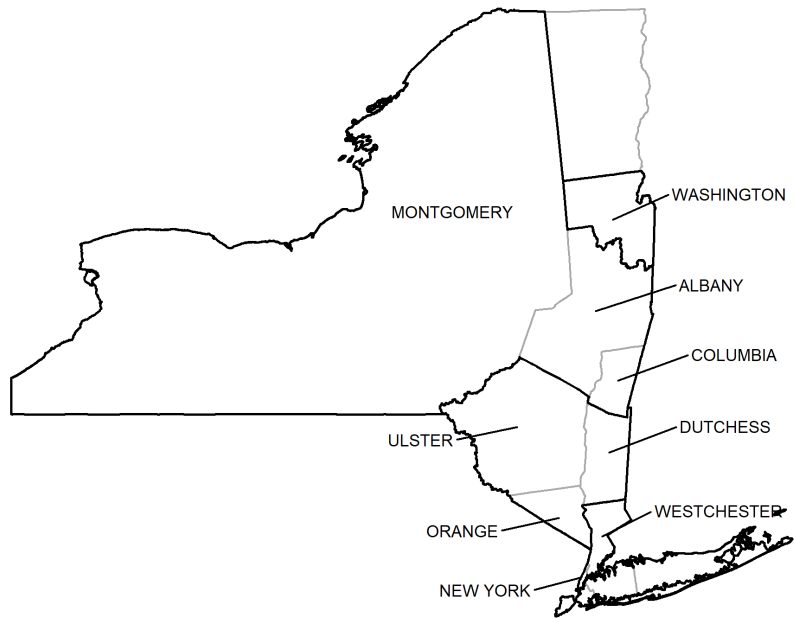
1.5.9 Alternative Modes of Organizing Politics

Studying the formation of parties requires an understanding of what came before parties, of how politics was organized in the absence of parties. Let me therefore end this section on party development with a brief look at alternative modes of organizing politics.

The Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 reminds us that one way of voicing dissatisfaction with existing policies, here a federal tax on whiskey, was to tar and feather officials instead of voting them out of office. The existence of parties requires the containment of physical violence as a means to solve political conflict. What was so remarkable about the election of 1800 was that political power transitioned peacefully from one party to another (even though for a brief moment the country was at the brink of a civil war). Reed's (2019, 2020) recent work demonstrates how the American state slowly established a political field in which conflicts were resolved through electoral competition rather than violence.

The main contender for an alternative mode of organizing politics was patrimonialism. Patrimonialism refers to forms of government in which the political administration of an area is based on the ruler's family household. "We shall speak of a patrimonial state when the prince organizes his political power over extrapatrimonial areas and political subjects [...]"

1788



1800

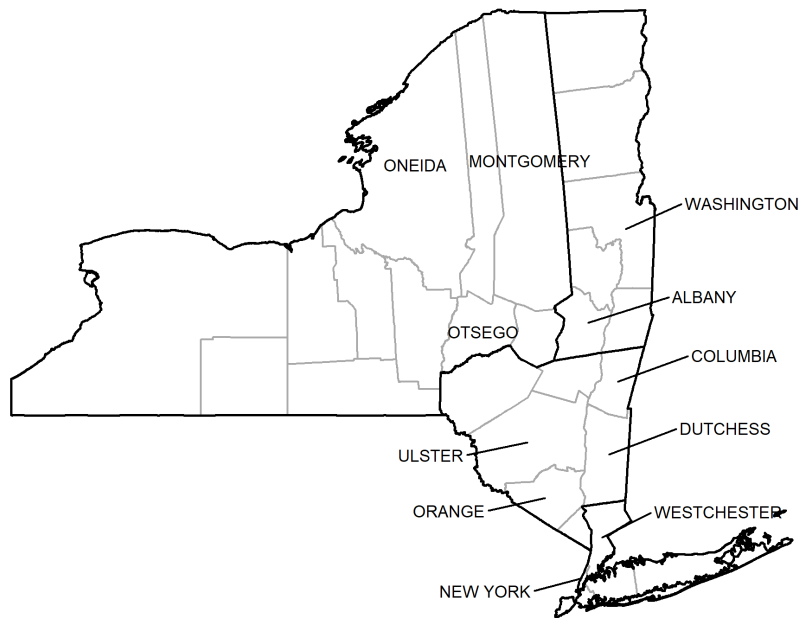


Figure 1.4: New York in 1788 and 1800

Note: Thin lines show county borders. Thick lines indicate senatorial districts.

just like the exercise of his patriarchal power” (Weber 1978, 1013). Adams’ (1994, 2005, 2007) work on the Netherlands is a great example of a political system that is erected on the principles of patriarchal patrimonialism.

Above we saw that politics in England was dominated by connections between powerful families. To the extent that the power of these families relied on voters, they formed vertical patron-client relationships with commoners (O’Gorman 1984). Wood (1993, 44) suggests that patriarchy might have been even stronger in colonial America than in England because other institutions like the church and guilds were weaker. Up until the Revolution, New York, or at least the Hudson Valley region, resembled the English model like no other place in North America (Bonomi 1971; Wood 1993; Beeman 2004). The most important class in the state was “that small cohort of closely related families of wealth, commonly known as the aristocracy” (Becker 1909, 8). As in England, these families formed vertical relationships of deference, such as between landlord and tenant or between creditor and debtor, that extended their influence outside the immediate family and into the local community (Formisano 1974; Taylor 1993).

The Revolution, however, altered New York’s social structure significantly. Among the many Loyalists who left the country were powerful patriarchs such as the DeLanceys in the south and the Johnsons in the north, which opened up space for a class of new men to enter politics. In addition, northward and westward expansion and the creation of new counties in the frontier regions came with a shift of power away from the New York City-Albany-Hudson Valley axis that was controlled by the old families and toward regions where family dynasties did not exist. As chapter 5 will show, even though many of the aristocratic elites survived the Revolution and retained their influence in politics, the parties that formed after independence were more than a concatenation of these local kinship-based patronage pyramids. Parties had absorbed, if not replaced, familial politics.

Besides horizontal ties between families and vertical patron-client ties, politics could have

also been organized by networks of personal relationships based on shared college education, shared work experience, or membership in societies like the Society of the Cincinnati. Again, these relationships clearly played an important role. Think, for example, of the relationship between George Washington and Alexander Hamilton that formed during the revolutionary war. But we will find that these networks were not extensive enough to organize politics across the entire nation and down into the various localities. They were absorbed into a system of party politics that slowly superimposed itself on these existing pieces of political organization.

This suggests that speaking of alternative modes of organizing politics is problematic because these different logics were not exclusive. In fact, one reason that makes it so difficult to determine the timing of party formation is that parties did not replace older forms of politics, but incorporated them. Parties absorbed existing pieces of social structure into larger structures. To be sure, at some point it became more important to be a party man than a family man, but the rise of one was not automatically the decline of the other.

1.6 Theories of Party Formation

Several approaches to party formation can be identified in the literature. Although these approaches highlight key aspects of party formation in America, the previous discussion of party development after the War of Independence also exposes their limits.

1.6.1 The Institutional Approach

The institutional approach links the formation of parties to two main institutional changes, although the precise relationship and causal sequence often remain unspecified. These two changes are the extension of parliamentary prerogatives and the establishment of elections in combination with the growth of the electorate. Sartori (1976) combines these processes in the following analytical model of party development (see also Duverger 1963). First,

legislatures become more powerful relative to other institutions within the state. A key part of this process is the establishment of what Sartori calls “responsible government,” a government whose ministers are responsible to the legislature. As legislatures become more powerful, and the stakes get higher, groups within the legislature start to form. These groups are called legislative or parliamentary parties. The formation of this type of party does not require elections; divisions in the legislature can emerge no matter how legislators obtained their seats. The second condition for the emergence of modern electoral parties is the franchise. The introduction of elections gives rise to local electoral committees that seek to make candidates known to voters and persuade them to vote for those candidates. Increasing competition between legislative groups drives them to establish stable connections to electoral committees, form new electoral committees in places where they have none, and increase their efforts to mobilize voters. Competition is a crucial factor. Mobilizing voters is a dangerous gamble for elites. Elites are generally threatened by the mobilization of non-elites and will therefore choose this option only if they have to (Shefter 1994). Competition among elites can create the conditions under which the mobilization of non-elites appears as the only viable option. Thus, parliamentarization and the extension of the suffrage only lead to the formation of parties to the extent that they are combined with competition.²⁰

Scholars generally agree that a strong parliament and a sizable electorate are necessary conditions for the formation of parties. Whether they are also sufficient conditions, and thus can explain the timing of party formation, is less clear. In Germany, for instance, universal manhood suffrage was institutionalized in 1871, but parties remained weakly organized (Ziblatt 2017). In part this had to do with the weakness of parliament, so that one may argue that only one condition was present, but it also was related to other state and social institutions. In the American case, the debate centers on the fact that while the franchise

20. Martin (2009) has argued that it is not competition per se, but competition for indivisible goods that drives party formation. It is the winner-take-all nature of these situations that drives competition and leads to increased efforts to organize.

was relatively extensive, in many cases Americans did not vote even though they could, and higher levels of voter participation often *followed* party activities instead of giving rise to them. This was certainly true during the colonial period (Fischer 1965, xiii–xiv), but it was also often the case after 1776 (P. Goodman 1967).

Perhaps more helpful in thinking about the timing of party formation in America are arguments that link parties to the creation of a national political arena in the late 1780s (Chambers 1963; P. Goodman 1967; McCormick 1967). As Chhibber and Kollman (2004) have argued, centralization of authority at the national level led candidates to unite under national party labels and contributed to the formation of national (as opposed to local) parties. Here the creation of the presidency was of particular importance. The winner-take-all structure of presidential elections, especially after George Washington’s retirement in 1796, produced a tendency to form horizontal alliances leading to a bifurcation of the elite (Martin 2009, 290–2). First-past-the-post electoral procedures for members of the U.S. House of Representatives had similar effects in congressional districts. Further, the large size of electoral districts, the strong presidency, and the coupling of different levels of government (e.g., New York’s presidential electors were chosen by the state legislature) all required coordination across localities. By tying the American states into a common political framework, the constitution encouraged coordination across regions and different levels of government. County elections required coordination across towns, state senate elections required coordination across a few counties, gubernatorial elections required coordination across the whole state, and now presidential elections required coordination across all states in the Union. The federal structure also produced important trickle-down effects, which became clearly visible in the election of 1800. That year, the presidential race depended heavily on the twelve electors from New York. These electors were chosen by the state legislature, which meant that in order to get the delegates, each party had to first win enough seats in the assembly and state senate, which in turn depended on elections in the various

counties. And here New York City turned out to be crucial. This is why national elites like Hamilton and Burr were so active in local election campaigns. Increased coordination of electoral activities, in turn, brought about identities that were no longer tied to local contexts but could travel and unite the whole nation.

Besides these main factors, there are a set of other institutional conditions that are conducive to the formation of parties. One that is often overlooked is the existence of basic rights such as the right to free assembly, association, and speech (Scarrow 2006), or the state's inability to suppress parties in case they do not enjoy these rights.²¹ That parties formed first in England and America can in part be related to the existence of these rights.

The institutional approach helps us think about the conditions under which party formation is likely and even offers explanations for why parties formed as well as the timing of their formation. But it does not help us understand how these parties were built and why they looked the way they did. One exception is Duverger's (1963) famous argument that simple-majority single-ballot electoral systems have an inherent tendency to produce two parties instead of many. While a crucial part of the story, it does not say anything about the character of these two parties or the specific processes that led to their construction. In part this is because the institutional approach completely ignores the role of actors. Reminiscent of modernization theory, it claims that the formation of democratic institutions and a mass electorate naturally bring about parties as a means to organize politics under these new conditions. But as Kalyvas (1996) has shown for the case of Christian Democratic parties in Europe, party formation is also a function of the assessments and decisions of relevant political actors.

21. After the Zenger trial of the 1730s, the freedom of the press was largely established in New York, and the First Amendment of 1791 enshrined exactly these freedoms in the constitution. Even the Sedition Act of 1798 could not suppress opposition to the government. Besides, despite intense debates over the legitimacy of the Democratic-Republican societies of the 1790s, civic associations were never formally prohibited.

1.6.2 *The Social Cleavage Approach*

The second approach, dominant in sociology,²² understands parties as reflections of structural divisions in society. In its most prominent formulation, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that the European party systems were the result of two revolutions that gave rise to four critical social cleavages. The industrial revolution created cleavages between land and industry and between owner and worker, the national revolution created cleavages between center and periphery and between state and church. The degree to which these cleavages had developed in different European societies shaped the structure of the party systems that congealed in these countries in the early twentieth century. While extending earlier work in the Marxist tradition that saw parties as nothing more than the “democratic translation of the class struggle” (Lipset 1960, 230), Lipset and Rokkan retain the idea of parties as relatively passive political expressions of social dynamics. Unlike the institutional approach, this approach focuses on trying to explain the structure of party systems by linking the formation of elite alliances to pre-existing social divisions.

To discuss the role of social cleavages in the American case, it is helpful to introduce a distinction between those who govern and those who are governed, or between office-holders (and office-seekers)²³ and voters. Lipset and Rokkan’s argument is (a) that dominant social cleavages exist in society and that (b) these cleavages are somehow translated into divisions between office-holders in the form of divisions between political parties.

22. Recent work by political sociologists (e.g., de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2009, 2015; Ackerman 2020) challenges the notion of parties as passive expressions of social cleavages. Their argument is that parties are active agents capable of suturing together hitherto unconnected social blocs, thus creating instead of reflecting social cleavages. See Sartori (1969, 84) for an earlier version of this critique: “To put it bluntly, it is not the ‘objective’ class (class conditions) that creates the party, but the party that creates the ‘subjective’ class (class consciousness).”

23. In modern polities, the group of office-holders is divided into politicians and bureaucrats (Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman 1981). In representative democracies, politicians are often referred to as representatives. While the term “representative” is used at the time, the notion that it was the job of an elected official to represent the interests of his constituents was only beginning to develop. Instead, in republican fashion, elected officials often saw themselves as governors whose job it was to govern virtuously and realize the interest of the community as a whole.

Let us first examine (b), that is, the relationship between social cleavages and political elites. Unfortunately, Lipset and Rokkan provide no clear account of how social cleavages are translated into political divisions (Sartori 1990). The relationship between social cleavages and political parties can be understood in two ways: either in the sense that different parties draw on different social groups for electoral support, or in the sense that the party elites themselves come from different social groups. This distinction reminds us of the difference between descriptive and substantive representation. The idea of substantive representation is that representatives advocate on behalf of certain groups; the idea of descriptive representation is that representatives mirror the represented in important characteristics. The former is what Lipset and Rokkan have in mind. Their argument is fundamentally about voters. It is not that social cleavages are reflected in the social characteristics of party elites, but in the electoral support they receive. Yet, the goal of this project is to explain divisions among those who govern. One might say that the cleavage argument can explain divisions among those who govern only to the extent that they come from the social groups or categories they represent.

Sometimes this is the case. In societies in which social and political status are tightly linked and in which therefore politics is not functionally differentiated from the rest of society, this is what we might observe. For instance, in his study of the civil wars in Chile during the nineteenth century, Zeitlin (1984, 161) finds that the divisions among representatives mapped the onto social cleavages in society: “I suggest that the intraclass divisions at the focus of the present historical analysis were also reflected in the divisions among the political struggle’s leading participants themselves.” We also often see this in cases where parties grow out of broader social movements. Think of Christian Democratic parties in Europe which grew out of religious mass organizations (Kalyvas 1996). Or think of the European ecological parties which grew out of the cultural and political protest movements of the post-war era (Kitschelt 1989). In the case of these “externally mobilized” parties (Shefter 1994, 30), we

sometimes see at least an initial homology between elite divisions and social cleavages (see also Mudge 2018, 11).

At the other extreme, we can imagine a system in which elites are, at least initially, free-floating and not tied to any of the existing social cleavages, either through social relationships or through membership in the same social categories. This might be the case in highly professionalized polities in which political classes have developed that are decoupled from other sectors of society.²⁴ These decoupled elites can then either tap into existing cleavages or articulate new ones.²⁵

The following chapters will demonstrate that politics in New York fits neither of those two extremes. On the one hand, political elites were not free-floating. They were deeply embedded in social relationships and their political careers were closely tied to their social careers. “Translating the personal, social, and economic power of the gentry into political authority was essentially what eighteenth-century politics was about” (Wood 1993, 88). In such a world, the elected landlord was seen as a landlord, not as a politician who, in principle, could represent the interests of tenants. In other words, the idea of substantive representation was not accepted enough for elites to completely detach themselves from their social background. The usage of abstract ideological rhetorics such as aristocracy and democracy can, I think, be attributed to this difficulty, as they made it easier for elites to detach themselves from their social backgrounds and thus created room for political movement. Even the largest landowner could become a champion of democracy.

But at the same time, New York’s political elites were also not tied down by their affiliations to social groups. Although he overstates the situation somewhat, Martin (2009, 301) observes that “the New York political system was in the hands of professionals who tended

24. It is perhaps not surprising that this image of political elites underlies economic theories of political parties in which “parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies” (Downs 1957, 25).

25. Work by de Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2009, 2015) studies the strategies that elites pursue in articulating pieces of social structure into new social cleavages.

to be concentrated in a tiny portion of the state, and who lacked any organic relation to class or sectional interests, as did the Virginia planters, or to the fraternity of elite schools, as did the Massachusetts clergy, or to religion, as did the Pennsylvania Quakers and Anglicans.” While New York’s elites were deeply rooted in the social (as chapter 5 will show), they did not act based on their membership in social categories. Or at least we cannot account for *divisions among elites* by relating them to different social categories (as chapter 3 will show).

Still, it is possible that the two emerging parties appealed to social cleavages in their attempt to mobilize voters. I therefore now turn to (a), that is, the extent to which cleavages existed. For parties to be based on cleavages, cleavages have to be developed enough. They have to exist in an objective sense (cleavages in themselves), be recognized by participants (cleavages for themselves), be organized (associations, leadership), and transcend local contexts.

Compared to the European context Lipset and Rokkan studied, cleavages in New York were relatively undeveloped. One important reason for this has to do with timing. When the American parties began to take shape at the end of the eighteenth century, the industrial revolution had not happened yet. Cleavages between capitalists and workers and between land and industry did not exist in the same way they did in nineteenth-century Europe. Mechanics societies existed in larger cities such as New York City and structured the vote in important ways (A. F. Young 1967, 1985). But there were no organized trade unions that could have formed the organizational underpinning of parties (as was the case with the Social Democratic or Socialist parties in Europe). Tenant uprisings attest to an underlying conflict between landowners and tenants, but these cleavages remained local and were not organized enough to form the bases for parties. Furthermore, westward expansion and an abundance of land prevented “social caging” (Mann 2012) and the emergence of distinct class divisions. America never saw the feudal relationships that structured politics in Europe. Economic divisions also often remained local. The division between rich and poor in New York City

was different from the one between tenants and landholders on the old manors which in turn was different from the one between the pioneer farmers and the land proprietors on the western frontier. There was a conflict between landed and commercial interests, which shaped many of the alliances during the colonial era and which still erupted episodically after the War of Independence (such as during the dispute between proponents of a land bank and proponents of a commercial bank in the 1780s). But the boundary between land and commerce was often blurred as elites engaged in both landholding and trade. A clear class separation as in the case of the East Elbian Junkers in Prussia did not exist. During elections, lawyers were sometimes singled out as a class of parasites and crooks, but again the line was blurred as the law profession increasingly combined intellectuals from humble backgrounds as well as members of the old aristocratic families. Finally, there was also no organized church that could have opposed the centralizing tendencies of the federal state (as was the case with the Christian-Democratic parties in Europe [Kalyvas 1996]). When Lipset and Rokkan spoke of social cleavages, they had divisions between nationally organized movements in mind, such as the workers' movements of the nineteenth century or the Catholic church. Nothing in New York came close to that. Unstable, unorganized, or merely local cleavages in New York did not produce interest constellations that could have been transformed into parties.

But even if one were to argue that social cleavages in New York were developed enough, there still remains the need to politicize them. In other words, they must be taken up by political elites. There is no reason to assume that the mere existence of cleavages would automatically lead to their politicization. One structural reason that made this difficult was the fact that many of the existing social divisions were horizontal ones (landlord-tenant, creditor-debtor, rich-poor). But the parties that emerged were the product of vertical divisions among the elite. As a consequence, cleavages could not easily be mapped onto parties. Politicizing those cleavages would have required political elites that were highly detached

from their social backgrounds. In particular, it was essential that appeals to social cleavages did not threaten the elite. And indeed some of the issues that were around at the time (debtor laws, the system of tenantry, and the state's undemocratic political institutions) were not taken up by either party (A. F. Young 1967). The same was obviously true for race and for the conflict between European settlers and Native Americans. Neither could have been politicized at the time. In addition, the Federalists in particular were hesitant to strengthen individual groups within society, even if they could have been incorporated into the party. For example, they rejected requests for the incorporation of new mechanics societies arguing that they were "separating citizens into classes" which "may tend to hostility" (A. F. Young 1967, 539).²⁶ Thus, while the Federalists promoted all kinds of incorporations, they opposed those that favored the lower classes. Importantly, this was not simply because mechanics voted Republican. In fact, up until around 1800 they did the opposite (A. F. Young 1985).²⁷

Another cleavage that is often activated as a result of elite conflict is region, largely because region serves as a proxy for other social differences. But as chapter 3 will show, region was not a dominant structuring principle of the first party system in New York either.

One cleavage, however, was clearly relevant: that between center and periphery. In the federalist system that was established with the U.S. constitution, this took the form of a conflict over the relative strength of the individual states versus the federal government. And, in fact, many scholars have argued that this was the main political issue at the time and that it provoked the division between the two parties (e.g., Aldrich 1995): Federalists supported a strong federal government, Republicans preferred to locate political authority in the states. But it is not clear to what extent this division *antecedent* the parties. State building and

26. The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of New York City was founded in 1785, but mechanics societies in other parts of the state only appeared after 1800.

27. The Federalists also vehemently repressed the Democratic-Republican societies that formed in the mid-1790s, but in this case it was because of the societies' affinity with the Republican party (Link 1973; Schoenbachler 1998).

party formation occurred simultaneously, and the division between those promoting and those opposing a strong federal government was largely endogenous to the process of party formation. The violent conflicts between central states and local lords that we know from Europe and China, and that produced strong cleavages between center and periphery prior to the arrival of parties, were absent in America. Further, the division was clearly not one of principle, but rather one about who controlled what. The Republicans took the states-rights position only as long as the Federalists were in control of the federal government. When the Republicans took over in 1800, they continued many of the federalist policies (Balogh 2009). In the words of Gouverneur Morris, the Republicans “did more to strengthen the executive than Federalists dared think of, even in Washington’s day” (cited in Roosevelt 1898, 335).

Still, it is possible to think of a path-dependent process whereby those who initially had to gain from a strong federal government went to one side and those who were threatened by these developments to the other. Once those two sides existed, they of course began to compete for the same offices at all levels of government, which eventually led to a reversal in which side was to benefit from a strong national state. But because the two sides were locked in, and there was nothing that inherently tied an elite to a pro- or anti-federal government position, this did not lead to a reconfiguration of the party system. We will see in the following chapters that there certainly is some truth to this argument.

All of this is not to say that social divisions did not matter at all in New York. Political elites looked at the world of non-elites to see how it was divided and how they could appeal to those divisions in their effort to mobilize voters. But the party divisions that emerged never mapped onto existing social cleavages in a way that would allow us to construct a cleavage-based explanation of party formation.

1.6.3 The Rational Actor Approach

Political scientists take a different approach, one that puts political actors front and center. This approach understands parties as institutions produced by rational political entrepreneurs and thus as endogenous to political processes. Rational choice theories have developed two models of parties that result from two major objectives politicians pursue: office-seeking and policy-seeking (Strom 1990). Aldrich's (1995) explanation for why parties formed in America combines both of these goals. First, following Downs (1957) and Schlesinger (1991), he argues that politicians seek office and stable careers and that parties help them achieve that goal. Second, he argues that politicians, once elected, seek to push their policy preferences through the legislature and that parties help them achieve that goal. The overall developmental process in his theory is similar to that described by the institutional approach. According to Aldrich, groups first formed in Congress as coalitions to realize the majorities that were necessary to accomplish policy goals. He seeks to demonstrate this through an analysis of roll call voting, which shows that by the Third Congress representatives had congealed into two voting blocs that could be differentiated along a single dimension—their position on what he calls the “great principle,” the question of how powerful the new federal government should be. Those who found themselves in the minority then tried to mobilize voters in an attempt to strengthen their position, sparking counter mobilization by their opponents. Consequently, electoral committees formed as another set of coalitions, this time outside the legislature and with the objective of nominating candidates and mobilizing voters in order to elect these candidates and ensure their reelection. While, according to Aldrich, the first American party system saw the formation of legislative voting blocs, it was not until the Democratic party of the nineteenth century that mass mobilization of voters occurred and a national caucus was created that oversaw fundraising and propaganda and coordinated electoral efforts.

By providing a theory of elite political action, Aldrich offers a good starting point for

thinking about party formation in America. But there are a few reasons why this theory remains unsatisfactory. Most importantly, any theory of party formation must avoid assuming what needs to be explained. This, however, is exactly what Aldrich does. Scholars like Schlesinger (1991), who are sympathetic to rational choice accounts of politics and whose work Aldrich builds on, are very aware of the fact that those theories only work well in contexts in which individuals operate within organizations, like markets or party systems, that produce highly structured behavior. But if our goal is to explain those organizations, we cannot do so by reference to the kinds of individuals that they bring about (in this case political entrepreneurs that seek to realize their policy preferences and create stable careers). How elites struggled for offices and how this is related to the formation of parties must be studied empirically and we cannot treat those preferences as exogenous.

Second, in line with the methodological individualism that underlies much of rational choice theory, Aldrich envisions political entrepreneurs as free-floating actors who come together to join alliances because this is understood to be beneficial. One might argue that the national political actors Aldrich studies came close to this ideal, as they were largely detached from their local communities and thrown into a world that had not much in terms of prior social organization. But even here, as work on the effect of shared residence in boarding houses on congressional voting has shown (J. S. Young 1966; Parigi and Bergemann 2016), social relationships structured political behavior. Politics, even at the national level, is always local. In addition, I will show in chapter 7 that many of these national elites also held offices at the state and even the local level, and were, thus, simultaneously embedded in multiple networks of government. Finally, as soon as we leave the national legislature and try to understand how national parties mobilized voters in the states or how state party systems formed, we are confronted with a thick and highly structured social world that shaped politics. Parties were not coalitions of atomized individuals, as Aldrich would have it, who suddenly came together because this was seen as advantageous (more

on this in chapter 5). Aldrich's top-down view of party formation treats the political world almost as a *tabula rasa* and does not systematically account for the fact that by 1789 there were well developed political structures in the individual states (although he acknowledges their existence). We need to know more about the interrelationships between these different levels to come up with a satisfying theory of party formation.

Finally, the theory, by focusing exclusively on the benefits of party organization, ignores possible negative consequences that come from affiliating with a party. Most importantly, affiliating with a party severely limits the space of possible actions elites can pursue (Brewer 1976, ch. 6). It is all too easy to run for an unsuccessful party and consequently be ousted. In that way, affiliating with a party can have damaging consequences to a person's career. This is why some good eighteenth-century politicians like Aaron Burr tried to stay independent.²⁸ At least for Burr, the problem was not just trying to form a party to advance his goals, but also to remain sufficiently independent to not get locked in. In a letter to Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris referred to Burr's behavior during the presidential election of 1801 with the following words: "It is dangerous to be impartial in politics; you, who are temperate in drinking, have never perhaps noticed the awkward situation of a man who continues sober after the company are drunk" (cited in Roosevelt 1898, 330). In Morris' analysis it was party spirit that intoxicated elites and made it difficult to stay independent, not rational calculus.

That joining a coalition brings with it a loss of control becomes clear when we think about party caucuses. Caucuses are dominated by party leaders and put both incumbents and challengers into the role of mere supplicants. That is why the introduction of direct primaries during the Progressive Era "liberated the congressman from the caucus and allowed him to employ proven campaign skills and the resources of office to maximum advantage" (Kernell 1977, 677). More generally, as parties become organizations and take on a life of

28. In the Second Congress (1791-1793), Burr was still independent of parties (Hoadley 1986, 109).

their own, they begin to detach themselves from the elites that built them. While a faction was nothing else but a collection of elites, a party is more than the people who constitute it. An elite who joins a party must therefore plan on giving up (some of his) control.

1.6.4 The Structural-Genetic Approach

The structural genetic approach understands political parties as large social structures that were put together out of smaller pieces of social structure. The task here is to identify those pieces as well as the principles by which they were joined together. Duverger, whose work I cited earlier, also falls into this camp. What he calls “the general articulation of the party” involves a combination of vertical ties of control, horizontal ties of alliance, and nested units that allow the coordination, mobilization, and penetration of local areas by trans-local governing structures (Duverger 1963, 40, 52).

The approach is most fully developed by Martin (2009). Martin contends that parties formed out of horizontal relationships of alliance between elites and vertical patron-client relationships between elites and non-elites. Party formation begins with patronage pyramids, which, when politicized, turn into factions. Politicization occurs when the good elites are competing for becomes indivisible, thus creating a winner-take-all situation which leads to increased competition. Competition, in turn, forces factions to mobilize non-elites, which in electoral democracies happens through the mobilization of voters. Electoral competition further promotes the vertical integration of patron-client relationships (Scott 1972). As non-elites are mobilized and incorporated, factions turn into parties. In the American context, this first happened at the state level. After the Constitutional Convention those state level political formations were then aggregated into a national party system. This happened through a combination of vertical coordination and the horizontal alignment of these state level divisions based on common interest or ideology. Thus, in contrast to the institutional and the rational actor approach, Martin describes a bottom-up process that begins with

small pieces and proceeds all the way up to national parties.

These local forms of organization can be of use to party formation at the federal level in two ways. First, there may be existing forms of social organization that national level parties can incorporate, can latch onto, or can use as scaffolding. In some cases, these may be formal organizations, such as when militia organizations are appropriated for partisan purposes, and partisan organization spreads inside them. In other cases, these may be actual political structures: for example, understandings of where meetings can take place, or committees of correspondence. In still other cases, the state level organization may be wholly informal—sets of tried and true alliances, or relationships of vertical patronage, either of which may be used for coordination. Second, we should not discount the importance of the experience gained in state level politics, experience with certain forms of political action that may then be transferred to a new domain.

Similar ideas about how larger political formations use pre-existing organization as scaffolding appear in other work. For example, both historical (Allen 1965; Koshar 1986) and quantitative (Anheier 2003; Satyanath, Voigtländer, and Voth 2017) studies show how the Nazi party in Germany was able to mobilize followers and establish local chapters by linking the organizational core of the Nazi movement to a diverse network of bourgeois associations ranging from professional associations to student fraternities, singing and animal breeding clubs, and local volunteer fire brigades (see also Berman 1997). In a similar vein, Riley (2010) argues that the rapid rise of civic associations such as mutual aid societies, rural credit organizations, and cooperatives in Europe between 1890 and 1914 was the precondition for the rise of fascism in Italy, Spain and Romania.

1.6.5 The Dynamic-Relational Approach

Finally, there is a dynamic version of the structural-genetic approach. Like the structural-genetic approach it sees political formations like parties as concatenations of smaller forms

of organization, but it pays closer attention to the interactions between the various elements that aggregate into larger social structures. While the structural-genetic account views parties largely as things, the dynamic version thinks about social formations as more fluid. In the context of the formation of political parties, such an approach has been proposed by Slez and Martin (2007). Studying the debates during the Constitutional Convention, the authors argue that political positions (and alignments of those positions, i.e., alliances) emerged only during the debates and were shaped by the sequential progression of the debates. The interdependent moves people made during the debates, where settling one issue either changed the meaning of others or precluded their discussion altogether, was what led to the gradual sorting of the representatives into two groups.

This dynamic approach is more developed in work on other kinds of political formations, most notably civil wars.²⁹ What makes this work particularly useful for my purpose is that its starting point often is a similar puzzle as the one formulated here: Similar people end up on opposite sides and side-taking cannot be explained in advance, but is the end result of a process in which existing relationships and new events pull and push people until some end up on one side while others end up on the opposite side. In other words, it is a process of alignment (dynamic) that is shaped by relations between people, groups, or structural positions (relational).

Bearman (1993), in his work on the transformation of gentry social structure preceding the English Civil War of 1640, argues that the civil war was the result of the decline of local kinship networks as sources of status among the local gentry and the simultaneous spread of national patronage linking local gentry to the national center. These changes created uncertainty about the legitimate bases of social and political action at the local level. In the absence of clear ways for determining status and identity, local gentry turned to their

29. The boundaries between political parties, civil wars, and movements are not always clear-cut. This is especially true in periods like the one I am studying, where formal political institutions are still at an incipient stage.

control over church positions as a new mechanism for organizing social relations. These religious appointments produced a polarized structure in which one group of local gentry with connections to national elites opposed another group of local gentry with connections to national elites. Because this structure was related to religious patronage, it was infused with religious rhetoric. New and more abstract religious ideologies, Puritanism and constitutionalism, were adopted and began to form the basis for action. In an uncertain local context, the gentry embraced religiosity for local ends, and the struggle for local status was increasingly articulated in terms of national religious rhetorics.³⁰

Zhang (2021) develops a similar argument in his study of the Taiping Civil War in nineteenth-century China. He formulates a dynamic-relational model that theorizes relationships as emerging from chains of interaction. The argument proceeds in several steps. First, there was the initial rebellion of the Taipings that began in 1850. The rebellion was met with a countermobilization by the state, which sent troops and commissioners to localities and also strengthened local civilian officials. At the same time, local elites also engaged in countermobilization against the rebels, which led to the formation of local militia groups. Because of the state's countermobilization efforts, existing administrators such as governors now competed with officials of the imperial army and with imperial commissioners. Instead of fighting the rebels, local militia groups used their new strength to fight one another, and this competition among local militia groups, in turn, led to horizontal oppositional alignments within but also across localities. These emerging blocs then aligned with different state actors, who were also competing with one another. Now only one step is missing. The vertical divisions that emerged had to be transformed into a horizontal division between the state and the rebels. Here Zhang's argument is slightly less clear. He argues that depending on their strength relative to their rivals as well as the position of their state patrons, local

30. Similarly, Scott (1977, 221), in an entirely different context, observes that "within the village party labels were appropriated to serve ends that often had only local significance—a significance having little or nothing to do with the parties as national institutions."

militia blocs either became rebels or state agents fighting the rebels. Thus, it was the interactions among local elites, among state actors, as well as between elites and state actors that produced the final alignment, an alignment that could not have been predicted in advance, but was the emergent result of the process just described.

Like Zhang, Walder (2006) also begins with the puzzle that people in similar structural positions ended up on opposite sides during the Cultural Revolution. In his work on the Beijing Red Guard Movement, he argues that under rapidly shifting political conditions new motives and identities can form that are not the product of preexisting differences, but of the political process itself. In this case, factional identities among university students in Beijing emerged from the interactions of students with delegations of party officials during a seven-week period in June and July 1966. During this period, the party sent work teams of national and municipal party officials into schools. These work teams acted differently in different universities. Some defended the existing party apparatus in the university, others attacked the existing power structure and removed the party leadership, while yet others pursued a mixed approach. Often the stances of the work teams shifted over time, thus creating uncertainty as to whether it was better for students to support or oppose the work teams. The division that emerged was one between students who cooperated with the work teams and students who opposed them. Eventually, the work teams were seen as conservative groups trying to protect school officials from radical students—and so were the students that supported them. Thus, the identities between conservatives and radicals that characterized student factionalism were not the product of students' structural positions but, as in Zhang's work, emerged from the interactions with the work teams and the choices those interactions demanded. The important takeaway from this work is that there are situations in which politics and side-taking are so underdetermined that only a detailed historical narrative can help us understand what happened.³¹

31. Walder draws parallels to Tilly's (1964) analysis of the Vendée, the counterrevolutionary uprising in western France during the French revolution. Like Walder, Tilly argues that the existing approaches, which

It is no surprise that similar arguments have been advanced by historians. Returning to the North American context, Countryman (1989, 104) finds that during the American Revolution “[r]ich and powerful men went to both sides, as did the poor, the middling sort, and the weak. [...] every single group must be seen in terms of the other groups that filled its own world. [...] The choices made by rich landlord patriots have to be seen in relation both to the choices of other, different rich men who became Tories and to those of poorer men who wanted to challenge landlord dominion. The same applies to the bearers of every other salient social characteristic. Wealth and poverty, high status and low, power and impotence, and every kind of ethnicity could all be found on both sides of the divide. Abstract characteristics did not count; what counted were the relationships among the people whom they characterized.”

These dynamics are not restricted to large scale political formations. Hagedorn (1988) observes similar dynamics in his study of gang formation in Milwaukee. Milwaukee gangs grew out of rivalries between street corner friendship groups, which then sorted themselves into two camps using the names of Chicago gang alliances (the “People” and the “Folks”). What is interesting is that members of both gangs usually could not remember who initiated the sorting process, but they knew very well that they went to their side because their foes had gone to the other side.

This discussion raises the question what all of these cases have in common to produce these similar dynamics. Walder provides an answer: rapidly shifting political conditions. It is in moments of radical social change that preexisting divisions no longer shape politics and room for the types of endogenous processes discussed here opens up. In addition, in all of these cases competition among equals gives rise to divisions among equals. This is related to a third point. All of these authors describe processes in which the relationship between

had understood the insurrection in class terms, fail because class does not differentiate between the two sides. Instead, Tilly describes how the new regime required Catholic clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the nation, which confronted the clergy with a tough choice that split them in the middle. Thus, a national policy forced clergy to take a stance and nothing in the clergy’s interests or positions determined the choice.

different levels of government plays an important role. Reviewing the literature on civil wars, Kalyvas (2003, 2006) observes that we often find cases in which similar people end up on opposite sides because national divisions are used to settle local conflicts, and the process by which local divisions align with national ones is not determined. Viewed in this way, a national cleavage is “a symbolic formation that simplifies, streamlines, and incorporates a bewildering variety of local conflicts” (Kalyvas 2003, 486), leading to complex webs of alliance on both sides. What we need to understand, then, is how exactly local conflicts align with national divisions.

In the case of the emergence of the first party system in America this problem appears in debates about whether the process proceeded from the top down or from the bottom up, which is where I turn next.

1.6.6 Top-Down and Bottom-Up

Because of the multi-level political system that was established by the constitution, there has always been a question of whether party formation proceeded from the top down or from the bottom up, that is, whether it originated at the national level and then trickled down, or whether the national parties were a concatenation of pre-existing local and state level political formations.

Work that studies party formation in America at the national level tends to describe a top-down process whereby parties first formed in Congress (or in the cabinet and then in Congress) and then reached out into the individual states to mobilize cadres and voters (Dauer 1968; Cunningham 1957; Chambers 1963; Aldrich 1995). Party formation appears as a stalactic process in which parties grew gradually from the national center into states and localities, and the organizational strength of the emerging parties is equated with downward penetration. We encountered this type of argument in the discussion of the institutional and the rational choice approach above. McCormick (1973, 21), for example, writes: “How

these early parties emerged and what they represented remain subjects of controversy. My own view would be that a cleavage first developed within the administration, that is, within the circle closest to the president; that in due course a comparable cleavage manifested itself in Congress; that the formation of these congressional factions encouraged the building of parties in the states; and that the successive contests for the presidency in 1796 and 1800 contributed further to focus and heightened party feelings.” In line with this view, Tinkcom (1950), in his study of Pennsylvania, argues that the issues that aroused the people in the state were national in origin. The party system, according to this perspective, then emerges via the strengthening of initially weak organization, first established at the highest levels of the federal government.

But this view results from a myopic focus on the federal level. Those who focus solely on the federal level assume, by their very research design, that the parties had to trickle downwards, that they would begin as sets of coordinated elites at the highest level, and slowly extend their organizational structures to the local level. Historians who studied politics in the individual states, however, found that in some cases those local structures predated the federal party structure (Formisano 1974). Based on a study of New York, A. F. Young (1967, 578), for instance, argues that “the national party appears to have been no more than a loose amalgam of the state groups.” And he adds that in New York state parties would have existed without a national party system.³² This, then, gives rise to a different way of thinking about the rise of the political party: instead of a federal level structure seeping downwards and penetrating local populations across the land, it is more about knitting together pre-existing pieces. The task for a national level party organizer then consists in aligning the various local oppositional structures in the states into a coherent partisan quilt. This highlights the importance of examining state level party organization.

32. Similarly, Taylor (1995, 258–9) claims that national leaders merely attached themselves to the popular following that local politicians in New York had built.

1.6.7 *My Approach*

The empirical analyses that follow are not so much designed to test these different theories, but rather start from two key insights derived from the previous discussion. First, I take the institutional approach seriously by studying the specific institutional context in which parties formed. I do this through a systematic analysis of the structure of offices political actors competed for. This includes both elective and appointive offices as well as offices from the national all the way down to the county level. The changing nature of this world of offices had important consequences for the structure of the first party system, and analyzing competition for office highlights the political processes that led to the emergence of political opposition. Second, like the rational actor and the structural-genetic approach in its dynamic-relational incarnation, I contend that a theory of party formation in America must provide an account of the actors involved. In this case, an account of political elites. But unlike the rational-actor model, I study elites as socially embedded. I do this not by looking for social master categories as the basis of action, the way a cleavage-based approach might, but, following the structural-genetic approach, I examine the concrete social relations elites were embedded in. The work that exemplifies the vision for this dissertation most closely is that of Padgett and Ansell (1993). In their study of the Medici family in Renaissance Florence, elite political actors appear as deeply embedded in multiple social networks, but they also have room to move. Elite action is not determined by the social and ambiguity is theorized, not relegated to an error term. But because elites are socially embedded and not free-floating, movement is costly and some positions are easier to take than others. Politics in such a world is about the making, the using, *and* the breaking of ties. Ideally, this theoretical perspective will manage to bridge political sociology, political science, and history.

CHAPTER 2

DATA

The empirical analyses that follow are based on a novel dataset that consists of multiple parts: individual-level data on a sample of 763 political elites who were active between 1788 and 1801, including data on party affiliation, age, occupation, and wealth; data on the social networks those 763 elites were embedded in, including kinship, law clerkships, and membership in elite institutions; data on roll call votes in the state assembly between 1788 and 1803; and data on all civil, judicial, and military offices at the county and state level as well as all federal offices held by New Yorkers between 1777 and 1822. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Chapter 3 will draw on data discussed in section 2.1. Chapter 4 will draw on data discussed in section 2.3. Chapter 5 will draw on data discussed in section 2.2. Chapters 6 and 7 will draw on data discussed in section 2.4. Chapter 8 will draw on data discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.4. All chapters use data on party affiliation discussed in section 2.1.2.

2.1 Elites

2.1.1 Sample

To be able to gather detailed information about political elites, I had to create a sample. Elites were selected if they were elected to one of the following offices between 1788 and 1801: state assembly, state senate, governor, lieutenant governor, U.S. House, U.S. Senate. For the state legislature this means sessions 12 to 25. For Congress it means sessions 1 to 7. For governor and lieutenant governor it includes the elections of 1789 to 1801. In addition, I included everyone who was elected to the Continental Congress in 1788, the Ratifying Convention in 1788, the State Convention in 1801, or the Electoral College in 1792, 1796, and 1800.

I focused on elective positions because there are good reasons to think that they are the most relevant for a study of party formation. Above I discussed that party formation is about the systematic mobilization of non-elites and this primarily takes place in elections. Elective offices also make it easier for us to see actors' party affiliation as they run on party tickets or leave traces of their party preferences in their legislative behavior, which is often recorded in legislative minutes. In addition, it was important to get both federal and state elites. This allows me to escape the limited view of many studies which focus on important national elites and gives me a sample that is broad enough to examine to what extent parties had reached into the sphere of minor elites. Including the state assembly and the two conventions, whose members were elected at the county level, further allows me to cover elites from all regions of the state. This remedies the issue that too much attention has been given to the Hudson Valley in the political historiography of New York. Finally, the 1788 and 1801 conventions are important milestones in the constitutional history of the state. This sampling strategy gave me a total of 763 elites.

For each person in the sample, I sought to obtain the following information: party affiliation, age, occupation, wealth, college education, slave ownership, and membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. I go on to explain each of these in turn.

2.1.2 Party Affiliation

At the time of my study, when parties were not yet formally organized, party affiliation was wholly informal. Absent membership lists or other ways to systematically link political elites to parties, historians have relied on party tickets, often published in newspapers, attendance at nominating meetings, and personal correspondence, to identify the party an elite affiliated with. I obtained information on party affiliation from the *A New Nation Votes* database (see section 2.4), from biographical sources, and from the accounts of New York historians. Every time a person was associated with a party, I recorded that party. People who only affiliated

with the Federalist party were coded as Federalists (“F”). People who only affiliated with the Anti-Federalist or Republican party were coded as Anti-Federalists/Republicans (“A/R”). People who affiliated with both sides during their careers were coded as switchers (“S”). There was considerable continuity between the Anti-Federalists and the Republicans in New York, justifying the choice not to differentiate between the two.

In addition, I made use of the elections to the Council of Appointment. The members of the Council were elected by the assembly, which chose from among the pool of elected senators.¹ Every assemblyman openly nominated four candidates and those with the most votes were elected. The choices of each assemblyman were recorded in the assembly journals. This information was used to predict party affiliation as follows. Every time an assemblyman selected at least three senators of the same party, I assigned him to that party. If throughout his career in the assembly he was assigned to both parties using this procedure, he was coded as a switcher. Comparing these predictions to the data discussed above, I find that 93% of the Federalists and Republicans are correctly classified. Using this procedure, I then predicted the party affiliation of those for whom I did not already have it, but I never altered the party affiliation of those who had already been assigned a party. Predicting party affiliation based on voting behavior gave me data for an extra 102 people.

Using the procedure just described, I was able to find information on party affiliation for 670 of the 763 elites in the dataset (88%). 342 of them are Federalists, 251 are Anti-Federalists/Republicans, and 77 are switchers. The remaining 92 individuals were coded as having no party affiliation.

I also obtained the party affiliation for people who were active after 1801. These data come exclusively from the *A New Nation Votes* dataset. Adding this information, I was able to obtain data on party affiliation for 3550 individuals (670 plus an additional 2880 who are not in the sample). In analyses that are restricted to the 1790s, I will make use of the first

1. I will take a closer look at these elections in chapter 6.

set of party affiliation data only. Analyses that go beyond 1801 include the second set.

Note that labeling people as switchers may be somewhat misleading. Some were true switchers. They strongly affiliated with one party before switching sides. John Williams of Washington County is one of them. Adler (1976, 45) quotes an “outraged constituent” who complained about Williams’ switching sides: “Your defections, Sir, has not only destroyed the Republican Interest in Washington County but it gives your former inveterate enemies in that County an opportunity to persecute your former bosom friends.” Others, however, may be better characterized as independent or undecided. Yet others may have run on tickets for both parties without being clearly identified with one of the two sides. In any case, the important point is that eliminating these individuals from both parties produces less ambiguous party categories.²

2.1.3 Age

Data on year of birth and death were obtained from genealogy websites and other genealogical sources. I was able to identify the birth year for 639 of the 763 elites (84%). A comparison of missing data to party affiliation suggests that there is no bias with regard to Federalists and Republicans (see table 2.1). In both parties, 16-17% have missing data. For switchers, only 6.5% is missing. People without a party ID are more likely to have missing data, which makes sense given that having no party affiliation is likely related to political insignificance.

2.1.4 Occupation

Occupational information was obtained from a range of biographical sources, county and town studies, as well as secondary literature. Job titles were grouped into the following eight categories: landowner, merchant, lawyer, other professional, capitalist, farmer, mechanic,

2. Naturally, one might wonder if the number of switchers went down over time. I examine this in chapter 8.

	Age data		Occupation data	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
A/R	211 (84.1%)	40 (15.9%)	146 (58.2%)	105 (41.8%)
F	285 (83.3%)	57 (16.7%)	213 (62.3%)	129 (37.7%)
S	72 (93.5%)	5 (6.5%)	50 (64.9%)	27 (35.1%)
none	71 (77.2%)	21 (22.8%)	36 (39.1%)	56 (60.9%)
Σ	639 (84%)	123 (16%)	445 (58%)	317 (42%)

Table 2.1: Missing data for age and occupation

and tavern-keeper. Table 2.2 summarizes the coding scheme and lists examples for each occupational category. Note that a person can fall into one or multiple of these categories (e.g., when he is both a large landowner and a lawyer). Table 2.1 examines if there are any systematic differences between Federalists and Republicans with regard to missing occupational data. No such differences are identified.

2.1.5 Wealth

Data on wealth was obtained from the *Tax Assessment Rolls of Real and Personal Estates, 1799-1804* held by the New York State Archives (record series B0950). Legislation enacted in 1799 required that real and personal property be assessed and taxed. The hand-written assessment forms, which cover the years from 1799 to 1804, are organized by county and town and contain, among other things, the name of the possessor, a description of the real estate (e.g., farm), the value of real estate, the value of personal estate, the total assessed value, and the amount of state tax to be paid. Ancestry.com has used the assessment rolls to create an online database that allows one to search for individuals using their name and location. If a match is found in the database, one is directed to the page in the original

Category	Job Titles
Landowner	landowner, landlord, landholder, plantation owner
Merchant	merchant, trader, businessman, accountant, (iron, ...) seller/dealer, mill owner, factory owner
Store keeper	store/shop keeper
Lawyer	lawyer, attorney, counsellor at law
Other professional	doctor, physician, surgeon, medicine, teacher, clergy, reverend, deacon, printer, publisher, editor, writer, newspaper owner, bookstore owner
Capitalist	speculator, surveyor, conveyancer, banker, land agent, land operator, investor, contractor
Farmer	farmer, farm owner, yeoman, freeholder, agriculture
Mechanic	mechanic, manufacturer, (shoe, chocolate, sail, ...) maker, carpenter, cartman, potter, manager of an air furnace, craftsman, butcher, tailor, grocer, hatter, fruiterer, stone cutter, inspector of leather, maker, smith, pewterer, tanner, upholsterer, shipwright, wheelwright, painter, mason
Tavern keeper	tavern owner, inn/hotel keeper

Table 2.2: Occupational codes

handwritten documents on which the name appears (Ancestry 2014).

I obtained tax data for a sample of 50 Republicans, 50 Federalists, and 50 switchers. Because many people owned property in multiple towns and even multiple counties, they appear more than once. For each person-county-town combination I extracted the tax data for at least two years and then averaged across years to get one value for each person-county-town combination. I then summed the real and personal property for each person in two ways. First, I combined the property of all locations in which the person appeared. Second, I used only the property in the primary location (the place where the person lived and usually the place where he owned most personal property). This reduced the wealth of people who own land in multiple towns and counties, but it also reduced the chance of conflating two different people from different places who have similar or identical names.

2.1.6 *College*

I collected data on whether the person went to college, which college he went to, and the year he graduated (or, if this was not available, the year he entered college). This information has been obtained from biographical sources as well as lists of graduates that have been published by some colleges such as the *General Catalogue of Princeton University* (Princeton University 1908).

2.1.7 *Slave Ownership*

Data on slave ownership comes from the *New York Slavery Records Index*. I used the first name, last name, and the first letter of the middle name (if any) to look up every person in my elite dataset in the index. I then obtained every search result for 1790 and 1800. These data are based on the 1790 and 1800 Census. I used county information to make sure I had found the right person. I used the county the person held offices in as well as the county he was born in, died in, or resided in. Changes in county boundaries were taken into account.

2.1.8 *The Society of the Cincinnati*

I obtained the names of the New York members of the Society of the Cincinnati. The Society of the Cincinnati is a fraternal society that was founded in Fishkill, NY in 1783 by officers who had served in the Continental Army (and Navy). The list of the New York members was obtained from the website of the New York State Society of the Cincinnati (New York State Society of the Cincinnati 2022). The names in this list were matched to my database using a procedure I describe in detail in section 2.4. I subsequently went through all potential matches and checked them by hand.

2.2 Social Networks

The second part of the dataset consists of social network data for the sample just discussed.

2.2.1 *Kinship*

The main source for family relationships was the genealogy website geni.com.³ I wrote a computer program that took every person in my sample (see section 2.1) and searched for him on the website, using year of birth and death to increase the accuracy of the results. This, of course, means that I was only able to search for those individuals for whom year of birth and death were available. For each person, I then extracted the name and the date of birth and death for the following kin: father, mother, paternal grandfather, maternal grandfather, up to two wives, father-in-law, and mother-in-law. Unfortunately, for this early period, the geni.com database is far from complete. Because not all elites could be found on the website, I supplemented these data with information from other genealogy websites as well as a range of historical sources. Marriage dates, which are important to locate kinship

3. Recently, Kaplanis et al. (2018) created a family tree of 13 million individuals using public profiles from the geni.com database, suggesting that geni.com is one of the best available sources for genealogical data. I tested five different websites (WeRelate, Find A Grave, Geni, WikiTree, and Ancestry) on a random sample of ten persons from my dataset. Geni.com was the most complete.

relations in time, were often not listed on geni.com. I performed another online search to obtain those data. To provide a sense of the completeness of the data, in the end I was able to identify the father of 62% of those elites for whom I had the date of birth (54% of all 763 elites). This number could be further increased by more genealogical research, but it is unlikely that this would generate many additional kinship relationships. This is because politically important families and individuals tied to politically important families are likely already included in the data, as they have a high chance of appearing on websites such as geni.com.

Missingness is clearly non-random in this case. The more important an individual, the more likely he is to appear in the data. Given Americans' interest in the military service of their ancestors, it is also plausible to assume that people who served in the military, especially during the revolutionary war, have a higher chance of being recorded on a genealogy website. Given that the two parties do not show strong differences in terms of the elite status of their members, including membership in the Society of the Cincinnati (see chapter 3), however, we do not have strong reasons to suspect that missingness is systematically related to party affiliation. Still, because of the incompleteness of the data, I will mostly refrain from structural analyses like the calculation of centrality and instead treat the kinship network more like a collection of ego-centric networks.

Instead of creating a network that contains all the names that appear in the data, I use the information to check for kinship ties between the elites in my sample. The following kinds of relationships are constructed from the data: son/father, grandson/grandfather, brother, cousin, nephew/uncle, son-in-law/father-in-law, brother-in-law, nephew-in-law/uncle-in-law, and same father-in-law. I also calculated a start and end date for each tie. For relationships based on descent, start dates were calculated as the larger of the two birth years plus 16. This ensures that people were tied when they have a family relationship *and* are both politically relevant. End dates were calculated as the smaller of the two death years. For marriage-

based ties such as between a son-in-law and a father-in-law, the start date was set to the year of the marriage. If data on the year of the marriage was missing, I imputed it using the median age in the data for the first marriage (25 years) or the median age for the second marriage (40 years). In total, the kinship network consists of 205 people and 291 ties.

2.2.2 College

Using the college data discussed above, I coded a tie between two elites if they went to the same college and graduated no more than two years apart, ensuring that their time at college overlapped.

2.2.3 Law Clerkships

In the late eighteenth century, most American lawyers received their education by first attending college, usually for three years, and then clerking for an established attorney (Surrency 1964, 132). Unfortunately, although it is believed that all law clerks in New York signed apprenticeship agreements, Hamlin (1939, 53) mentions that only two have been discovered for the colonial period. There is also no systematic source of clerkship data for the time after independence, at least not until far into my study period.⁴ Therefore, apprenticeship ties between lawyers cannot be constructed from these records, but must instead be extracted from biographical material. While this prevents me from conducting a systematic analysis of clerkship relations, I was still able to identify 83 of these clerkship relations (as well as 11 relationships that were based on a shared law practice).

4. After the State Supreme Court adopted rules regarding clerkship and admission to practice as an attorney in 1797, those types of records begin to be available (New York Supreme Court 1991).

2.3 Roll Calls

The third part of the dataset contains roll call votes in the New York State Assembly from 1788 to 1803. Roll call votes were obtained from the assembly journals for sessions 11 (which met from January to March 1788) through 26 (which met from January to April 1803). Not all votes in the assembly were taken by roll call. In order for the yeas and nays to be recorded in the proceedings, a roll call had to be called by a legislator and seconded by another one. In cases where a roll call was taken, the names of those who voted yea and nay were listed under “For the Affirmative” and “For the Negative,” respectively.

Optical character recognition was used to turn the original journals into machine readable text files. Because of the poor quality of the original prints, this process introduced a large number of errors. With the help of a team of research assistants, the spelling of the names of those who voted was checked for every vote. A computer program then went through the text of each session, located all roll calls, and extracted the names of the legislators who voted yea and nay. There were a few instances in which the exact same name appeared under “For the Affirmative” and under “For the Negative.” Those names were deleted. The program then matched the names to a list of legislators who were elected in the respective session.

This process was not perfect. Three types of errors are possible. (1) An assemblyman who cast a vote is classified as not having voted. (2) An assemblyman is classified as having voted when he did not cast a vote. (3) An assemblyman who voted yea (nay) is classified as having voted nay (yea). To calculate error rates, three votes from each of the 16 sessions were checked. The error rates for each vote were calculated as follows. The error rate for (1) was calculated by counting the number of errors and dividing it by the number of people who voted, because each person who voted was at risk of being falsely classified. The estimated error rate is 1.2%. The error rate for (2) was calculated by counting the number of errors and dividing it by the number of legislators who were elected to that session, because each

legislator was at risk of being falsely classified. The estimated error rate is 0.1%. There was not a single case of (3).

The result of this process were separate legislator-vote matrices for each session. These matrices were subsequently turned into legislator-legislator distance matrices using the simple matching distance (the number of votes where legislators disagreed divided by the total number of votes that they both participated in) for each legislator pair. Those distance matrices form the bases for most analyses in chapter 4.

Following standard practice, I deleted legislators with very few votes (less than 20) as well as highly lopsided roll calls (less than 2.5% voted with the minority). A very small number of votes does not allow good estimates of a legislator's ideal points in the W-NOMINATE models used to examine the structure of voting. Near-unanimous votes contain little information about a legislator's location in the space. To be consistent, those legislators and roll calls were deleted for all analyses presented in chapter 4. Note that this procedure never deletes more than four legislators and never more than one vote per session. The number of legislators and roll calls for each session are given in table 2.3.

For each legislator I obtained information on the county he was elected in and the senatorial district to which the county belonged at the time, taking into account that counties sometimes changed districts. Because the legislators who appear in the roll call data are a subset of the elites in my sample, I am able to also merged in the data on party affiliation, occupation, and year of birth discussed above.⁵

5. It is important to note that although historians may have occasionally used an assemblyman's voting behavior to judge his party affiliation, in most cases voting and party affiliation are separate measures. Most information on party affiliation was derived from election ballots, election returns printed in newspapers, as well as the personal correspondence between political elites. It is an empirical question to what extent party affiliation measured in this way correlates with voting in the assembly.

Session	Number of legislators			Number of roll calls	
	elected	≥ 1 vote	≥ 20 votes	all	minority $\geq 2.5\%$
11 (Jan 1788 – Mar 1788)	63	60	56	59	59
12 (Dec 1788 – Mar 1789)	64	62	62	117	116
13 (Jul 1789 – Apr 1790)	65	63	63	127	126
14 (Jan 1791 – Mar 1791)	65	62	60	45	45
15 (Jan 1792 – Apr 1792)	70	68	67	58	58
16 (Nov 1792 – Mar 1793)	69	68	65	87	87
17 (Jan 1794 – Mar 1794)	71	70	69	72	71
18 (Jan 1795 – Apr 1795)	70	68	66	100	100
19 (Jan 1796 – Apr 1796)	70	69	65	62	62
20 (Nov 1796 – Apr 1797)	108	107	105	77	76
21 (Jan 1798 – Apr 1798)	108	107	105	182	182
22 (Aug 1798 – Apr 1799)	108	107	106	193	193
23 (Jan 1800 – Apr 1800)	108	107	106	108	108
24 (Nov 1800 – Apr 1801)	107	107	103	103	103
25 (Jan 1802 – Apr 1802)	106	102	101	99	99
26 (Jan 1803 – Apr 1803)	99	97	94	87	87

Table 2.3: Number of legislators and roll calls for each session

2.4 Political Offices

The fourth part of the dataset comprises all civil and military offices at the county and state level as well as all federal offices held by New Yorkers covering a time period of over 40 years (1777-1822). The 1777 state constitution established popular elections—with varying property-based suffrage restrictions—for governor and lieutenant governor, both chambers of the state legislature, as well as the U.S. House of Representatives. (U.S. senators and presidential electors were chosen by the state legislature.) Almost all appointive positions were distributed by the Council of Appointment, which consisted of the governor and four members of the state senate, one from each senatorial district, who were chosen by the assembly. The Council had the power to appoint all state, county, and municipal officers in the state.

The bulk of the data comes from the minute books of the Council of Appointment. The original, hand-written minute books for 1786 to 1822 are held in the New York State

Archives (series number A1845). The military appointments contained in these books were abstracted in Hastings (1901). I used OCR to digitize the four-volume book and wrote a computer program to extract each appointment. The civil appointments exist only in the form of the original hand-written minute books. With the help of a team of research assistants, I coded up 3,100 pages of appointments. Each page was coded by two coders who subsequently compared their results to eliminate discrepancies. After that, a final data cleaning step was performed.

Volume one of the minute books, containing the minutes from 1777 to 1786, was destroyed in the State Capitol fire of 1911. Fortunately, an index to this volume had been prepared, which is held in the New York State Archives (record series A1846). The military appointments listed in the index exist in digitized form and were added to the dataset. The original hand-written lists of civil appointments exist on microfilm and have not yet been added, leading to left-censoring for some civil positions (those that did not also appear in the datasets discussed below) before 1786.

I supplemented these data with information from the *A New Nation Votes* database (NNV) and from the *New York Civil List* (NYCL). The NNV database (American Antiquarian Society 2007) was created by Philip Lampi and published online by the American Antiquarian Society and Tufts University Digital Collections. It is a collection of electoral returns for 1787 to 1825 and contains the names of all candidates (both successful and unsuccessful) as well as the number of votes received, in most cases down to the town-level. In some cases, it also contains data on the party the candidate affiliated with. The majority of the data were obtained from election returns published in newspapers.⁶ While the scope of the database is impressive, some electoral returns, especially early ones and those for assembly elections, could not be located so that not all elections are included.⁷ People

6. Certified election returns were sent to the state capital and also kept at the county clerk's office of each county. Most of the returns that went to the capital were lost in the 1911 New York State Capitol fire at Albany. Some of the records kept in the counties survive.

7. Fortunately, because the NYCL contains the name of everyone who had been elected, those gaps could

with less than 30 votes were deleted. Often these scattered votes were cases where a name was misspelled on a ballot or a ballot was placed in the wrong ballot box. At the time, voters wrote the names of candidates on a ballot and then deposited it into ballot boxes. Misspelled names were counted as for a different candidate. Because there was one box for each office, what sometimes happened was that a voter put the ballot into the wrong box, as when a ballot for the assembly was put in the state senator box (Philip Lampi, personal correspondence).

The NYCL (Werner 1891) includes lists of officials who were “connected with the public service of the State.” Those lists include the most important appointive offices from the minutes of the Council of Appointment, federal appointive positions held by New Yorkers, as well as all elective positions at the state and federal level. I coded all offices from 1777 to 1822 and added them to the dataset.

Each entry in the resulting dataset contains the name of the person appointed/elected, the name of the office, and the date of the appointment/election. It consists of approximately 50,000 civil appointments; 65,000 military appointments; 7,000 instances in which someone was elected; and 5,000 instances in which someone ran for an elective office and was not elected. In addition, for every person I created two additional “offices” called “Source” and “Sink” that capture the beginning and end of a person’s career. The Source appears the year before the first real office, the Sink the year after the last real office. In some analyses I use these “offices” to examine entry into and exit from the system of positions. A list of all offices is provided in table 2.4. None of the analyses operate with this original list, however. To make things manageable, I collapse them into fewer office groups.

Figure 2.1 shows the number of offices by year, separately for county, state, and federal offices. The vast majority of offices are at the county level, and the number of offices in the dataset increases dramatically over time.

be filled. But note that the NYCL does not include unsuccessful candidates.

Type	Office
Federal appointive	Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Assistant U.S. Superintendent of Finance, Collector of Customs, Consul to Lima, Judge of the Superior Court of the Territory of Orleans, Minister to France, Minister to GB, Minister to Russia, Minister to Spain, Naval Officer of Customs, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Surveyor of Customs, U.S. Attorney, U.S. Circuit Court, U.S. District Court, U.S. Inspector-General (US Army), U.S. Marshal, U.S. Postmaster-General, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, U.S. Secretary of War, U.S. Senate, U.S. Superintendent of Finance, U.S. Supreme Court, Vice President
Federal elective	Continental Congress, Electoral College, U.S. House
State appointive	Assistant District Attorney, Associate Justice NY Supreme Court, Attorney General, bank/company director, Canal Commissioner, Chancellor, Chief Justice NY Supreme Court, Clerk of the Assembly, Clerk of the State Senate, commissioner to perform duties of a judge of the supreme court, Comptroller, Council of Appointment, court clerk, District Attorney, Examiner in Chancery, health official, Indian affairs, Inspector of Prison, Judge of the Court of Probates, Master in Chancery, President Provincial Congress, President of the State Senate, Secretary of State of New York, Speaker of the Assembly, State Printer, state prison official, Superintendent of Common Schools, Superintendent of Salt Springs, Surgeon, Surveyor-General, Treasurer
State elective	Assembly, Colonial Assembly, Constitutional Convention 1788, Constitutional Convention 1821, Convention 1801, Council of Safety, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Provincial Congress, Senate
County	Assistant Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, Chief Marshal, Clerk of the Market, Collector, Commissioner of Deeds, Commissioner of Excise, Commissioner of Loans, Commissioner of Taxes, commissioner other, construction, Coroner, County Clerk, County Judge, Culler of Staves and Heading, Director of the Poor, Inspector of Goods, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Justice of the Peace, Judge of the Justices Court, Marine Justice, Marshal, Mayor, Police Clerk, port worker, Postmaster Albany, Postmaster New York, Postmaster Poughkeepsie, Public Notary, Recorder, Register of Deeds, Sheriff, Superintendent of the Salt Works, Surgeon, Surrogate, Vendue Master/Auctioneer, Water Bailiff, weights/measures, Wreckmaster
Military field	Brigadier General, Captain, Colonel, Ensign, Lieutenant, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Major General
Military staff	Adjutant, Adjutant-General, Aide-de-camp, Assistant Commissary General, Assistant Commissary of military stores, Brigade Inspector, Brigade Judge Advocate, Brigade Paymaster, Brigade Quartermaster, Chaplain, Commissary-General, Commissary of military stores, Commissioner of military stores, Division Inspector, Division Judge Advocate, Division Paymaster, Division Quartermaster, Judge Advocate, Judge Advocate General, Paymaster, Paymaster General, Quartermaster, Quartermaster General

Table 2.4: List of offices in the dataset

Note: During the study period, New York changed the title of the person commanding a regiment several times. He was sometimes called colonel, sometimes lieutenant colonel, and sometimes lieutenant colonel commandant. I combined all of these ranks into that of “colonel.”

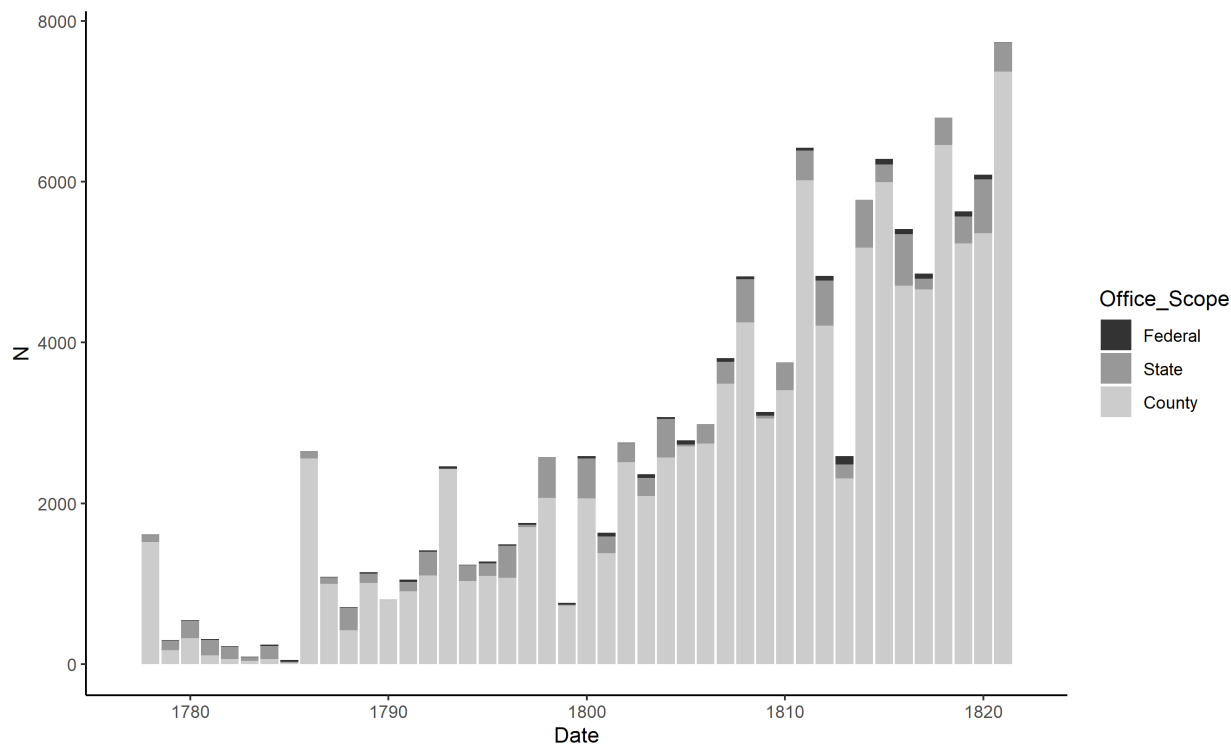


Figure 2.1: Histogram of the number of offices by level of government

Offices were joined into careers by matching similar names and assigning them the same person ID. This was not an easy task. Exact name matching could not be performed because the same name often appeared in different spellings. Frequently, names were recorded based on their phonology and not too much attention was given to the exact spelling. For example, the name McCracken might appear as McCracken, MacCracken and McCracken. Thus, the challenge was to combine those names that were similar and likely referred to the same person without also combining similar names that clearly referred to two different persons.

I used fuzzy matching to combine similar names. For each pair of names, I calculated the weighted Levenshtein distance using the weighted-levenshtein library in Python. The Levenshtein distance calculates distances between strings based on how many operations (deletions, insertions, and substitutions) it takes to transform one string into another. Names that are similar require few operations, names that are different require many. The weighted-levenshtein library allowed me to assign character-specific costs to those operations. For

example, while I chose a default substitution cost of 1, I set the cost for substituting “s” for “f” to .2. This was done because the old “s” looks very similar to an “f” which caused the OCR program to introduce errors. I also set low costs for deleting “h” and “e” because in many cases phonetically these letters make no difference so that names frequently appear with and without them.

Before names were matched, I dealt with two very common deviations. First, names with double letters frequently also appeared using only one of those letters. Second, names with a “ck” frequently appeared using only a “k.” If there were two names that differed only in those ways but were otherwise identical, the less frequent version was replaced by the more frequent one.

For each name, the matching algorithm returned the name with the lowest distance, given that the distance also remained below a certain threshold. The matching procedure was aided by the fact that most offices are associated with a county or an electoral district. This information was used when searching for matches. To match names, I began with the NNV database because it contained unique IDs for each person. Starting with these IDs, I then matched the remaining names that did not have an ID to those with an ID in a three-step process. In the first step, I used exact matching, meaning that the two names had to be identical and they had to be associated with the same county or district. In the second step, I took all names that still had no ID and used fuzzy matching with county information, meaning that people were only matched to those who ran in the same county or district. This procedure was complicated by the fact that during my time period many new counties were being created by breaking them off from old ones. I took this into account by looking for matches not only among names associated with the exact same county, but also those associated with the parent county or the offspring county. For instance, in 1791 Herkimer County was formed from parts of Montgomery County. If the focal person was associated with Herkimer, I looked for matches both in Herkimer and in Montgomery. In the third

step, I dropped the county/district requirement. Because I ignored location information when searching for matches, I used a more rigorous distance threshold than in step 2. The thresholds used in steps two and three were determined by many rounds of trial and error. I chose those that seemed to give good results by matching names that clearly referred to the same person without tying names together that clearly referred to different people.

Finally, all those names that still had no ID at the end of this process were clustered based on name similarity. First, each name without an ID was compared to all other names that had at least one capital letter in common, appeared in the same county or the parent county or the offspring county or had no county information at all. Comparing the focal name only to a subset instead of all names saved time, but the subset was still generous enough to include all possible matches. If the distance was below a certain threshold, a tie was created between the focal name and the match. Those ties were then turned into a weighted network, before using the `weakly_connected_components` function in the NetworkX Python library to extract connected components of the network. Names who ended up in the same component were then assigned the same ID.

This procedure generated a total of almost 55,000 unique individuals. Figure 2.2 shows a histogram of the number of offices for each person. Of the 55,000 individuals in the dataset, almost 30,000 held only a single office. Among those who held more than one office, the average person held four offices, the median person three. Because the sample described in section 2.1 was created on the basis of offices contained in the office dataset, it forms a subset of the individuals that appear in the office dataset.

2.5 Other

The shapefiles used to produce maps of the state of New York were obtained from the *Atlas of Historical County Boundaries* (Thorne 2010).

County-level statistics on population density, the proportion of slaves, and the sex ratio

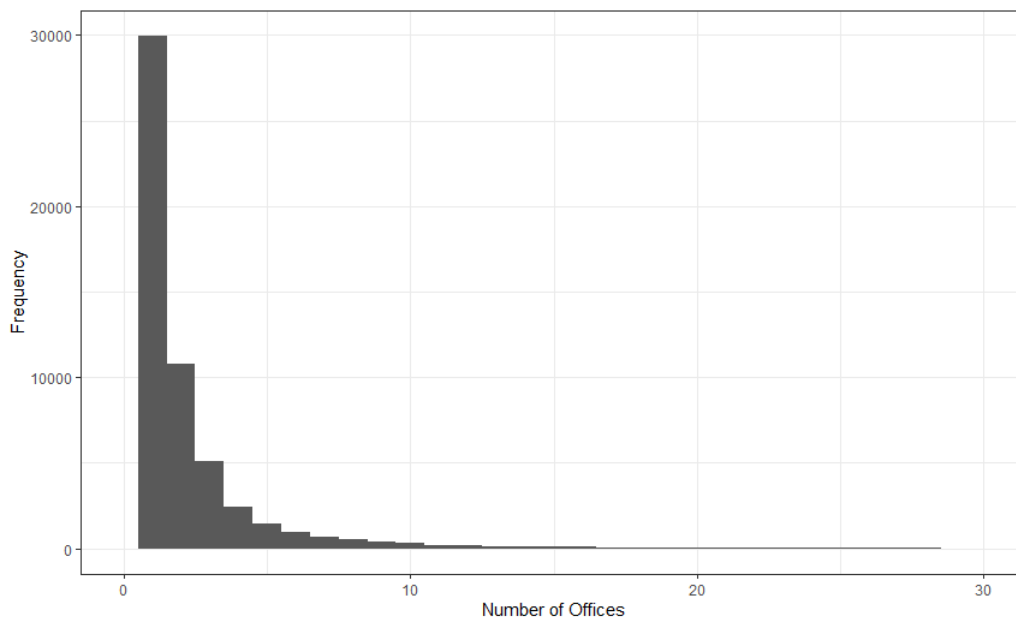


Figure 2.2: Histogram of the number of offices by person

are based on the 1800 U.S. Census and were obtained from Craig and Weiss (1998).

The number of electors for each county can be found in Hough (1857, ix). Electors are divided into those owning freeholds worth £100 and over, those owning freeholds worth between £20 and £100, and those who were not freeholders but who rented tenements worth at least 40s.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICS IN THE ABSENCE OF SOCIAL CLEAVAGES

3.1 Introduction

My critique of the cleavage approach in the previous chapter rested on the claim that New York's Federalists and Republicans do not map onto social categories like class, generation, or region. Given the state of the literature on the first American party system, this claim about no difference will appear implausible to many readers. In fact, there seems to be a widespread understanding that the Federalists were disproportionately older elites and more tied to commerce, while the Anti-Federalists and then the Republicans were more likely to be of modest background, more tied to agriculture, and more inland than the Federalists. Wood (2009, 167–8) characterizes the Republicans of the first party system as follows: “In the South the Republican opposition to the Federalist program was largely the response of rural slaveholding gentry who were committed to a nostalgic image of independent freeholding farmers and fearful of anti-slavery sentiments and new financial and commercial interests emerging in the North. In the North, however, the Republican party was the political expression of new egalitarian-minded social forces released and intensified by the Revolution. [...] But most supportive of the Republican party in the North were those enterprising and rapidly increasing middling people resentful of the pretensions and privileges of the entrenched Federalist elite.” Thus, Wood suggests that in the North, including New York, the first party system can be understood as a horizontal divide between old elites and rising new men.

Goodman's (1968) study of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives between 1797 and 1804 supports this argument. While, taking the House as a whole, the representatives of the two parties looked relatively similar in social terms, this was largely due to the elite status of the Republicans from the South. In the North, the party system picked

up a horizontal division. For the middle states, which include New York, Goodman finds that 72% of the Federalists had a father with a high-ranking occupation compared to only 33% of Republicans, and 83% of the Federalists held a high-ranking occupation themselves compared to 63% of Republicans.¹

As we saw in chapter 1, Fischer (1965) and Buel (1972) come to a different conclusion. They agree that the Federalists were somewhat more likely to be professionals and wealthy merchants, to have a college education, and to receive support in the commercial centers, while the Republicans were more likely to be farmers and receive support from rural regions. But to them this was a matter of degree. There was no social cleavage that sufficiently mapped onto the party system to justify an explanation that rests on the existence of pre-existing interest constellations. As Fischer (1965, 201) put it, “[t]here was surely no simple symmetry of political conviction and economic interest, no clean-cut cleavage between wealth and poverty, between agriculture and commerce, between realty and personalty holdings, between city-dwellers and countryfolk, between northern merchants and southern planters, between subsistence and commercial farmers, between hardy frontiersmen and effete easterners, between orthodox Calvinists and other religious groups.”

These statements refer to the national parties. But what about the parties in the individual states? It could be that the further we expand the set of political actors to include lesser elites, the stronger the differences become. And many of these lesser elites will be found in state politics. P. Goodman (1964), for example, argues that in Massachusetts Republicans recruited their leadership from people excluded from positions of power, while Federalists came from an entrenched social elite. New York showed a similar division during the 1780s as the discussion of Main (1974) and Countryman (1989) in chapter 1 showed. Fox (1965) further suggests that those same dynamics that shaped politics in New York during the 1780s

1. These numbers suggest that the degree of upward mobility may have been an important difference between the two parties. Although they looked rather similar when they were elected to the U.S. House, they may have started from very different places. Unfortunately, I will not be able to test this hypothesis as I have no data on father's occupation. But I will return to this issue from a different angle in chapter 7.

were still relevant after the Constitutional Convention.

A close look at the lives of political actors in New York, however, raises serious doubts about accounts that try to understand why some elites sided with the Federalists and others with the Republicans based on their membership in socio-demographic categories. Take Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, for example. The early lives of these two men could barely have been more similar. Born in 1755 and 1756, both grew up without their parents, went to college, one to Columbia, the other to Princeton, and studied law. Both served as aides to Washington during the Revolutionary War and both were able to climb the social ladder due to their military achievements. As lawyers they met in the courtrooms of New York, as politicians they later met in President Washington's cabinet. Despite these similar paths, Hamilton went on to become a leading Federalist and Burr a leading Republican. Their common story ended when Burr shot and killed Hamilton in a duel in 1804. Similarly, John Jay and Robert R. Livingston also started on a common path. They became close friends during their college years at Columbia, Jay married into the Livingston family in 1774, and in 1777 both worked together in drafting the first state constitution. And yet, the two men ended up running against each other in the gubernatorial election of 1798.

This phenomenon is not unique to the old families or to national elites. Similar stories can be told about New York's frontier region. For example, William Cooper of Otsego and John Williams of Washington County were both born in the early 1750s, both married into wealthier families which introduced them to elite circles and got their careers off the ground, both became extremely wealthy through land speculation on the frontier, and both were considered the "fathers" of their respective counties. But while the physician John Williams became a leading Republican before switching to the Federalists in 1795, William Cooper, a former wheelwright, had always been an ardent Federalist (although he contemplated switching to the Republicans at one point).

In addition to the fact that in New York similar people ended up on opposite sides,

politics brought about strange inversions. For instance, when in the early 1790s, shortly after their switch to the Republicans, the Livingstons began to sue some of their tenants over land titles, the Federalists saw an opportunity. The party that is commonly thought of as representing New York's elites now started to incite and mobilize the Livingston tenants by promising them to secure their land titles (Brooke 2010, 219).² To give another example, during the first session of the Fourth Congress, Representative Edward Livingston criticized William Cooper for his lack of gentlemanly manners. What is puzzling about this scene is not that the aristocrat Livingston ridicules the frontier land speculator Cooper. What is puzzling, at least if we apply general notions of who belonged to the two parties, is that Livingston was a Republican and Cooper a Federalist.

These examples are not mere exceptions. They represent a general pattern of New York politics that did not escape contemporary observers. "After living a dozen years in New York," wrote Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, "I don't pretend to comprehend their politics. It is a labyrinth of wheels within wheels, and it is understood only by the managers" (cited in Benson 1961, 3). Many decades later scholars of New York politics like A. F. Young (1967) still puzzle over this high degree of complexity that makes it impossible to tell a simple story about party affiliation in the state. In New York, they argue, the first parties were not based on preexisting socio-economic master categories like class or region that were simply activated and mobilized into parties.

Thus, there appears to be no consensus on whether pre-existing social differences were constitutive of the two parties in New York, and, if so, what those differences were. Drawing on novel data on 763 office-holders who affiliated with one of the two parties during the 1790s (described in section 2.1), in this chapter I examine the social characteristics of the Federalists and Republicans in more detail, focusing on occupation, wealth, age, slave ownership, college

2. Interestingly, one of the Federalists involved was Ambrose Spencer, a lawyer who a few years earlier had been hired by the Livingston family for these very law suits and whom the Federalists were able to lure to their side.

education, and membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. I also examine regional patterns of party strength using county-level election data (described in section 2.4).

3.2 The Two Parties in Social Terms

The data I have gathered allow me to test whether there were systematic differences between those who affiliated with the Federalists and those who affiliated with the Republicans. The results are presented in table 3.1.³ I begin the discussion with the occupational composition of the two parties. I decided to calculate the proportion of people who had a particular occupation based on the entire sample, not just those for whom I had occupational data, and to show the proportion of those without an occupation separately. I believe this is the right thing to do because missing data is likely to be non-random and to affect some occupations more than others.⁴ A look at the occupational data shows that the class distinctions of the 1780s had largely disappeared. Merchants make up the largest occupational group among both parties with 20%. Lawyers are the second largest group. Here we see a small difference between the two parties with lawyers having a stronger representation among Federalists (18 to 14%). The same is true for other professions such as teachers or doctors (8 to 4%). Farmers, on the other hand, make up a larger share among Republicans (12 to 8%). As far as landowners, store keepers, mechanics, and tavern keepers go, we see only minor differences. The occupational group of capitalists, which comprises bankers, company directors, but also land speculators, also shows strong similarities (9 to 8%). Thus, while we see some expected tendencies, the differences are small and make clear that both parties were based

3. While table 3.1 shows data for Republicans, Federalists, switchers, and those without a party ID, the discussion focuses on the differences between Federalists and Republicans. Switchers, who appear to be a distinct group of social heavy weights, are the subject of chapter 8.

4. This decision only affects the occupational composition of each party; it does not effect differences between the parties in a significant way, because, as table 2.1 shows, missingness is largely unrelated to party affiliation. For example, if I calculated the proportions based only on those for whom occupational data is available, the proportion of merchants would jump from 20% for both parties to 34% for Republicans and 33% for Federalists.

on important cross-cleavage alliances (at least in occupational terms). There seems to be no obvious class-based story to party affiliation.

A similar picture emerges when we look at wealth. For both parties the mean of the wealth distribution is larger than the median, indicating right-skewed wealth distributions. Skewness is particularly strong for the Federalist, who have among their ranks some very wealthy individuals. But differences between members of the two parties are small. While the average (median) Republican owned \$5,764 (\$4,700) in real property, the average (median) Federalist owned \$7,168 (\$4,055). As far as personal property is concerned, the values are \$912 (\$516) and \$863 (\$593), respectively.⁵

Slave ownership, which some have used as a measure of wealth (Gould 1996), but might more accurately reflect differences in the economy between different regions, also shows no major differences. 34% of the Republicans and 37% of the Federalists owned slaves. On average, Republicans owned 1.30 slaves and Federalists 1.25.

It is well-known that generational change often shapes political developments (e.g., Padgett 2010). Given that during the post-independence years politics was shaped by a conflict between the old elites and new men who only recently had entered political office, we may find it plausible to expect that the Federalists were older than the Republicans. Yet, this is not confirmed by the data. In fact, the Republicans tend to be slightly older than the Federalists with a median birth year of 1749 as compared to 1755 for the Federalists. Comparing these numbers to the mean birth year, we see that the distribution for the Republicans is slightly skewed to the right, meaning that there are some very young Republicans who pull the average birth year up, while the distribution for the Federalists is skewed slightly to the left, meaning that there are some very old Federalists who pull the average birth year down.

5. For reference, the wealthiest person in the sample is John Thurman of Washington County whose real property was assessed at \$67,000. To put this into perspective, in 1799 the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury received an annual salary of \$5,000 (L. D. White 1965, 295). The Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court received an annual compensation of \$4,000 and \$3,500, respectively (Pfander 2008). A teacher earned \$450 in 1797, a shoe maker less than \$300 in 1800 (Wright 1889, 60, 62). \$5,000 in 1800 is equivalent to \$100,000 in 2020.

	A/R (N=251)	F (N=342)	S (N=77)	none (N=94)
A: Occupation				
Landowner	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.02
Merchant	0.20	0.20	0.23	0.13
Store keeper	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.04
Lawyer	0.14	0.18	0.29	0.03
Other professional	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.10
Capitalist	0.09	0.08	0.10	0.06
Farmer	0.12	0.08	0.05	0.11
Mechanic	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.03
Tavern keeper	0.03	0.04	0.00	0.03
Missing	0.42	0.38	0.35	0.61
B: Wealth				
Mean real property (all)	\$5,764	\$7,168	\$12,327	
Median real property (all)	\$4,700	\$4,055	\$5,587	
Mean personal property (all)	\$912	\$863	\$1,750	
Median personal property (all)	\$516	\$593	\$845	
Mean real property (primary only)	\$3,647	\$4,293	\$6,221	
Median real property (primary only)	\$2,250	\$2,609	\$4,029	
Mean personal property (primary only)	\$667	\$674	\$1,302	
Median personal property (primary only)	\$335	\$431	\$595	
C: Slave ownership				
Mean number of slaves	1.30	1.25	1.57	1.09
Proportion with at least one slave	0.34	0.37	0.43	0.29
D: Age				
Mean date of birth	1751	1753	1751	1752
Median date of birth	1749	1755	1752	1752
E: Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati				
Proportion with membership	0.08	0.09	0.13	0.07
Proportion with membership, incl. honorary	0.09	0.11	0.19	0.07
F: College				
Proportion with college education	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.06

Table 3.1: Social characteristics by party

Note: “Mechanics” was a term used for manual laborers such as shipwrights, carpenters, cartmen, butchers. “Switchers” are people who were affiliated with both parties throughout their life. Because some elites owned property in multiple towns and even multiple counties, data on wealth are shown separately for all locations and for the primary location only (see section 2.1.5).

Finally, we might imagine that other measures of elite status help us explain differences between the Federalists and the Republicans. Here I look at two such markers: college education and membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. Again, differences are small. With 12 to 9% the proportion of people who went to college is slightly higher among the Federalist. So is the proportion of those who were members in the Society of the Cincinnati (9 to 8%). But again these numbers do not indicate a categorical difference between the two parties. The similarity in terms of membership in the Society of the Cincinnati is particularly surprising. The Society was created by senior military officers to take the centralized strength of the Continental Army to civilian life. Republicans in particular worried that it would undermine republican government (Hünemörder 2006, 44). What these results show is that New York's elite, as defined by membership in elite institutions, was divided. No party was completely detached from these elite institutions, and both likely used them to form political alliances.

So far, I have examined the two parties in the aggregate. Yet, this might hide important temporal and regional variation. The finding that the political divisions of the 1790s look different from those of the 1780s suggests that there may be important generational changes. Further, westward expansion of the political system during the 1790s (more on this below) suggests that there may be important regional differences. I here examine both of these hypotheses by splitting both parties in terms of generation and region. Following Fischer (1965), generation is defined by birth year with 1760 as the cutoff between an old and a young generation. Counties were divided into old and new ones as follows. All counties that were created in or after 1788 were assigned to the new region, with one exception: I assigned Rensselaer County, which in 1791 was broken off from Albany and contained some of the old aristocratic families, to the old region. People were then assigned to each group based on their primary county, defined as the county in which they held most of their offices between 1788 and 1801. The results are shown in tables 3.2 (for generation) and 3.3 (for region).

	old generation		young generation	
	A/R (N=148)	F (N=192)	A/R (N=63)	F (N=95)
A: Occupation				
Landowner	0.11	0.06	0	0.08
Merchant	0.21	0.20	0.17	0.24
Store keeper	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.07
Lawyer	0.11	0.17	0.27	0.31
Other professional	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.16
Capitalist	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.06
Farmer	0.14	0.11	0.10	0.05
Mechanic	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.04
Tavern keeper	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Missing	0.43	0.37	0.25	0.21
B: Wealth				
Mean real property (all)	\$6,830	\$10,201	\$4,272	\$3,113
Median real property (all)	\$4,682	\$5,301	\$4,237	\$2,508
Mean personal property (all)	\$1,134	\$1,058	\$561	\$727
Median personal property (all)	\$517	\$741	\$471	\$284
Mean real property (primary only)	\$4,488	\$5,937	\$2,379	\$1,941
Median real property (primary only)	\$2,395	\$3,060	\$1,786	\$1,933
Mean personal property (primary only)	\$864	\$833	\$389	\$558
Median personal property (primary only)	\$411	\$513	\$250	\$284
C: Slave ownership				
Mean number of slaves	1.58	1.71	0.86	0.68
Proportion with at least one slave	0.34	0.46	0.30	0.24
D: Age				
Mean date of birth	1744	1747	1766	1765
Median date of birth	1745	1750	1766	1765
E: Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati				
Proportion with membership	0.11	0.13	0	0.03
F: College				
Proportion with college education	0.07	0.12	0.19	0.18

Table 3.2: Social characteristics by party and generation

Note: Generation is defined by year of birth. Following Fischer (1965), everyone born in 1760 or after belongs to the young generation.

	old region		new region	
	A/R	F	A/R	F
	(N=174)	(N=237)	(N=77)	(N=105)
A: Occupation				
Landowner	0.08	0.06	0.03	0.05
Merchant	0.17	0.21	0.24	0.20
Store keeper	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.08
Lawyer	0.16	0.20	0.09	0.13
Other professional	0.03	0.06	0.08	0.13
Capitalist	0.11	0.07	0.05	0.10
Farmer	0.10	0.06	0.18	0.11
Mechanic	0.09	0.06	0.03	0.03
Tavern keeper	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.07
Missing	0.42	0.39	0.42	0.36
B: Wealth				
Mean real property (all)	\$6,371	\$8,230	\$4,763	\$5,702
Median real property (all)	\$5,292	\$4,464	\$4,469	\$2,761
Mean personal property (all)	\$1,029	\$920	\$720	\$783
Median personal property (all)	\$570	\$699	\$435	\$457
Mean real property (primary only)	\$4,209	\$5,111	\$2,721	\$3,165
Median real property (primary only)	\$2,275	\$3,136	\$2,115	\$1,933
Mean personal property (primary only)	\$814	\$847	\$424	\$434
Median personal property (primary only)	\$473	\$513	\$259	\$261
C: Slave ownership				
Mean number of slaves	1.74	1.64	0.33	0.38
Proportion with at least one slave	0.45	0.47	0.12	0.15
D: Age				
Mean date of birth	1749	1752	1754	1757
Median date of birth	1748	1753	1751	1760
E: Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati				
Proportion with membership	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.08
F: College				
Proportion with college education	0.10	0.14	0.08	0.08

Table 3.3: Social characteristics by party and region

Note: Counties in the old region are New York, Kings, Queens, Suffolk, Richmond, Westchester, Albany, Dutchess, Columbia, Rensselaer, Ulster, Orange. All other counties belong to the new region.

While there are certainly striking differences between the two generations, differences between parties within generation remain small. The young generation has a larger share of lawyers and other professionals—something to be expected in an increasingly professionalized polity. It also appears less wealthy, although this is easily explained by the fact that wealth was measured at one point in time (around 1800) and that older people tend to be wealthier than younger people. Slave ownership and membership in the Society of the Cincinnati have dropped in the young generation, while the proportion of people with college education has doubled. Thus, a new generation of office-holders seems to have appeared that looked different from the old one, but as far as differences between the two parties are concerned, they are minor. That being said, some of the differences we saw before have been accentuated by breaking the sample up into two generations. Old Federalists are less likely to be landowners than old Republicans, while in the young generation landowners had completely disappeared from the Republican party. Further, there is a larger difference in the proportion of mechanics and farmers in the young generation, with both having a higher representation among Republicans. As far as college education is concerned, the Federalists had a higher proportion in the old generation (12 to 7%), while in the younger generation the Republicans had caught up (18 to 19%).

When we look at region, we find a similar pattern: There are significant differences between old and new counties, but only minor differences between the two parties within regions. The share of farmers is larger in the new counties while that of lawyers is smaller; people in new counties own less wealth and fewer slaves; and they are less likely to be members in the Society of the Cincinnati and to have attended college (although the difference is small). As far as differences between the Federalists and the Republicans are concerned, the general takeaway is that although some of the differences we saw at the state level have been accentuated in this analysis, there are still no strong patterns that would indicate that an explanation based on social characteristics can work. Age, perhaps, being an exception.

In the old counties, the median Republican was born in 1748, while the median Federalist was born five years later. In the new counties, the median Republican was born in 1751, while the median Federalist was born nine years later. This means that while the median Republican in the new region was 25 at the time of the revolution, the median Federalist was only 16 (and thus 28 when New York ratified the U.S. Constitution). We need to be careful not to make too much of this difference, but there appears to be a generational division in the new counties such that younger people went to the Federalists while older ones sided with the Republicans. More work is necessary to understand why this happened. One possible explanation is that those who were able to control local offices in the old counties because of their ties to governor George Clinton became Republicans, and that the creation of new counties was driven by their challengers in order to create new career opportunities for themselves.⁶

In sum, these findings contradict what is usually assumed about the two parties. Based on a study of hundreds of partisans, I find no systematic differences between the Federalists and Republicans of the 1790s in terms of their socio-demographic composition. These findings expose the difficulties of applying the cleavage approach to party formation in New York. Party elites were not systematically recruited from different social groups. Instead, we see a vertical division between Federalists and Republicans that cuts through most social groups. Of course, it is always possible that I have looked at the wrong social categories. Maybe others such as ethnicity or religion provide the answer. But it is likely that if we were to examine them, we would reach a similar conclusion (see A. F. Young 1967, 404–5 on religion).

6. This also fits the finding that the Federalists were strong in the western part of the state when it became politically important in the 1790s.

3.3 Region

One of the great cleavages that often maps onto political party divisions is that of region. Even in small countries, region reliably proxies certain differences of interest—coastal communities hoping to shift the burden of tax onto agriculturalists, inland communities hoping to avoid land taxes and instead preferring duties, and so on and so forth. In larger polities, these differences may be magnified, and in a country like the United States, populated by successive streams of immigration with different geographical and temporal locations, geography is even more likely to be bound up with the cleavages that will be politicized. In Slez’s (2020, 235) words, “politics and policymaking are intrinsically spatial—a fact that it is all but guaranteed in a democratic system where representation is based on geography.”

Of course, democratic contestation may be used to adjudicate these sorts of conflicts of interest and of position across area. But as Slez and Martin (2007) point out, a functioning democratic polity often requires an inattention to regional cleavages. Of course, in a multi-party system, certain regions may be represented by particular parties (think of the CSU in the German state of Bavaria), and even in a two party system, one party may lock in a dominance in one region, such as the Democratic Party in the days of the “solid South” (Key 1984). However, this system was only stable because the South was still dwarfed by competitive party politics in the North, Center, and West. Outside of such a case, in a two-party system, too high a correlation between region and party, at least if the regions involved are contiguous, is likely to lead to fracture or civil war, as the case of the American civil war shows. It is not that such regional issues need to be wholly suppressed, but that they neither be too closely aligned with party, nor more important than those issues that divide the parties so that the party system appears irrelevant.⁷ If this is accomplished, then,

7. This is the case of the breakdown of the American party system in the 1850s. The issues on which the Whigs and the Democrats attempted to compete (mostly turning on internal improvements, if they were not simply vague appeals to goodness, honesty, and the common man) were dwarfed in importance by the regional conflict over slavery and the admission of new states—issues that the party leaders had desperately attempted to suppress (Holt 1999; Foner 1995).

in a two-party system, both parties will have some credible showing in multiple regions, if not in every single locale.

We can imagine that parties that are rooted in the interests of elites who dominate one region, and are used to compete against elites in a different region, will try to court some of the disaffected in their rivals' area. The result of cumulative acts of such alliance formation is a competitive party system in multiple states. The same is true at the state level: Elites based in one county, fighting those with different interests in a different county, have an incentive to try to make alliances with actors who are sufficiently powerful to make trouble for those elites' enemies. Just as there is no real room for politics where region completely determines political sides at the federal level, so one cannot have a true modern party system if there is no competitive partisan activity at the local level.

Before turning to election data to investigate the regional strength of the two parties in New York, it is useful to see if there are any underlying socio-demographic divisions that show a regional pattern. Unfortunately, systematic data on the economic and social character of different regions does not exist. Usually, we would turn to the U.S. Census for this type of information, but even though the first census was conducted in 1790, the early censuses asked only a handful of questions, most of which do not serve as a useful measure of social categories. All that is available is county-level data on population density, the proportion of the population that was enslaved, and the sex ratio, which I obtained for 1800. Population density shows a regional pattern (figure 3.1). The counties east of the Hudson River between Albany and New York City have high population densities, while the rest of the state is sparsely populated. The ratio of men to women for each county (figure 3.2) is perhaps not very informative, but it may reflect important settlement patterns with counties that have a higher share of men being those that are younger and where people have moved more recently. And, in fact, it tends to correspond to population density with sparsely populated areas having a higher sex ratio. Finally, figure 3.3 shows the proportion of slaves in each county.

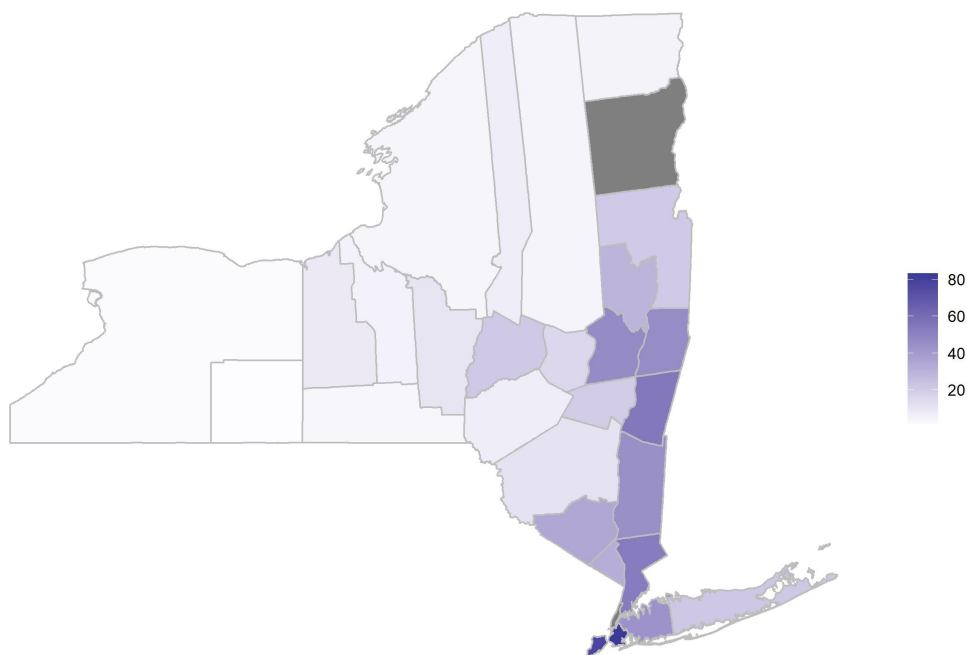


Figure 3.1: Population density

20,613 slaves lived in New York in 1800, 3.5% of the total population (as compared to 42.3% in South Carolina). Slaves were concentrated in Kings County (where one quarter of the population was enslaved), and also somewhat in Richmond (15%), Queens (9%), Ulster (9%), and Rockland (8%). Thus, if the issue of slavery had been politicized, it would have produced a rough regional division between the slave-owning southern part of the state and the rest—a regional pattern that, incidentally, corresponds to the division between Federalists and Anti-Federalists at the time of the Constitutional Convention when the Federalists came from New York City and its surrounding counties and the Anti-Federalists won everything north and west of Westchester as well as Queens and Suffolk (see chapter 1).

Let me now turn to the election data. I will here focus on assembly elections. Assembly elections take place at the county level (instead of larger electoral districts), they occur annually (instead of every three years as in the case of gubernatorial elections), and the larger number of candidates (compared to gubernatorial elections or state senate elections)

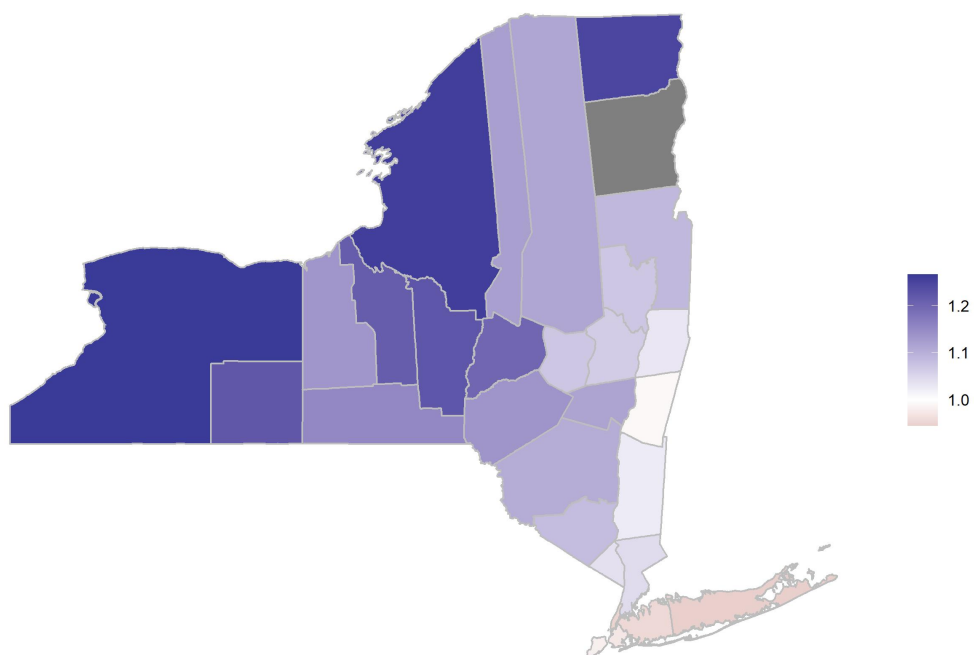


Figure 3.2: Sex ratio

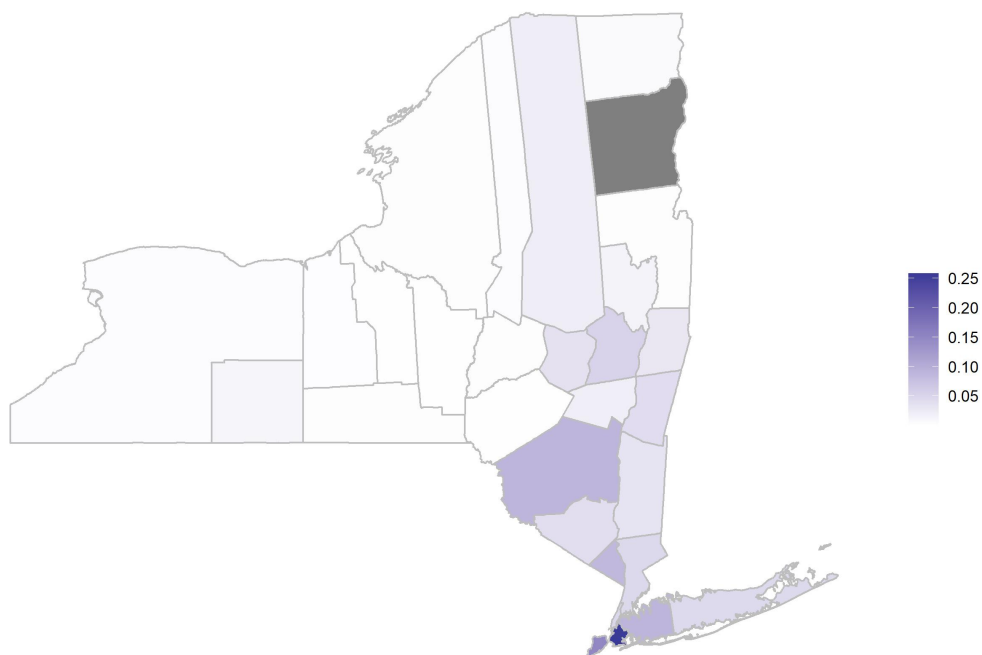


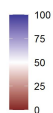
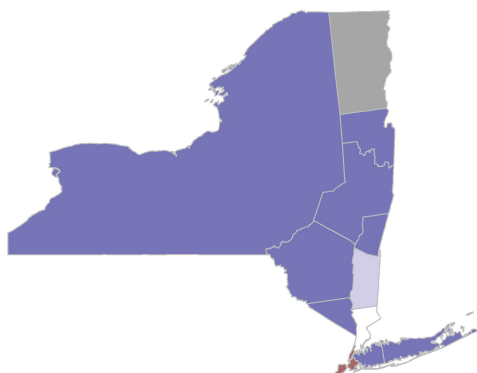
Figure 3.3: Proportion enslaved

increases the chance that we are measuring voter preferences for parties rather than for individual candidates. Figure 3.4 presents electoral maps for six select years: 1788, 1789, 1792, 1796, 1800, and 1801. (Electoral maps for all elections between 1788 and 1802 can be found in appendix A. Appendix B provides electoral maps for the gubernatorial elections that took place between 1789 and 1801.) Ideally, we would want to compare the vote share received by Federalist candidates to the vote share received by Republican candidates. But while many of the early electoral returns that contain those numbers exist, there is considerable missing data. What I *do* have for each county are the people who were elected. The maps therefore show the share of seats captured by each party.

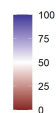
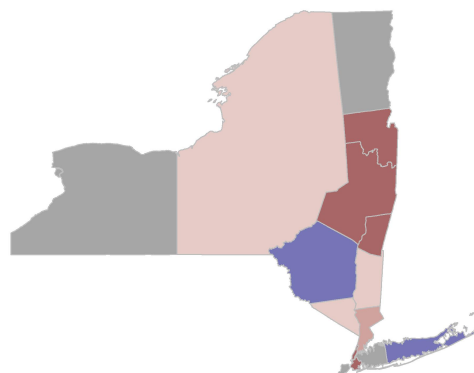
The 1788 map shows the same regional division that we saw for the Constitutional Convention (both elections took place at the same time). Only one year later, however, the landscape had changed completely. After the ratification question had been decided, the Federalists took over many of the counties north of New York City. And with the exception of the election to session 16 in 1792, they managed to control the state legislature until the end of the 1790s. Not even events like the Jay Treaty, a treaty negotiated by Federalist John Jay between the United States and England which for a brief moment caused an outcry among the revolutionary population of New York, could disrupt Federalist dominance.

Due to a reapportionment based on the 1795 New York State Census, the political system expanded in session 20. The number of senate seats rose from 24 to 43, the number of assembly seats from 70 to 108. Most new seats were created in the western and northern part of the state, thus shifting the center of political gravity in those directions. Almost 80% of those who were elected for the first time to the assembly in session 20 were Federalists. Federalists also dominated the senate elections. Of the 23 senate seats that were contested that year, they took all but one (A. F. Young 1967, 466). The map for the 1796 election shows how far-reaching the dominance of the Federalist party was at that time. Now even Ulster, the home county of George Clinton, had thrown its support behind New York's

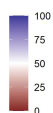
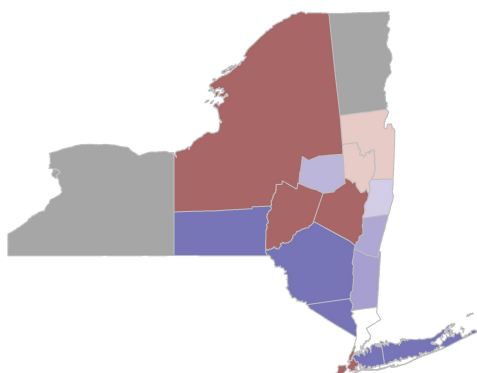
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 12 (1788)



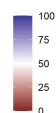
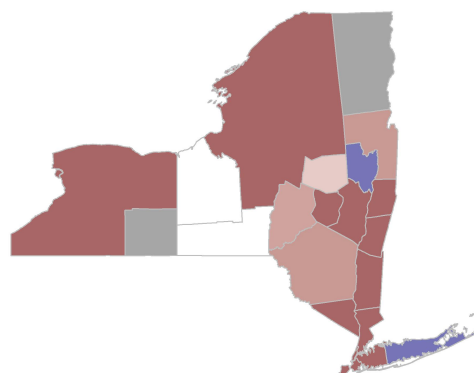
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 13 (1789)



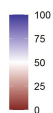
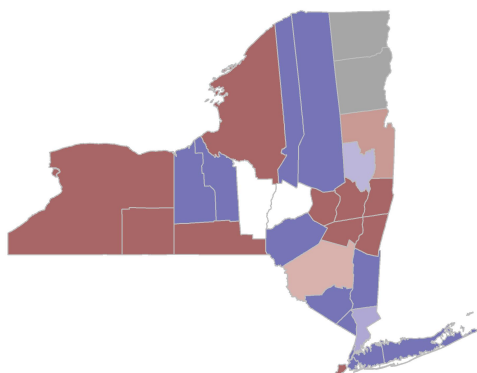
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 16 (1792)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 20 (1796)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 24 (1800)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 25 (1801)

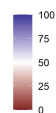
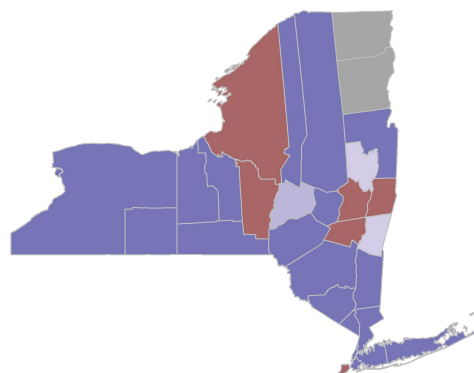


Figure 3.4: Party strength by county, assembly elections, select years

Federalist party.

Only two years later, the pattern began to change again, and in 1800 the Republicans were able to capture most of the seats in the assembly. What is interesting is that at the height of party divisions in that year, region was no longer a main dimension along which elites divided. By 1800, the southern part of the state had become Republican and new pockets of Federalist support had emerged in and around Albany as well as in some western counties.

Figure 3.5 presents these data in a way that makes temporal changes easier to see. For each election, it shows the share of seats captured by the Republican party. In addition, it also shows the vote share received by the Republicans for those elections for which this information is available. Two things stand out: There was competitive partisan activity in most counties and, related to that, most counties did not vote consistently for one party. Only four counties voted for one party throughout the entire time period: Suffolk voted Republican, Richmond, Oneida, and Chenango voted Federalist. Eight counties (Kings, Rensselaer, Herkimer, Ontario, Otsego, Schoharie, Steuben, Onondaga) voted for the Federalists until session 23 or 24 when the Republicans took over the assembly. New York shows a similar pattern although it started moving towards the Republican party earlier around session 21. Albany went the other direction and turned from a center of Anti-Federalism into a Federalist stronghold. Ten other counties (Columbia, Dutchess, Montgomery, Orange, Queens, Saratoga, Ulster, Washington, Westchester, and Tioga) bounced back and forth between the two parties. Thus, we see shifts in the two commercial centers of the state (although in opposite directions) as well as in counties that had traditionally identified either with the Federalists (such as Kings County) or with the opposition that had formed around George Clinton (such as Ulster County). None of these patterns can easily be explained by regional or economic differences, with the exception that most counties in the western district were

strongly Federalist before switching to the Republican party around 1800.⁸

I will end with a brief look at the elections to the state senate. Figure 3.6 shows the party composition of each of the four senatorial districts over time. A few things stand out. First, the dominance, during most of the time period, of the Federalists in the western district and the Republicans in the middle district. Second, the changes in support in the eastern and southern district. By session 24 (the election of 1800), the Federalists were almost completely pushed out of the middle and southern districts, while the Republicans were pushed out of the eastern and the western districts. Thus, party competition had led to significant shifts in regional party strength.

In sum, it appears that region, either as a meaningful division in itself or as a proxy for underlying socio-demographic divisions, did not structure the party system during the 1790s.

3.4 From Horizontal to Vertical Divisions

The analyses presented in this chapter show that the two parties were not rooted in different social categories, be they economic or social class or region. If we compare these findings to the discussion of New York politics in chapter 1, we see a significant change in the structure of politics between the colonial period and the 1790s. That change can now be grasped more analytically (see figure 3.7).

During the colonial era (figure 3.7, left), politics was characterized by a contest among prominent families for access to power (Wood 1993, 87). These families formed constantly shifting factions that vied for the favor of the colonial governor, the main source of power at the time (Bonomi 1971). Factions were formed through horizontal, often marriage-based alliances with other families as well as vertical, deference-based ties to tenants and other

8. This was different in other parts of the country. Risjord (1978, 68), in his study of Chesapeake politics, observes that “[t]he clash of regional interests was the principal dynamic in the politics of the Chesapeake after the American Revolution.”

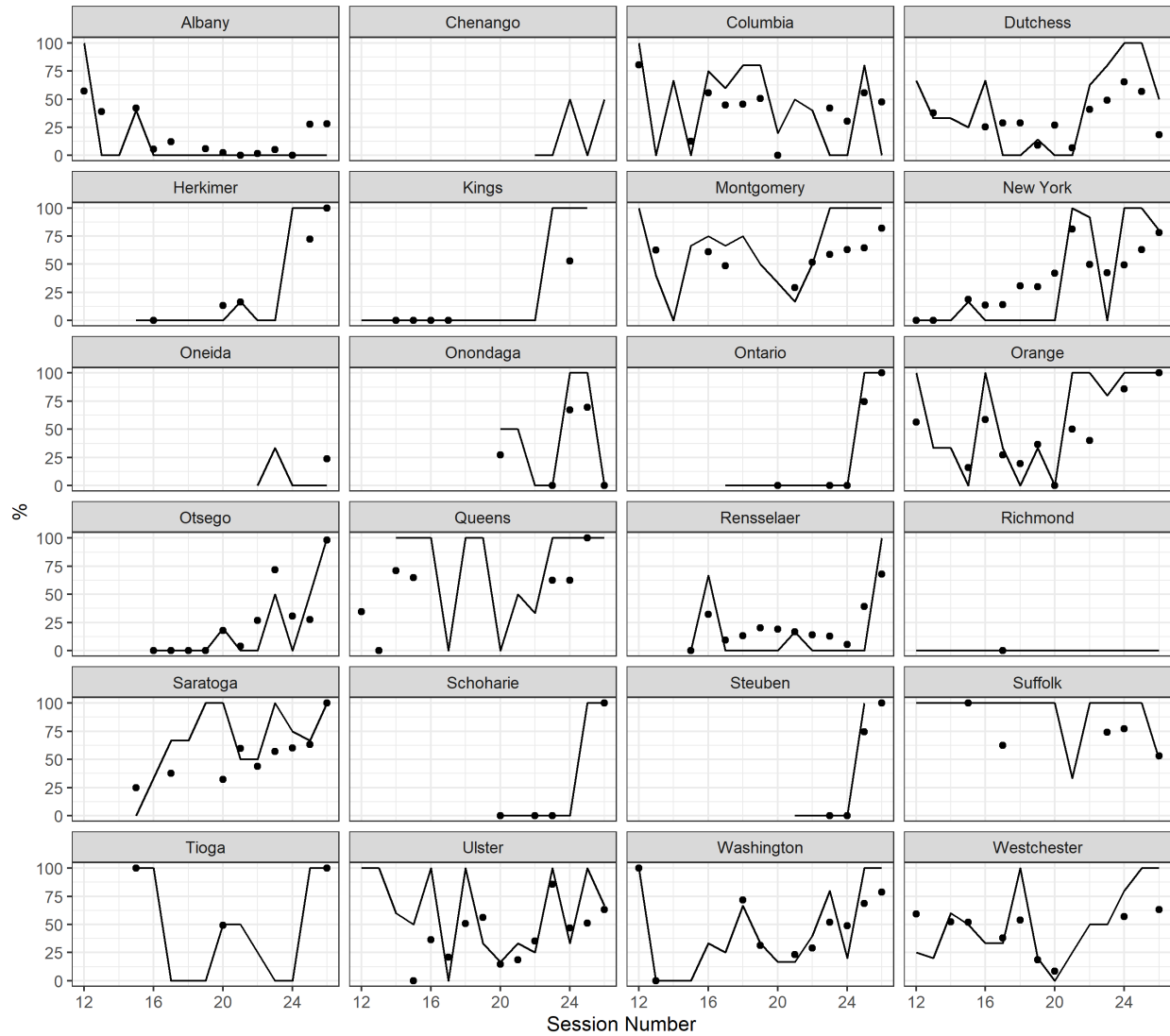


Figure 3.5: Share of seats (line) and votes (points) won by Republicans, assembly elections

Note: Solid lines show the share of seats won by the Republican party. Points show the share of votes received by the Republican party, for elections for which electoral returns exist. Switchers and people without a party affiliation were ignored when calculating these numbers.

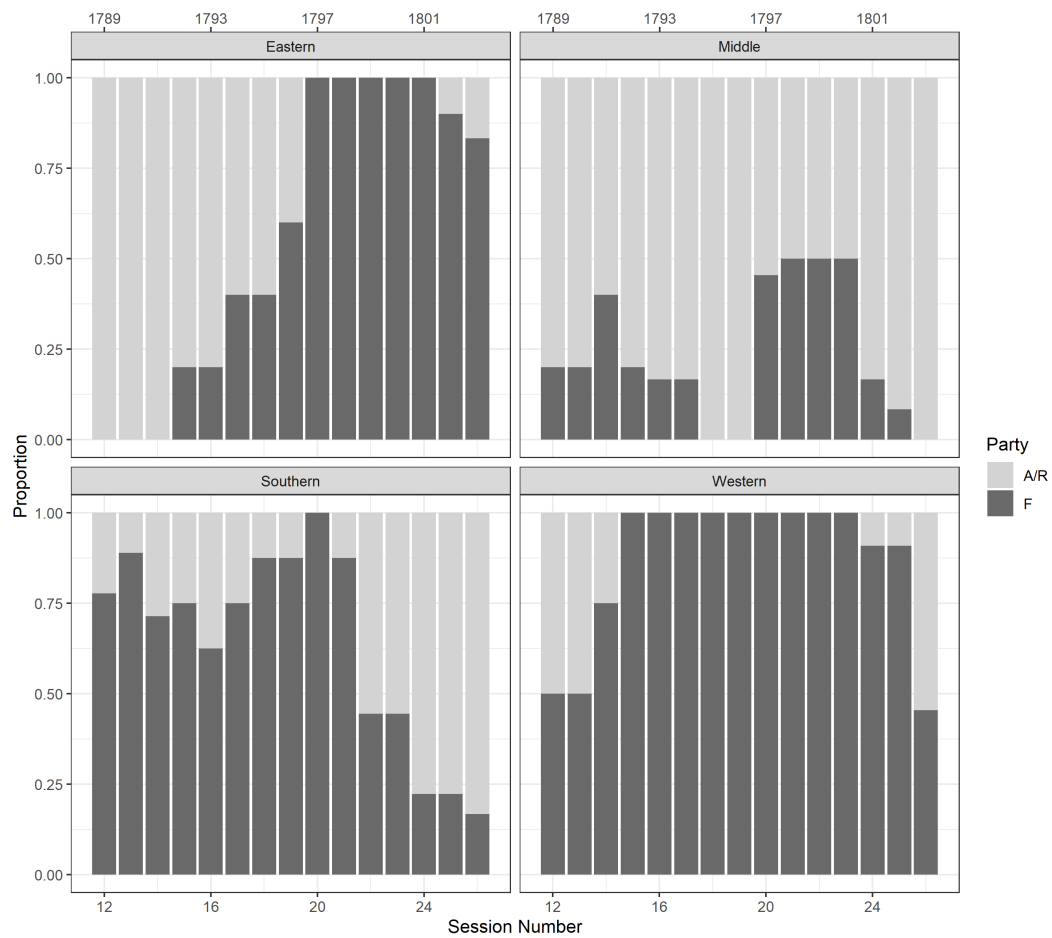


Figure 3.6: Party composition of the State Senate by senatorial district

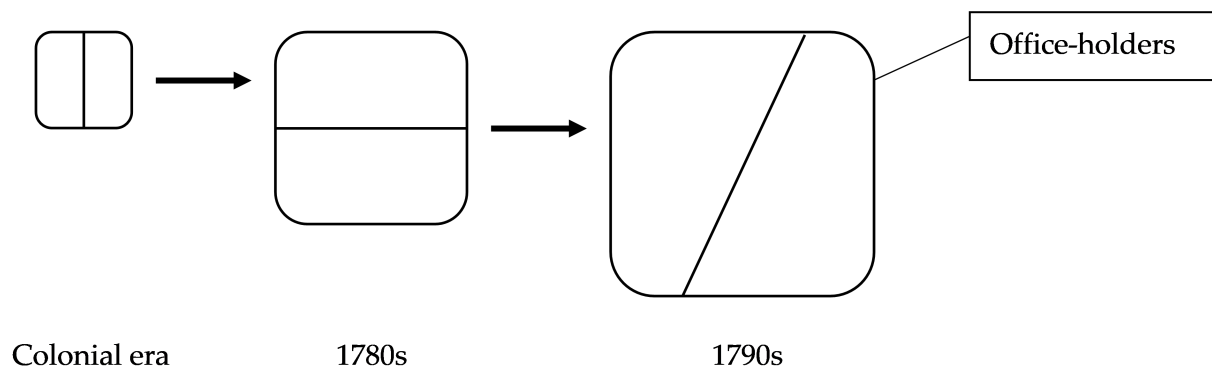


Figure 3.7: Transformations in political divisions among office-holders

followers. The “outs,” those not supported by the governor, were forced into the position of the popular faction as they had to seek power in the assembly by appealing, albeit grudgingly, to voters. Non-elites were still largely kept out of politics; they were neither drawn into the sphere of office-holders nor were they mobilized in large numbers as voters.

The War of Independence altered New York’s social structure. Many Loyalists, including powerful elites, left the state, creating a vacuum that was filled by new men. These men were the product of the revolution. Some rose through their military service, others through speculation in loyalist land, and yet others through their service on the revolutionary committees of safety (Countryman 1989, 198; Brooke 2010). As a result, “The state legislature was full of men new to state power, and though it took time, indeed years, for them to become a coherent bloc, they were from the beginning less than fully amenable to the leadership that the conservatives sought to give them” (Countryman 1989, 195). Those were men like Abraham Yates, who “moved from licking the boots of the grandees to being the prime focus of their fears” (Countryman 1989, 222–223). Between 1782 and 1786, men like Yates joined into a radical alliance that was formed out of three elements: politicians in Albany, Dutchess, and Westchester who challenged the old elites above them in their counties’ social structure; representatives from counties west of the Hudson River who did not belong to New York’s old elite but who also had no one above them against whom they could have rebelled; and radicals from New York City who joined in 1784 after the end of the British occupation. By 1783 governor Clinton had detached himself from the old elites and started to take leadership of this group of new men, which was now dominant in the assembly.

But this is not the story of a rising stratum of people that takes over, turns into the new old guys, and then splits into two competing groups.⁹ This was because New York’s aristoc-

9. For a case that follows this *Animal Farm* story line, see Florence in 1282. Here the popolani/patricians rose to power and overthrew the magnates (with the help of the guildsmen below them). The magnates were prohibited from holding office (and the guildsmen were pushed out). The popolani then split into two factions, the Albizzi and the Ricci.

racy was never pushed out, and during the second half of the 1780s consolidated its power. As new people streamed into the world of politics, in an act of antagonistic cooperation (Sumner 1906; Simmel 1955) elites recognized their similarity, temporarily suspended their disagreements, and joined into an alliance of merchants, landlords, and former Loyalists. In 1785, Robert Livingston wrote to Alexander Hamilton that by “uniting the interests of the Rensselaer, Schuyler, and our family, with other Gentm. of propoerty in the County [of Columbia] in one interest [...] we Carryed this last Election to a man [...] we shall always have the like Success provided we Stick Close to Each other” (cited in Countryman 1989, 264 and Brooke 2010, 62). According to A. F. Young (1967, 75), there “was probably no other point in the second half of the eighteenth century when the great estate holders were more united.” The result was that for a brief moment after the war, New York politics crystallized into a vertical division between the the old elites and new, lesser elites (figure 3.7, middle). In the words of Margaret Beekman Livingston, who in 1779 complained to her son Robert R. Livingston about the taxes that were levied on land by the legislature: “May the Almighty give us Peace, Independance and deliverance from the persecutions of the Lower Class” (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 28).¹⁰

Main (1974), in his analysis of the New York State Assembly during the 1780s, provides the best available data on the social composition of New York’s office-holders. Based on roll call votes, Main identifies two voting blocs—which he labels Clintonians and anti-Clintonians—and then looks at the composition of these voting blocs in terms of their social characteristics. He finds that “the Clintonian group consisted of the following elements: from towns, none; from commercial farms, 25.5 percent; from subsistence farms, 52.9 percent; and from the frontier, 21.6 percent. Among anti-Clintonians, 49.3 percent lived in towns, 40.9 percent in commercial farm areas, and 9.9 percent in subsistence farm regions” (Main

10. Similarly, William Smith, a prominent state legislator during the early years of the state, perceived “sharp Dissentions arising between the Levellers led by [John Morin] Scott & the Few Men of Property” (cited in Countryman 1989, 212).

1974, 147). In addition, 90 percent of the farmers in the assembly were Clintonians. Large landowners, lawyers, doctors, and merchants, on the other hand, almost exclusively sided with the anti-Clintonians or remained neutral. The remaining occupations such as artisans, manufacturers, store and inn keepers were almost equally split. Main found a similar class division in terms of wealth. 2/3 of the wealthy legislators voted with the anti-Clintonians, 1/3 remained neutral. Of those with moderate wealth, on the other hand, 47 percent voted for the Clintonians and only 12 percent for their opponents. Anti-Clintonians were also more likely to be members of elite families and to hold high public offices in the state or at the national level. (There were no strong differences between these groups in terms of religion, age, or national origin.)

A look at the positions these two groups took on political issues further strengthens the interpretation of a horizontal class divide. The Clintonians “became antiloyalists, obtained and kept a tax system favorable to themselves, supported the interests of debtors and strove for legal-tender paper money, usually voted for lower salaries except if a reduction threatened their own per diem or the governor’s income, opposed permanent salaries for judges, preferred a low price for vacant land, tended to demonstrate an antibusiness or antiurban bias, and favored a northern location for the capital” (Main 1974, 143). Their opponents consistently took the opposite position on these issues.

It was this vertical division that shaped the battle over the constitution. Instead of fighting the radicals head on, the old elites sought to change the parameters under which the fight would take place. As they feared that they were being pushed out of state politics, they adopted a nationalist stance and turned to the federal constitution as a solution to their dilemma (Wood 1969). “Nationalism in New York was thus a product of frustrated conservatism” (A. F. Young 1967, 81).

This picture somewhat overstates the horizontal nature of the divisions during the 1780s. Even during the 1780s the old elites enlisted some non-elites into their ranks (including

mechanics in New York City) so that none of the characteristics studied by Main (1974) produced a perfect separation of the two voting blocs. Still, there appears to be a qualitative difference between the dynamics that shaped politics before and after 1788. The Constitution rearranged the political field, and the political division that emerged during the 1790s began to approach a vertical one (figure 3.7, right). That the political world was now a different one can be seen in the biographies of many New Yorkers. Thomas Tillotson, who in 1783 had complained to his brother-in-law Robert R. Livingston that the “democratical part of the government is always encroaching,” was now a Republican. And so was Livingston. Both had joined the party that grew out of the democratical elements in the state they so despised. The task of the dissertation is to make sense of these new divisions of the 1790s.

3.5 Conclusion: Politics in the Context of Political Indeterminacy

Political elites in New York were not free-floating. But neither were their actions determined by their membership in socio-economic categories. The Federalists and Republicans of New York were not the product of the politicization of preexisting social master categories.¹¹ In a context of rapid change (due to the creation of a completely new set of offices at the national level, high population growth, migration, and an expanding political system), elite political action was underdetermined by social position. This opened up opportunities for skilled political elites to form complex webs of alliances. In the words of Zeitlin (1984, 158), “The leading participants in a political struggle are bound to find allies and supporters wherever they can, within principled limits, and whatever the struggle’s original source. The real clashes and confrontations in which they are involved might compel them to make choices

11. At least not in the sense that the political actors who affiliated with these parties came from different socio-economic groups. A strong test of the cleavage argument would require us to know to what extent support for the two parties came from different social groups. Unfortunately, socio-demographic data on voters do not exist.

and take actions they never expected, with consequences they never intended. They might, indeed, find themselves acting against their own immediate class or intra-class interests, especially as their own involvement in the political struggle itself creates new comradeships, loyalties, and adherents, as well as making enemies of former friends and allies.” Politics was malleable and elites had the agency to create something new. The structure of these new webs of alliances that were the produce of political action is the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

PARTIES AND VOTING BLOCS

4.1 Introduction

The first American parties were not formal organizations, which makes them difficult to study. They did not leave charters, notices of incorporation, membership lists, formal communications, or minutes. Historians have focused their attention on electoral committees and caucuses, which were still largely informal but sometimes left written records of their existence and occasionally even lists of attendees. These analyses have provided valuable insight into the nature of party organization at the time, but they give us only a limited view of the structure of the party system. Others have relied on newspapers to study parties' attempts to sway public opinion. Biographical studies, too, especially those that have impressive bodies of letters with which to work, have produced important evidence of informal party organization, at least when the protagonists have not deliberately covered over its existence by destroying the letters.¹ But such studies are generally restricted to elites whose lives are of sufficient interest. When it comes to the less prominent, we generally have much less to go on. For this reason, we often must infer the presence of party organization by looking at coordination: where we see actors pursuing action that appears coordinated, we may hypothesize some sort of informal structure. It is these informal structures that were recognized as political parties by contemporaries and that built the foundation for the more formal party organizations that would follow.

One particularly fruitful way in which this has been done is by looking at legislative voting. At least since Lowell (1902), political scientists and historians have examined roll call voting as a way to study coordination among legislators. Scholars interested in party formation, both at the state (e.g., Main 1974; Countryman 1989) and the national level (e.g.,

1. Some letters I have come across suggest that sensitive political issues were either not discussed in letters or those letters were expected to be destroyed after they had been read.

Hoadley 1986; Aldrich 1995), have likewise turned to roll call votes as a way to systematically examine the emergence of voting blocs. Roll call votes are well-preserved and facilitate a detailed study not only of the structure of political action, but also changes in that structure over time. Of course, the existence of legislative parties in the sense of voting blocs does not imply the existence of parties in the sense of formal organizations (Formisano 1974, 1981). But the study of voting blocs can reveal a great deal about alliance formation and informal organization among legislators. And because legislators come from different regions and socio-economic groups, by extension they can tell us a great deal about alliances between those different social groups.

In this chapter I will search for evidence of the crystallization of parties in New York, drawing on a novel dataset of roll call votes in the state assembly between 1788 (session 11) and 1803 (session 26). The data are described in section 2.3. No such study of voting in the New York State Assembly exists for the time period following the ratification of the constitution. I chose the state assembly instead of the state senate for several reasons. First, lower houses tend to be more blatantly politicized, and do less work behind the scenes, than upper houses, which are often created precisely to moderate partisanship. Further, the assembly is larger and, because it was chosen by a larger electorate, more likely to contain a broader range of political actors. In addition, about 90% of the political actors in my sample served in the assembly at some point in their careers. The assembly was as a hub where the careers of lesser local elites and important national level figures met (see chapter 7). Finally, similar studies of the state assembly exist for the 1780s (Main 1974; Countryman 1989) such that a comparison between the 1780s and 1790s becomes possible.

Before I turn to the analyses, I will briefly outline the plan for analysis and discuss some of the methods used in this chapter.

4.2 Methods

The dataset I have constructed allows me to carry out the following analyses. First, I am able to estimate the turnover rate for the assembly in each session, as well as the proportion of new entrants who had never previously been elected. Second, it becomes possible to compare the similarity of voting between and within parties, and to compare the similarity across legislator dyads to their similarity in respects other than party (for example, their regional location). Third, the data allow me to inductively search for clusters of legislators that tend to vote together and to identify the character of those voting blocs. Here I use k-medoids clustering (also known as partitioning around medoids or PAM) to create a two-cluster solution for each session based on the distance matrices (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 2005). In k-medoids clustering, each of the k clusters is represented by one of the data points in the cluster, called the medoid. The goal is to find k medoids such that the dissimilarities between all data points and their nearest medoid is minimized. In other words, the algorithm selects k medoids, assigns each remaining data point to its nearest medoid, and calculates the sum of the dissimilarities between all data points and their nearest medoid. It does this until it has found medoids that minimize the sum of dissimilarities. Clustering based on k-medoids is similar to k-means clustering, but because each cluster is represented by an existing data point rather than the mean value of all the data points in the cluster, it is said to be more robust to outliers.

Finally, I am also able to use the data to examine spatial models of voting. To do this, I estimate W-NOMINATE models using the R package `wnominate` (Poole et al. 2011).²

2. Practitioners tend to find that different models, when they are appropriate, tend to lead to similar conclusions. I repeated the analysis using non-metric multidimensional scaling and Optimal Classification, a non-parametric spatial model proposed by Poole (2000). The results are very similar and inspire confidence in the robustness of the W-NOMINATE scores. For studies of the American Congress, the DW-NOMINATE model is more commonly used. DW-NOMINATE is a dynamic version of W-NOMINATE that combines all sessions into one global model instead of treating them separately; each legislator is allowed to move along a linear or quadratic line between sessions. This model, however, only works well under the assumption of relatively stable voting patterns (McCarty 2016). I found that periods of disorganization, coupled with high turnover, made it too difficult to align the spaces (especially before and after the critical trough of session

W-NOMINATE scores are based on a parametric spatial model of voting. Each legislator is represented by an ideal point on each dimension, and each roll call is represented by two points on each dimension, one for yea and one for nay. The model assumes that legislators have single-peaked and symmetric preferences and make voting decisions that maximize their utility. A legislator's overall utility for voting yea (nay) is a function of the distance between the legislator's ideal point and the location of the yea (nay) vote, plus a random error term. Maximum likelihood is used to find model parameters that maximize the likelihood of obtaining the observed roll call decisions. Details about the functional form of the deterministic and random components as well as the algorithm that estimates the model parameters can be found in Poole (2005) and Poole et al. (2011).

4.3 The Structure of Voting in the New York State Assembly

4.3.1 Turnover and Partisan Agreement

I begin by considering one key aspect of a political party system, the degree of turnover. While turnover itself does not measure competitiveness, a system in which tenure is uniformly long chafes at our notion of a democracy. Further, bursts of high turnover may indicate major changes or breaks in a party system. In this case, I find that tenure was short, turnover high, and steadily increasing. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of legislators who had not been elected to the previous session (dashed line) as well as the percentage of legislators who had never been elected to the assembly (solid line) for sessions 2 to 45. Over the entire time period, from 1777 to 1822, turnover increases from 35 to 80% if measured as whether a legislator had served in the previous assembly and from 35 to over 60% if measured as whether a legislator had ever served in the assembly. A closer look shows that this dramatic change is largely due to legislators not running again; the likelihood of getting reelected if the

20) to use the DW-NOMINATE model.

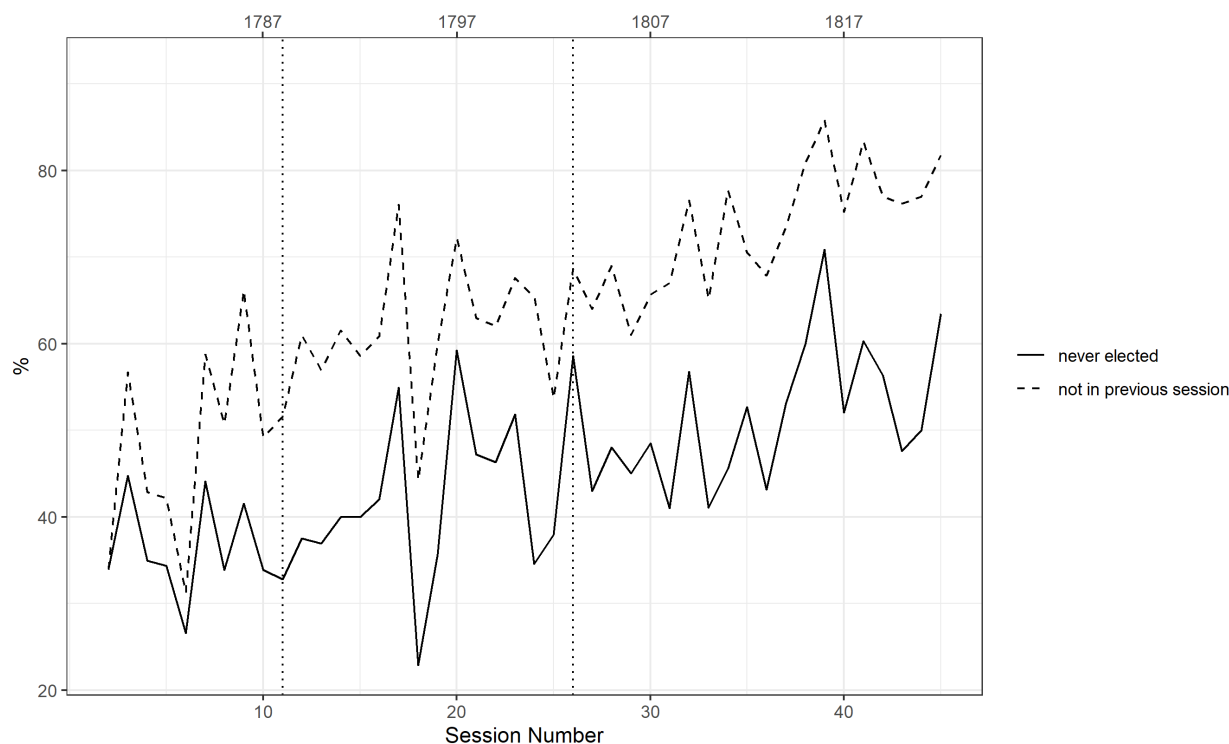


Figure 4.1: Percentage of assemblymen newly elected, sessions 2 to 45

Note: The vertical lines mark the time period from session 11 to session 26.

legislator decided to run again actually remains relatively constant over time (figure 4.2).³

During the period covered in this paper (sessions 11 to 26), turnover from session to session is around 60%, while the percentage of those who enter the assembly for the very first time hovers around 40%. In other words, 20% of legislators were not in the previous session but had been elected to the assembly at some point in their career. These aggregate numbers, however, hide important temporal variation. Two sessions stand out in particular. In session 17, three quarters of the assemblymen had not been elected in the previous session and more than half had never been elected. In session 20, the numbers are 70% and 60%, respectively. Interestingly, the vast majority of these newly elected assemblymen are Federalists. This can be seen in figure 4.3, which shows turnover by party.

3. I am unable to explain this pattern. One possible reason could be that parties began to introduce a rotation system that allowed a larger number of their members to serve in the assembly. It could also be

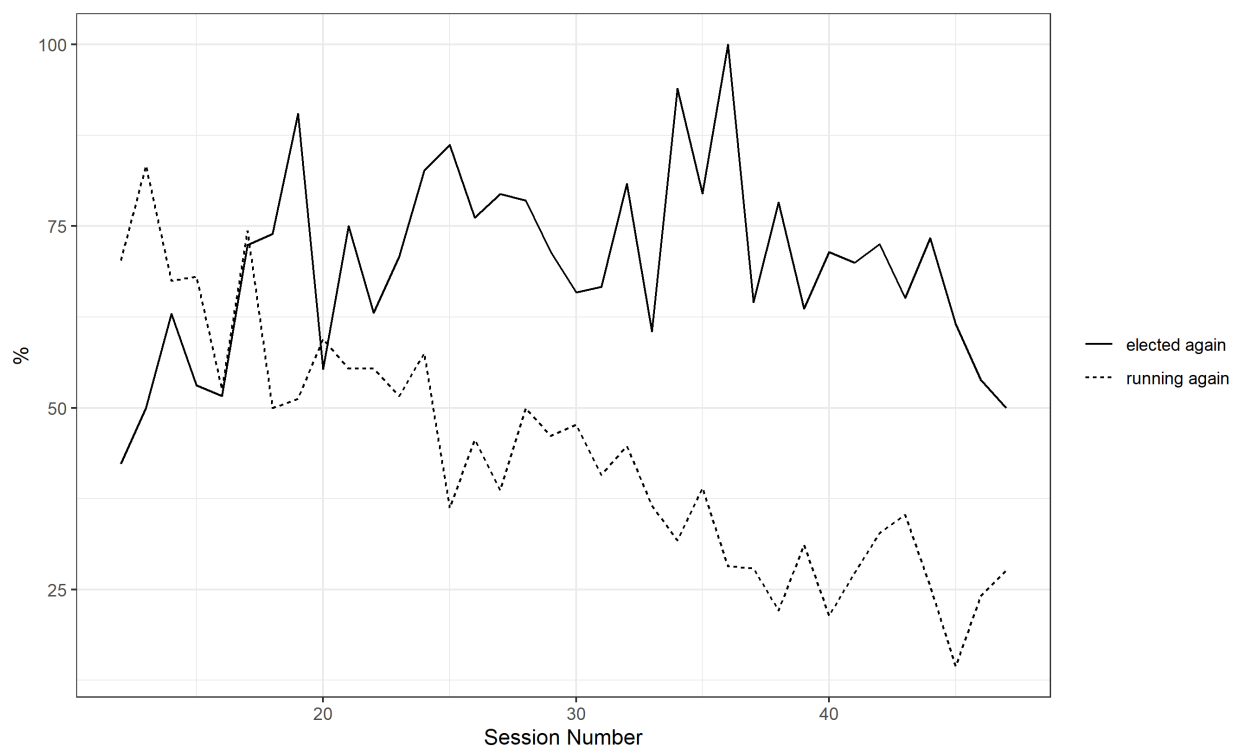
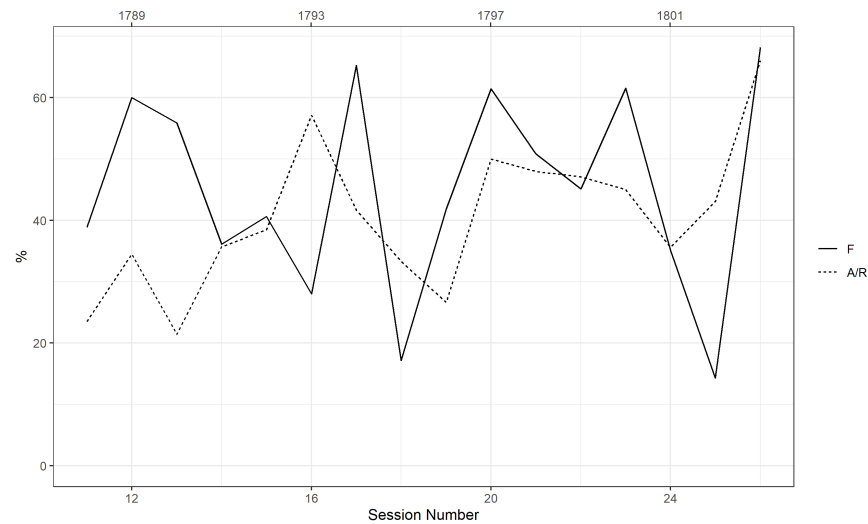
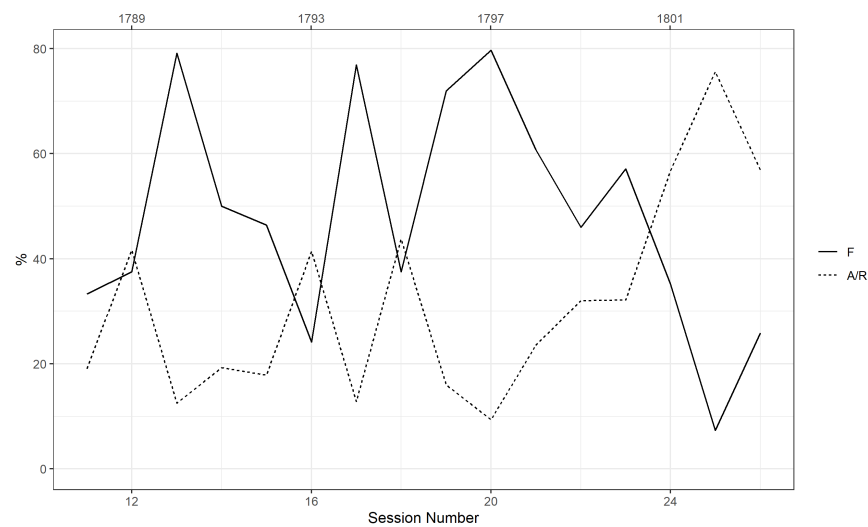


Figure 4.2: Percentage running again and percentage getting reelected conditional on running again



(a) Percentage of Federalists/Republicans that have never been in the assembly



(b) Percentage of assemblymen who have never been in the assembly who are Federalists/Republicans

Figure 4.3: Newly elected assemblymen by party, sessions 11 to 26

Given these high levels of turnover, we might expect considerable volatility in voting from session to session. If, on the other hand, we find stable voting blocs despite high turnover, this may indicate that parties were not spontaneous alliances that formed in the assembly but had a life outside the legislature. For this reason, I consider two simple measures of the degree of partisan agreement—the degree to which an average member of one party was likely to vote with members of his own party (within-party-agreement), and, inversely, the degree to which an average member of one party was likely to vote with members of the *other* party (between-party-agreement). Figure 4.4 does this separately for the two parties. What we see might seem quite surprising. Rather than see a trend such as slowly increasing partisan alignment, we see three different peaks in within-party-agreement and two corresponding troughs of between-party agreement. Further, we see that in the first and third periods, the Federalists are significantly more cohesive than the Republicans, who appear as a relatively looser coalition of assemblymen. This is surprising. Most extant work portrays the Republicans as the more organized party and emphasizes its movement-like character. This finding suggests that this higher degree of non-parliamentary organization may have been the result of the fact that they lacked the high degree of cohesion the Federalists portrayed inside the legislature.

Of course, it is possible that these results are spurious, as it might be the case that my coding of the partisanship of the actors is faulty. What is leading to the apparent decrease in cohesion, could then be the decreased accuracy of my partisan categorization. Even if my assignment of persons to parties was adequate, I might be understating the degree of organization if there was actually a different basis to politics than the two parties. (I will return to this important hypothesis from another angle below.)

To check this, I also carry out an inductive partitioning of the legislator-legislator distance matrix, constructed on the basis of the legislator-vote matrix for each session. Using k-

that rotation was introduced among the towns within a county.

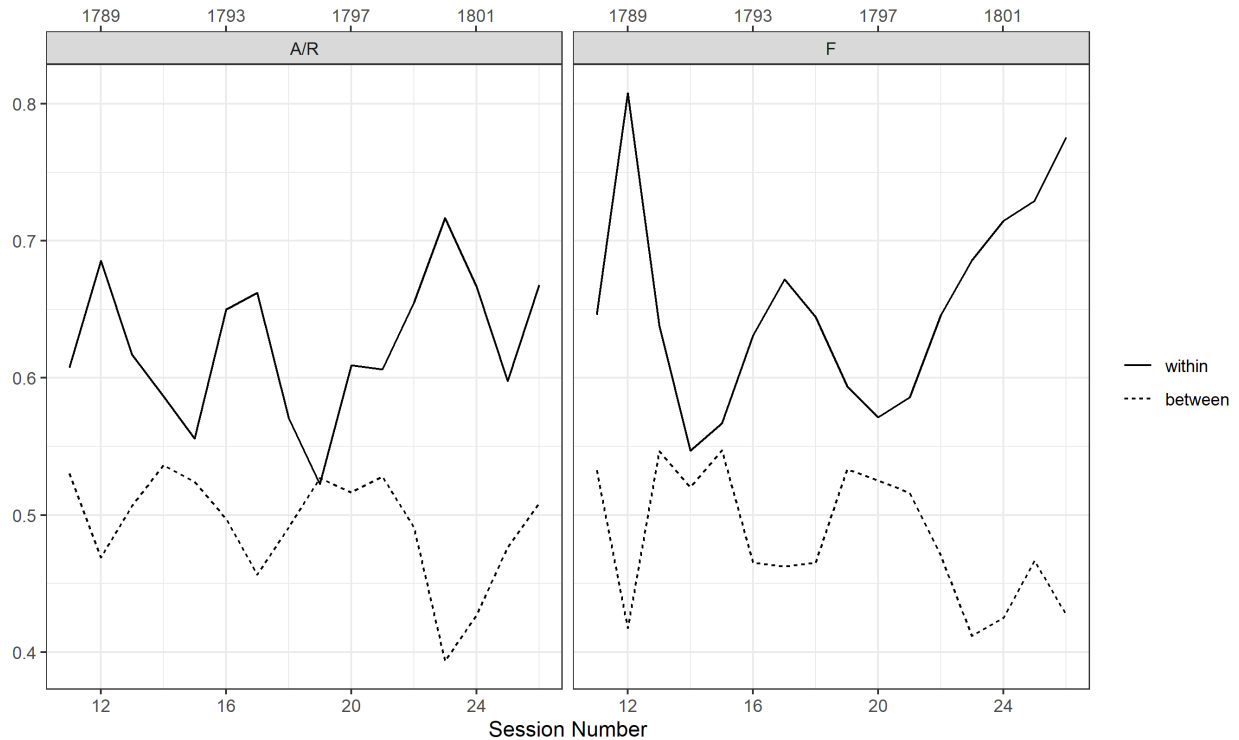


Figure 4.4: Average agreement within and between parties

medoids clustering, I produce a two-cluster solution for each session. Having created a two-bloc solution, I can then examine the extent to which these voting blocs map onto parties. If we assume that there is a Federalist cluster and a Republican cluster, we can obtain the proportion of legislators who are placed in the “correct” cluster based on their party affiliation. Again, I do this separately for each session. The results are presented in Figure 4.5. The values range from .56 in session 20 to .97 in session 24. Thus, while in session 20 Federalists and Republicans are nearly equally distributed across the two clusters, in session 24 the two parties are almost perfectly separated.

This might be taken to suggest that in the periods of low partisan cohesion, there is some *alternative* structuring to the opposition in the state assembly. However, the results displayed in Figure 4.6 cast doubt upon this interpretation. Here I present, for each session, the adequacy of the two-cluster solution using within-cluster and between-cluster agreement. What we see is that the times when there is low party cohesion using the *deductive* approach

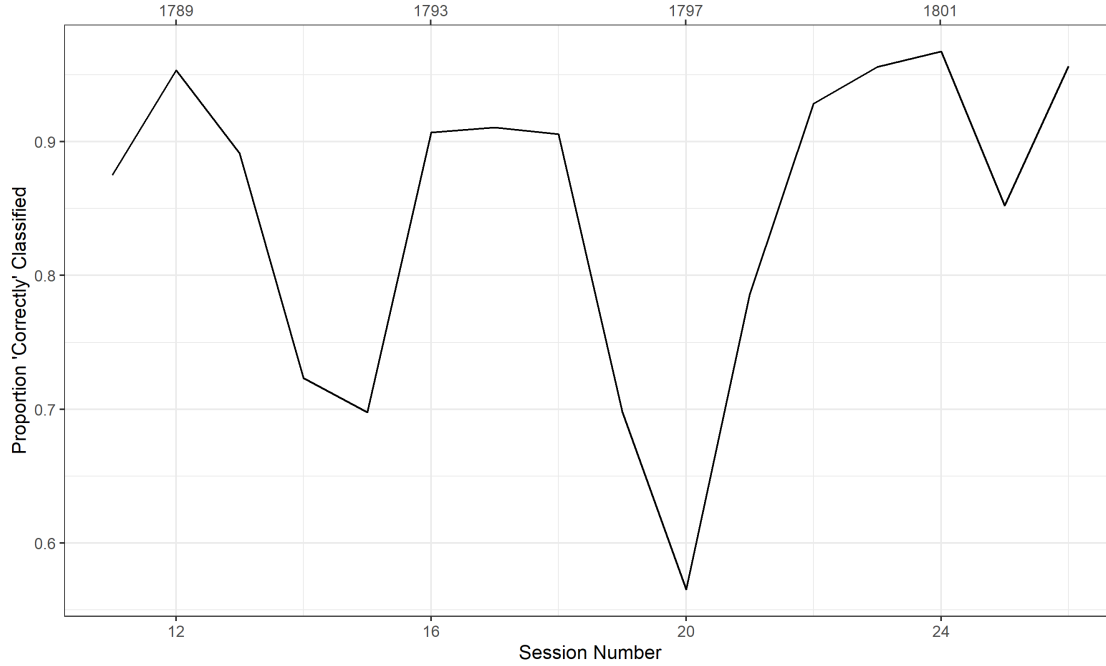


Figure 4.5: Proportion of people who are assigned to the “correct” cluster based on their party affiliation

of Figure 4.4 are also the times when there is low cluster cohesion using the *inductive* approach. The troughs are, so far as I can tell, times of *disorganization* more than they are times of *alternate* organization.

Interestingly, my previous conclusions do not disappear when I take into account other possible sources of agreement. The lines in Figure 4.7 represent the coefficients from a model that predicts dyadic agreement between any two legislators on their voting over the session and that simultaneously includes as predictors whether the two legislators are in the same senatorial district (on which, more below), have the same occupation, are in the same party, and a continuous measure in years of their age difference.⁴

I wish to focus on the fact that even in this multivariate context, we see the three peaks emerging quite clearly: one during 1788, one from late 1792 to early 1795, and a third starting in early 1800. In addition, we see an overall decline in region as a structuring principle of

4. Confidence intervals are constructed not taking into account the statistical non-independence across dyads and are thus likely to be overly narrow.

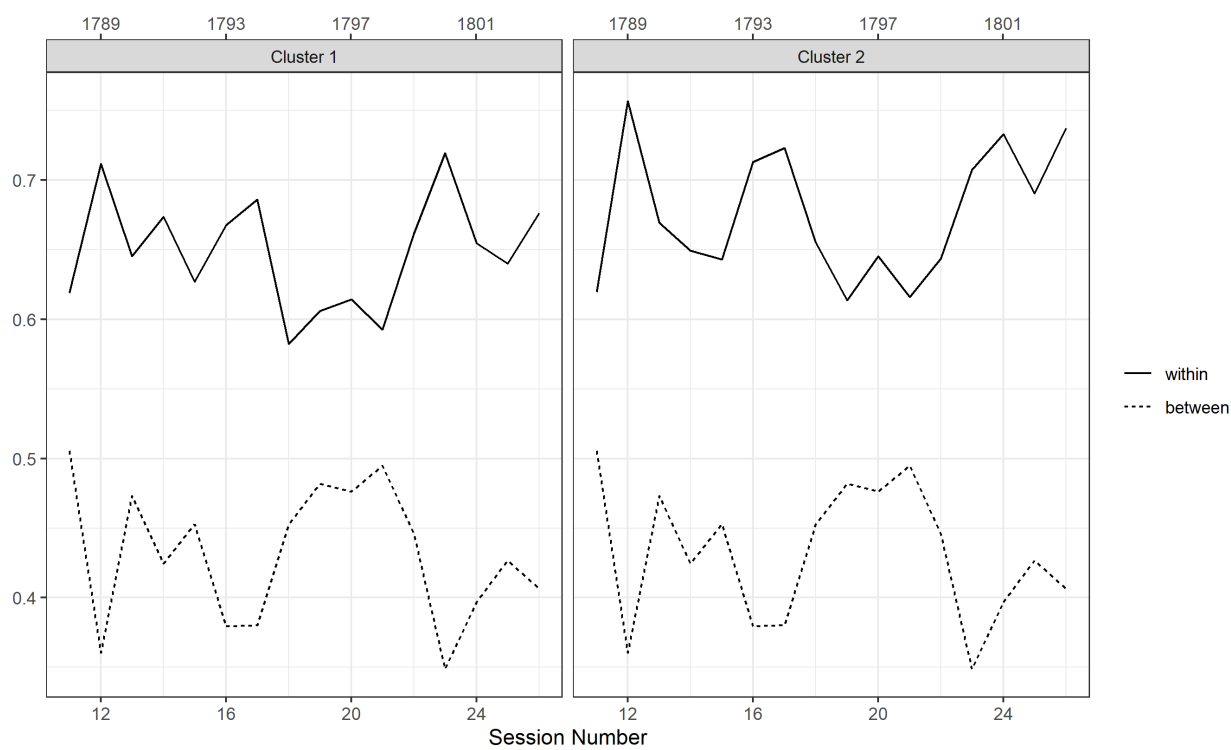


Figure 4.6: Average agreement within and between clusters

Note: Cluster 1 (left) tends to be the Anti-federalist/Republican cluster, cluster 2 (right) the Federalist cluster.

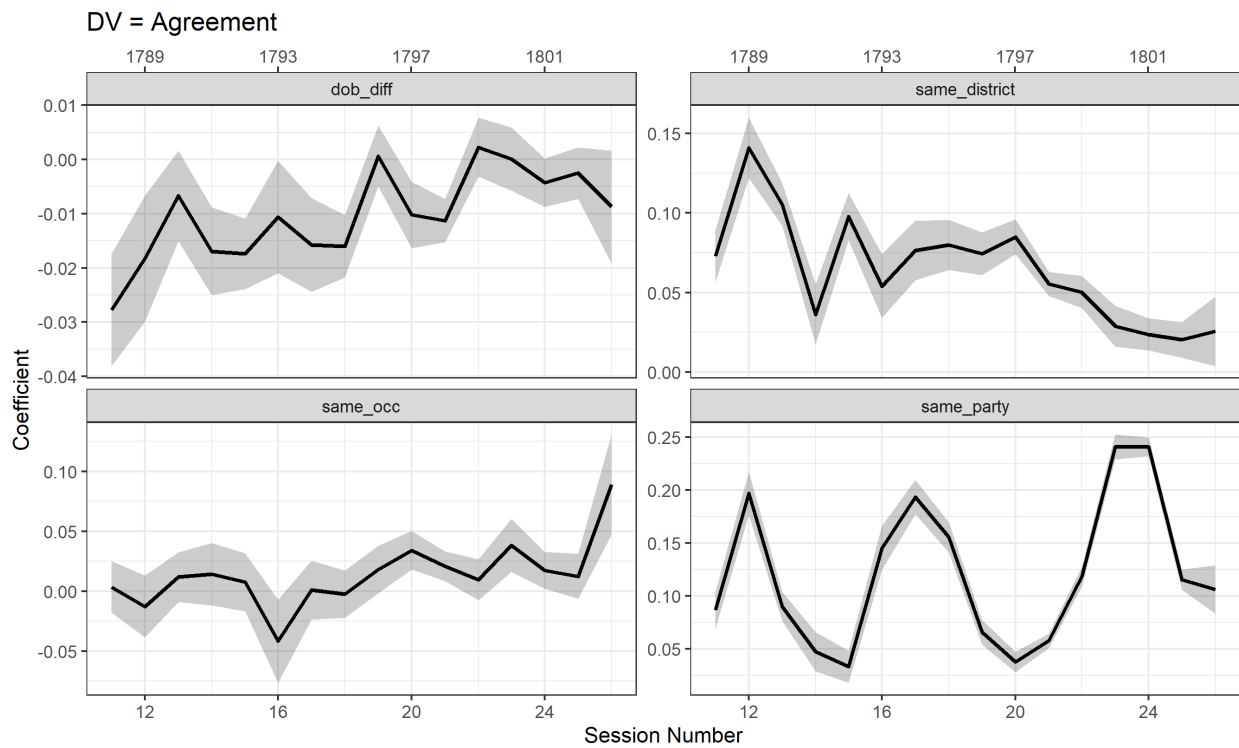


Figure 4.7: OLS regression of agreement on same district, same occupation, same party, and age difference

voting. I will go on to explore this from another angle, but we can conclude that party formation in New York was not a linear process whereby voting blocs became increasingly more polarized, as was the case at the national level (see Hoadley 1986). Legislative parties appeared episodically at three moments in time, and tended to disintegrate in between. This up-and-down of partisanship is similar to what Countryman (1989) observed in the assembly during the 1780s.⁵

Below I will investigate the dynamics that brought about strong voting blocs during those three periods. The question of what happened in the “troughs,” that is during periods of no partisanship, is more difficult to answer and I can only speculate at this point. In the first trough, voting seems largely unorganized. One possible reason is that the decision to ratify the constitution disarmed the Anti-Federalists and it took some time to formulate an opposition to the Federalists under the new, federal structure. What is more, the Anti-Federalists had been divided between those who ultimately agreed to ratify the constitution and those who held out in their opposition. In addition, Federalists were able to mobilize on the frontier, a region that had been strongly opposed to the constitution, thus leading to a reorganization of the political field in New York.

In the second trough, in sessions 19 and 20, the Federalist party completely dominated the assembly (in session 20, the number of Federalists was almost seven times larger than the number of Republicans). The dominance of the Federalists was in large part related to the expansion of the political system. Following a new state census, the number of senate seats rose from 24 to 43, the number of assembly seats from 70 to 108 (see table 2.3). Most new seats were created in the western and northern part of the state, and Federalists capitalized on the influence they had been building on the frontier since 1792 and captured most of

5. During the first four sessions after independence, Countryman finds shifting alliances that formed around individual issues. Over time, two opposing alliances formed: a radical one that challenged the old elites and a conservative one that formed in response to the radicals. By session 8 (October 1784 – April 1785) two parties had taken shape and partisanship began to transcend individual issues. But partisanship did not develop further, and even declined slightly in session 10 or 11 (Countryman 1989, 304–5).

them (see chapter 3). It is not uncommon for one-party dominance to introduce fractioning within the majority party, as party itself becomes largely irrelevant for conducting fights (Key 1984; for the New York case, see A. F. Young 1967, 517). And, in fact, it appears that the Federalists broke into three regional clusters: the southern district, the middle district, and the eastern plus western district.⁶

The discussion thus far points to an interesting interplay between party and region. I go on to examine this in more detail.

4.3.2 The Dimensionality of Voting

To further examine the relationship between party and region, I employ methods for the spatial analysis of voting. While there are many different mathematical solutions to this problem, I rely on the tradition of ideal-point analysis that is most frequently used in American political science. In particular, I use the W-NOMINATE model developed by Poole and Rosenthal.

In addition to producing ideal points, which in case of a model with two dimensions are projected onto the unit circle, W-NOMINATE produces a set of measures that evaluate the model and characterize the structure of voting. Because voting tends to be constrained in that a legislator's position on one issue predicts her position on other issues (Converse 1964), often one or two dimensions are enough to correctly classify most votes. In fact, Poole and Rosenthal (1997) found that two dimensions suffice to accurately predict approximately 85% of voting decisions in Congress between 1789 and 1985. Indeed, for most of American history, one dimension, generally understood as the liberal-conservative dimension, accounts for most of the variance in votes. A second dimension, which captures regional differences within parties, comes to the fore only episodically (during the 1830s and 1840s and the 1940s to 1960s) and tends to reflect differences on racial issues.

6. It is worth reminding ourselves that unanimous or near-unanimous decisions are less likely to be subject to a roll-call vote in the first place, and hence less likely to enter my analysis.

Applied to the New York assembly data, a one-dimensional model correctly classifies, on average, 77% of the votes. A second dimension improves classification by only 4%. Figure 4.8, top, shows the proportion of correctly classified votes for the one-dimensional and the two-dimensional model for each session. Figure 4.8, bottom, shows the difference between the two, that is, the improvement gained by adding a second dimension. Most of the time, a single dimension captures most of the voting decisions. Whether or not we interpret it as “ideological,” it certainly represents something dividing the parties. Figure 4.9 displays the coefficients from logistic regressions of a legislator’s party affiliation on his coordinates for dimension one and two, together with their 95% confidence intervals. During periods of partisanship, party is picked up by the first dimension, as we see the same three peaks that we have seen in the other graphs. While it might appear that the second dimension is also, though less strongly, related to the partisan divide in the second period of partisan activity (session 17), a comparison to Figure 4.8, bottom, reminds us that there basically is no second dimension at this time.

However, the second dimension does make a non-trivial contribution during the trough separating the second and third periods of partisanship in sessions 18 to 21 (figure 4.8, bottom), and at this time it is clearly unrelated to party. A question is whether we are able to identify the logic of this dimension. We know that region often plays an important role, in particular in expanding political systems (Slez 2020). Indeed, one might hypothesize that there is, within New York, a similar tendency for unresolved regional differences to induce multidimensionality, just as Poole and Rosenthal found for the United States as a whole. I go on to consider this issue.

4.3.3 Region and Party

According to the New York state constitution, counties were grouped into four electoral districts for state senate election: the southern, middle, western, and eastern district. We

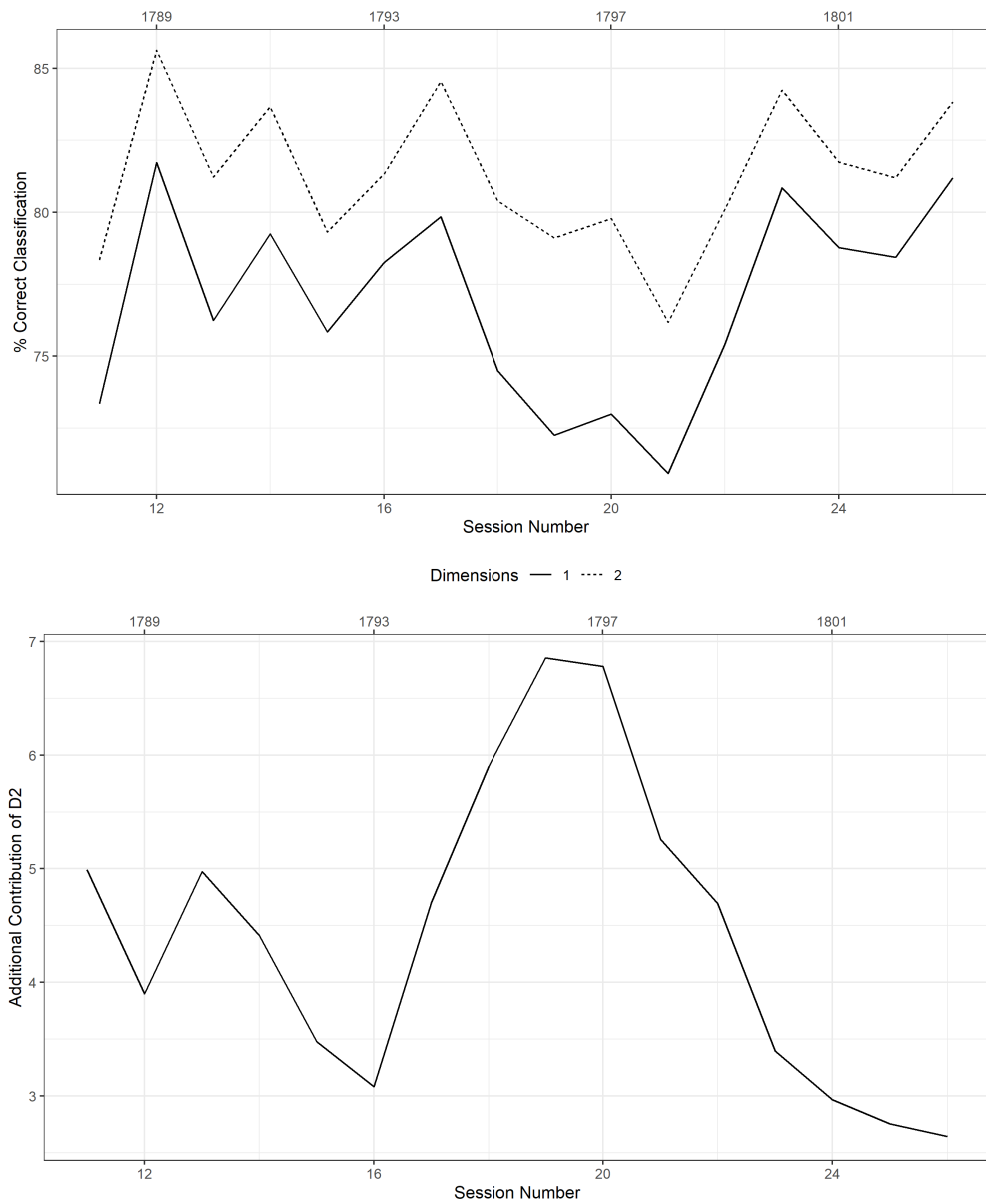


Figure 4.8: Correct Classification for one- and two-dimensional W-NOMINATE model

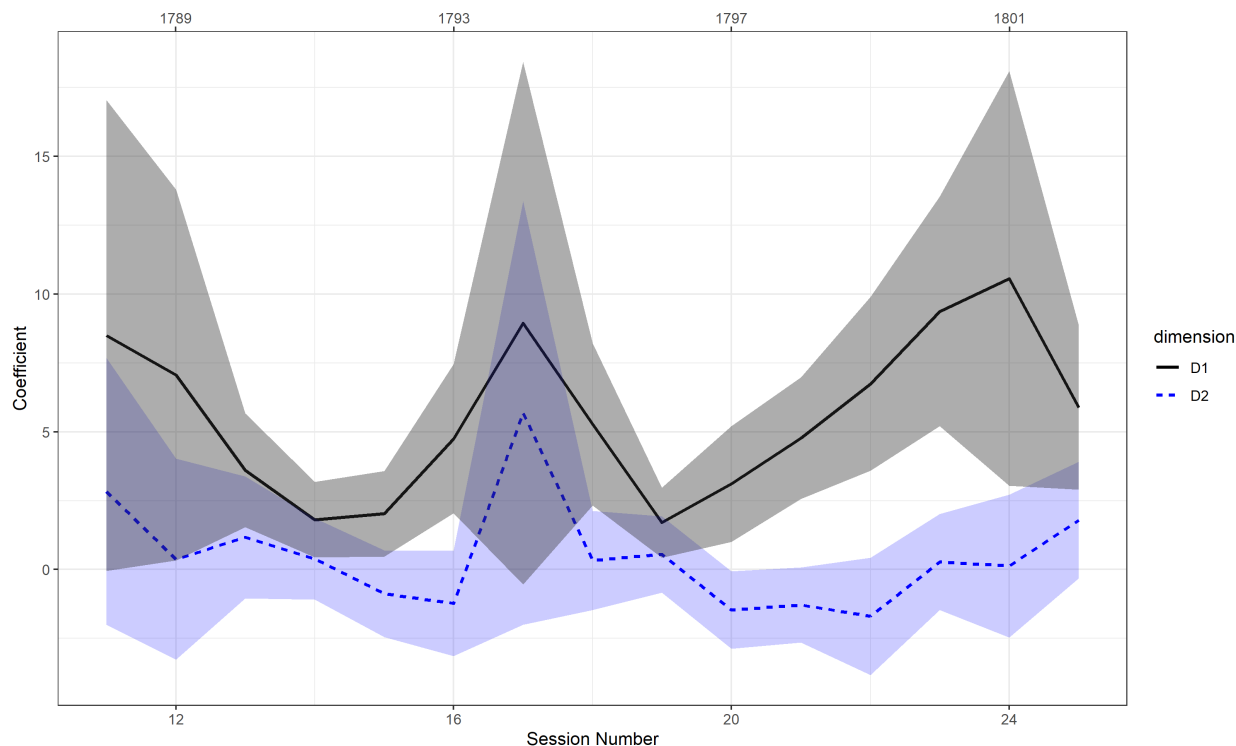


Figure 4.9: Logistic regression of party on W-NOMINATE scores

can gain insight into the relationship between region and partisanship by examining the placement of legislators from different districts and different parties in the two dimensions of the underlying W-NOMINATE space.⁷ Figure 4.10 does this for the 1788-9 session, which met just after the acceptance of the new federal constitution. Each dot represents a legislator, with the shape of the dot indicating the region, and the color that of the party. Embedded is the “scree plot” of eigenvalues showing the relative contribution of the first five dimensions, and the centroids of the two parties (F for Federalist and A/R for Anti-federalist/Republican) and the four districts (S, M, W, E). The title includes standard measures of fit for each dimension.

Here one can see that party and region are closely related and map almost perfectly onto each other, with the Federalist southern district opposing the other three districts that

7. I here only discuss three graphs that correspond to the three periods of high partisanship, and one graph for session 20. Appendix C provides W-NOMINATE coordinate plots for all sessions.

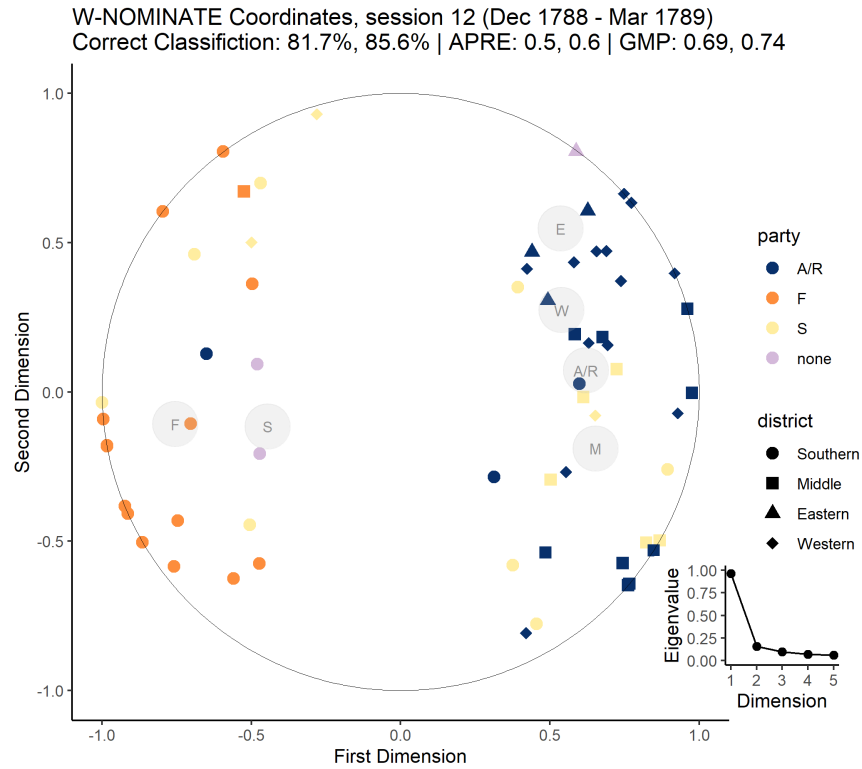


Figure 4.10: W-NOMINATE coordinate plot, session 12

Note: The plot shows the W-NOMINATE coordinates for dimension 1 and 2 from a two-dimensional model. Colors represent party, shapes represent senatorial districts. In addition, centroids for each party and district are given as transparent circles. The scree plot shows the eigenvalues, an indicator for how many dimensions are necessary to capture the data.

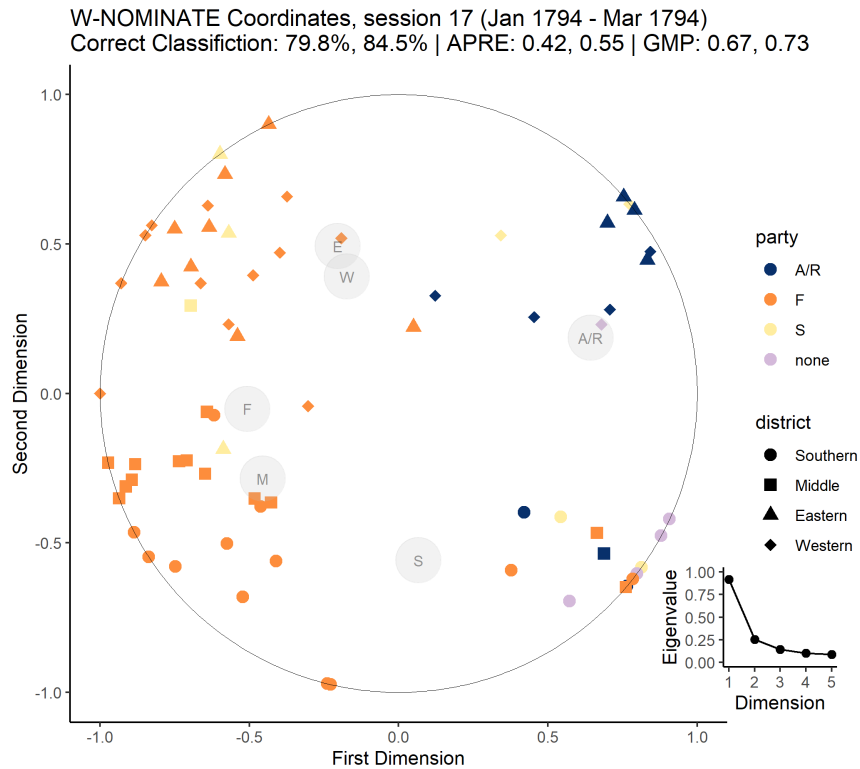


Figure 4.11: W-NOMINATE coordinate plot, session 17

Note: See figure 4.10.

overwhelmingly elected Anti-Federalists. During the second period of partisanship, however, there exist two distinct dimensions, one that captures party and one that captures region. At the peak of this period in terms of partisan cohesion, session 17 (portrayed in figure 4.11), the second dimension captures an almost perfect split between the southern and middle districts on the one side and the eastern and western districts on the other.

In sessions 19-21 party retreats into the background and region becomes the dominant way in which politics is organized. Thus, at a time when the western part of the state emerged as a political force and Federalists dominated the state (remember that the number of senate seats went from 70 to 108 and that most of these new seats were captured by Federalists), a sectional division began to form with the western district, often joined by the

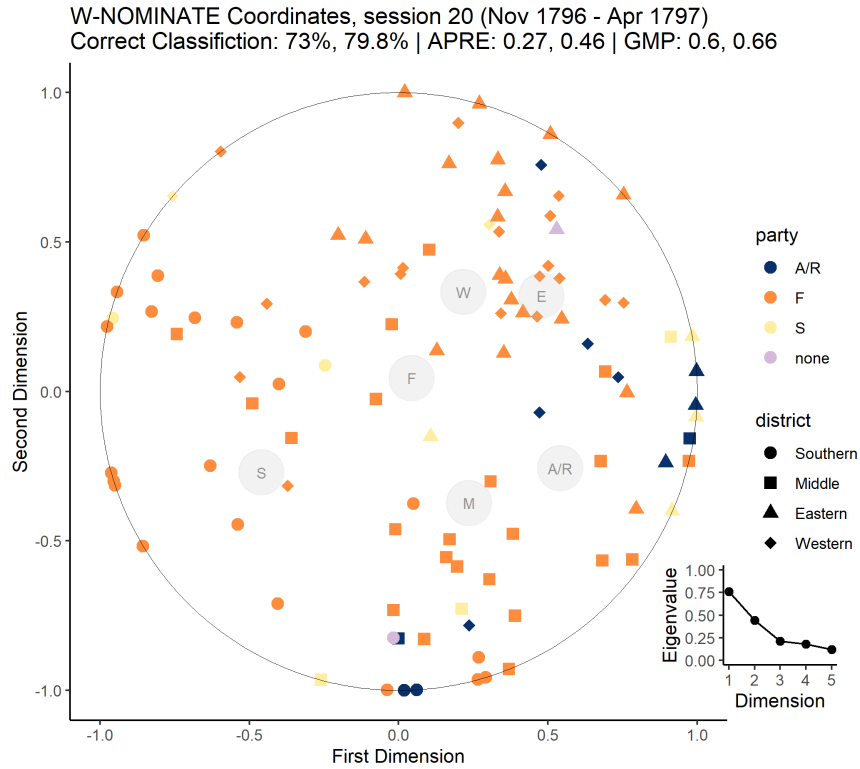


Figure 4.12: W-NOMINATE coordinate plot, session 12

Note: See figure 4.10.

eastern district, on one side and the middle and southern districts on the other (see figure 4.12 for session 20).⁸

Finally, starting in session 22 or 23, party replaces region as the only salient dimension. Thus, while parties mapped onto a regional division around the time of the Constitutional Convention of 1788, by the end of the 1790s parties had largely detached themselves from their regional bases. This can be seen most clearly by looking at the centroids for each party and district in the voting space. In session 24 (see figure 4.13) they are aligned along the x-axis with the two parties occupying the most extreme positions and the districts occupying

8. This was different in North Carolina, where neither party took up the cause of the western region (Risjord 1978, 503).

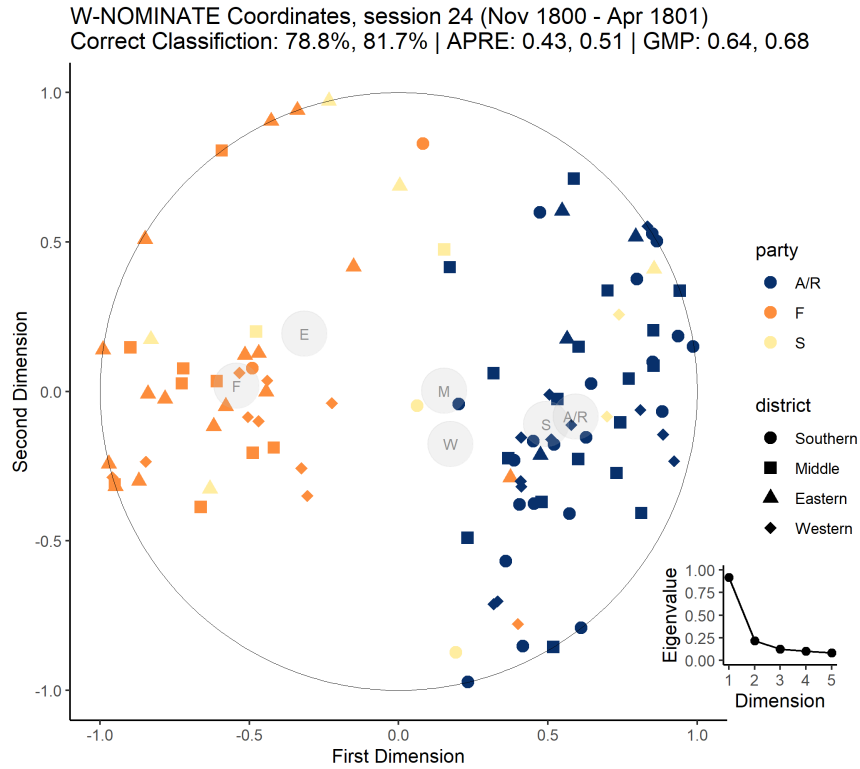


Figure 4.13: W-NOMINATE coordinate plot, session 24

Note: See figure 4.10.

more central positions. In other words, in contrast to the first two periods, here region has been neutralized as a principle of organization.

4.3.4 *Partisan Issues*

So far, I have shown that voting in the assembly was highly structured at three points in time, that the resulting voting blocs mapped onto political parties, and that region and party became increasingly separate dimensions over the course of the 1790s. Now I turn to the issues that gave rise to these voting blocs.

To do this, I sample highly partisan votes from the three time periods showing high partisanship. I first quantify how much each vote separates the two parties using the Rice

index of difference (RID). The RID is defined as $100|p_{y,F} - p_{y,R}|$, where $p_{y,F}$ is the proportion of Federalists voting yea and $p_{y,R}$ the proportion of Republicans voting yea (MacRae 1970, 183). The index runs from 0 (both parties are equally divided) to 100 (perfect party polarization). For the three moments of high partisanship (session 12, sessions 16 and 17, and sessions 23 and 24) I then select the votes with the highest RID.⁹

Were the highly partisan votes ones that involved the core ideological division separating the Federalists and the Republicans?¹⁰ In some sense, yes, as votes over the Federal Constitution—the issue which provoked the formation of the parties in the first place—were indeed highly partisan. After it was clear that New York’s state ratifying convention could not prevent the constitution from going into effect, the issue arose of whether to accept it conditional on amendments or with “full confidence” that Congress would make amendments and adopt a bill of rights after the constitution went into effect. The delegates decided to adopt the constitution unconditionally. Now the state legislature drafted an application to Congress declaring that the constitution was ratified in the confidence that another general convention would make revisions to the articles of the constitution and demanding such a convention. One vote appears that was about an additional sentence that said that the constitution was adopted “in confidence, that certain powers in and by the said Constitution granted, would not be exercised until such revision should have taken place.” The vote divided the two parties perfectly, with Anti-Federalists/Republicans voting for and Federalists against the additional sentence (RID = 100). Another vote about the timing of the

9. As an initial cutoff I chose an RID of 80. This gave me 34 votes for session 12, 4 for session 16, 10 for session 17, 18 for session 23, and 16 for session 24. I then increased the cutoff for session 12 to 90, giving me 26 votes, and decreased it to 75 for session 16, giving me 12 votes.

10. Non-partisan votes are often related to internal improvements, such as the establishment of turnpike corporations and the construction of roads and highways, which could be “pork” for local political actors. Others are about preventing dueling and horse racing or the promotion of morality. Votes on which the second dimension is important tend to be related to spatial interests: they often involve decisions over location (e.g., where shall we have the next meeting, where shall the county court meet) or decisions that affected a particular location (e.g., issues related to the state prison in NYC, where should certain county roads run, should we sell unappropriated lands in the western district).

convention shows the same division.

Other highly partisan votes also have to do with constitutional issues. In session 12, there are 21 votes that have to do with procedures for electing members of congress and presidential electors (average RID = 97). The U.S. Constitution had left many of these details to the individual states, and so it was natural that they were being debated in the first session after the ratifying convention. In the second period of partisanship, there are three votes about the election of U.S. Representatives and Senators (average RID = 81). And in session 23 there are another two votes about presidential electors (RID = 96). Furthermore, there was one vote in which Republicans tried to replace Gouverneur Morris, a Federalist who had been elected by the legislature to the U.S. Senate, with Leonard Gansevoort, Jr. (RID = 89).

Yet other issues that were highly partisan were not about the Constitution or federal-state relations. What they shared with these previously discussed votes was that they were *procedural* issues. Indeed, at all three moments of high partisanship, procedural issues dominated the set of the most partisan votes. Importantly, those votes were not just about any kind of procedure. They were almost all related to control over offices. For example, one such highly partisan vote in the first period turned on whether to postpone the selection of a new Council of Appointment (RID = 95), another one on whether to adjourn the meeting during a debate about how to carry into effect the U.S. Constitution (RID = 92).

The association of partisan-organization and procedural votes continues in the other periods of partisan organization. In sessions 16 and 17, there are twelve roll calls that have to do with the behavior of the canvassers during the disputed election to session 16 (average RID = 82). The election dispute ensued after the gubernatorial election in 1792. In that election, George Clinton beat John Jay by a margin of just over 100 votes. The dispute involved three western counties on the frontier and had to do with whether election procedures were violated, even though no one doubted the good faith of the actors involved and the somewhat

difficult circumstances of conducting elections on the frontier.^{11 12} Related to this election was the issue of whether William Cooper, a Federalist and the most central elite in Federalist Otsego County, had acted inappropriately by intimidating voters. Three votes related to an investigation by the legislature into Cooper's behavior appear among the selected votes (average RID = 82). (Both the election dispute and Cooper's behavior became slightly more partisan from session 16 to 17.) In addition, there is one vote about state senatorial districts (RID = 93) and one about redistricting Rensselaer County (RID = 75). All these issues were clearly partisan and procedural.¹³

Finally, in the third period (sessions 23 and 24), there are six votes on state senatorial districts (average RID = 88). But most importantly, the assembly was consumed by a constitutional crisis that revolved around the Council of Appointment. The Council of Appointment consisted of four senators and the governor, who served as its president. The problem first arose in sessions 16 and 17 when George Clinton was governor and the Council was dominated by Federalists. The question was whether the governor had the exclusive right to nominate individuals for appointments or whether the power to nominate was held

11. "The technicalities of the controversy," wrote A. F. Young (1967, 305), "were the sort in which eighteenth-century Americans delighted." According to the election statute of 1787, ballots had to be collected in a locked box. After the polls were closed, poll clerks had to bring the ballot boxes to the county sheriff who in turn had to deliver them to the secretary of state who submitted them to a committee that counted the votes. In all three counties irregularities were observed in the transmission of the votes. In Tioga the sheriff gave the ballot box to a deputy who became sick and gave the box to a clerk. In Clinton the sheriff gave the box to an individual who had no business being involved in the election. In Otsego the situation was more complicated. Otsego was also the only county of those three that voted for Federalist Jay, and those votes would have decided the election in Jay's favor. As a result, the dispute focused on Otsego. Here the sheriff's term had ended by the time of the election, the Council of Appointment had appointed a new sheriff, but the commission had not yet been delivered. In addition, part of the ballots were delivered in a sealed bundle and not the locked box. An official committee of canvassers was assembled, which decided to throw out the ballots from all three counties, confirming Clinton's victory. A heated public debate as well as an investigation, conducted by the assembly, into the conduct of the canvassers followed and lasted until the spring of 1793 (for details, see A. F. Young 1967, 304-23).

12. Because George Clinton was the Republican candidate for the Vice Presidency in 1792, the dispute had implications beyond the state. "Jefferson thought that Clinton, in good conscience, ought to resign or at least seek a new election. But what really concerned him [...] was that Clinton's actions would reflect on the party" (Risjord 1978, 415).

13. Remember that partisan divisions during this second period were less developed than during the first and the third, which is reflected in the somewhat lower RID values.

concurrently by all members. Now, in 1801, the situation was reversed and the issue resurfaced. John Jay, a Federalist, was governor, and the Council was dominated by Republicans who refused to accept his nominations. When the Republican members of the Council began to make their own nominations, the conflict escalated and produced a deadlock. A Constitutional Convention was called in 1801 to settle the issue, which ruled that all members of the Council had the power to make nominations (for details see H. M. Flick 1934). Five votes appear in the journals of the assembly that have to do with this issue and that show a strong partisan divide (average RID = 97).

In sum, we see that the parties quickly oriented to organize around procedural issues.¹⁴ This makes a great deal of sense if we consider parties to be that social structure that contests control of an organization (the state), and arises when that organization is understood as significant enough in itself to be a winner take all good. Then the most partisan action is not pushing for any particular position—it is pushing to be in the position to push for other positions in the future. The one thing that one can agree on is to change the rules of the game so that one side is favored in the next rounds.

Conspicuous by their absence are partisan votes on the *economic* issues often said to have divided the parties. There are a few exceptions,¹⁵ but certainly no reason to think that this was a principle by which the parties would fall into line. Here I look at three types of votes which, according to Main and Countryman, were related to the party divisions of the 1780s and which can be understood as being related to class cleavages: those having to do with salaries of government officials, those having to do with taxes, and those having to do with debtor relief.

14. Risjord (1978, 476–8, 572) observes the same phenomenon in Maryland.

15. In session 23, for example, a clause is debated that would levy a tax to pay government officials, which Republicans try to expunge. They fail, but the vote is close and highly partisan. There is also a bill limiting the production of boots, hats, and other manufactured goods by prisoners where Republicans tend to vote yea and Federalists tend to vote nay. The meaning of this vote is not clear to me, but it may have been about protecting local manufacturers. Still, the difference to the 1780s, where class was a much more salient dividing line, is apparent.

The first of these issues has to do with salaries for government officials. Salaries are a particularly useful case because the issue arises regularly throughout most of the time period. In session 15, I find eight votes related to the salaries of the chief justice and the other justices of the State Supreme Court, the per diem allowance for members of the legislature, and an additional allowance for the president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly. Most of these votes show low partisanship. The highest partisanship is found in a vote on whether the chief justice should make 700 pounds. The RID for this vote is only 35. In sessions 16 and 17, two sessions that were relatively partisan, there are several votes about details of “An Act for the Support of Government,” which regulated the payment of government officials. None show a partisan structure. Again, the highest RID is 35. Between session 21 and 24, there are another 34 votes that are related to salaries. Most show an almost equal split of both parties, but there are a few exceptions. In session 22, there is a clause proposing payment for the state printer. The bill is rejected with most Republicans voting against it and the Federalists being split (RID = 46). In the same session, I find two motions to reject “An act for the support of government.” The RID for the first one is 26 and for the second one 65. In both cases Republicans vote en bloc against the motion. In the first instance, 2/3 of the Federalists join the Republicans, in the second instance 2/3 vote for the motion. In session 24, there is a vote on whether to give the chancellor an additional \$400 (RID = 43). Republicans tend to vote yes, Federalists no. But this can easily be explained by the fact that the incumbent chancellor was a Republican. Thus, overall, we see little evidence that salaries were a partisan issue.

The second issue is taxes. Again, most votes related to taxes did not divide along partisan lines. In session 11, there is a vote on whether 25,000 pounds should be raised in the state. Both parties are almost equally divided. In session 22, there is a clause that would raise a tax as part of “An act for the support of government.” This vote is partisan, with all Republicans opposing the clause (RID = 77). The same happens in session 23 (RID = 81).

While this shows evidence of partisanship, it seems that this had more to do with the specific purpose of the tax than with taxes per se. Still, when it came to raising taxes to pay for the salaries of government officials, the two parties occupied different positions. In session 23 there is a vote on a bill that tried to shift the powers from the tax commissioners, most of which were Federalists, to the county supervisors. Again, this vote shows high partisanship with an RID of 75. But it is a procedural vote more so than a vote on taxes per se. In session 24, there is a vote on the second enacting clause of “An act for the assessment and collection of taxes” which specified the value of personal property such as bulls and cows, coaches, and gold watches and which also stated that a person who is dissatisfied with the assessment can appeal the assessor’s decision. The clause was expunged. 2/3 of the Republicans voted yea, but Federalists were equally divided. Thus, again there is little evidence that the issue of taxation was particularly partisan during the 1790s.

The third issue, debtor relief, was another issue that divided the legislature during the 1780s when the more radical members passed a series of laws in support of debtors. There are seven votes on this issue during sessions 18, 19, and 20, the period of low partisanship and high sectionalism. None of these votes show a partisan pattern (the RID ranges from 1 to 21). In session 24 there is another vote on debt-related imprisonment. Again, both parties are split.

Thus, overall there is little evidence that during the 1790s economic issues gave rise to the horizontal divisions we saw during the 1780s. The legislative parties of the 1790s are a different kind of party than the legislative parties of the 1780s, and they formed primarily around procedural issues, not substantive ones.¹⁶

16. Similarly, Risjord (1978) finds that the economic issues that shaped politics in the Chesapeake during the 1780s largely disappeared during the 1790s. “Indeed, economic issues appeared on the legislative agenda with less and less frequency during the 1790s. And when they did appear, they were less likely to generate public roll calls. The lack of interest in establishing a public record itself suggests that such matters were becoming less controversial” (Risjord 1978, 472).

4.3.5 *Partisanship and Politicization*

Although procedural issues dominated highly partisan votes, this is not to say that substantive policy issues did not matter. Especially towards the end of the time period, all kinds of issues began to divide along partisan lines. Interestingly, partisan divisions did not only affect issues related to the state, but also national and local ones.

By the end of the 1790s, national issues had not only entered the increasing number of newspapers across the nation, but also the New York State Assembly. And those issues showed extremely high levels of partisanship. In session 21, there are two votes about the provision of cannons to the U.S. government as part of “An act to provide arms, accoutrements and military stores” and several votes on erecting “fortifications within this State, for the defense of the United States.” All of these are partisan with an average RID of 78. In session 22, there are 18 votes on the Alien and Sedition Acts, which also divided the parties at the national level. The average RID for those votes is 82, ranging from 27 to 97.¹⁷ Moreover, there are three votes about an address the assembly composed to John Adams (with an average RID of 83) as well as two votes on an address in response to a speech by governor John Jay about the crisis with France (with an average RID of 88). Finally, in session 23, there are two votes about an act to allow New York to credit the costs for defensive measures like fortifications against the debt it owed to the U.S. government (both votes have an RID of 86). Clearly, the foreign policy crisis with France had entered state politics, and it mapped almost perfectly onto the two legislative parties that had emerged in New York. This indicates that the alliance that had formed between New York and the southern states was not restricted merely to choosing the president; issues divided the nation all the way down to the state and county level.

But these national ideological divisions were not what brought about the state-level

17. The Alien and Sedition Acts, while related to foreign policy, are similar to procedural issues in that they were understood to be an instrument by the Federalists to weaken their opponents and therefore reflect the formal struggle for power more so than a substantive foreign policy issue.

parties. Instead, it appears that state-level opposition was driven largely by a procedural struggle for control of offices. State parties then sorted themselves into the emerging national party system, and national ideological divisions were brought in to articulate those local oppositions (Bearman 1993, Martin 2009, 306–307). While for some (e.g., those who depended on trade with English merchants) positions on whether to support France or England were tied to interest, for many others it was a purely ideological alignment grounded in local conflict. This makes sense in a context in which both sides look so similar in social terms (see chapter 3). Relatively abstract ideological questions of whether to support France or England could be almost entirely decoupled from the social fabric New York’s elites were embedded in.

What is remarkable is that even local issues now appeared as partisan. In session 23, for example, the assembly voted on whether John Drake, Jr. and Samuel Bogardus should be allowed to build a bridge across Wappinger’s creek in Dutchess County at their own expense. There were two votes with RIDs of 70 and 76. The issue was defeated by the Federalist majority in the assembly, although some Federalists sided with the Republicans. It became law the following year when the Republicans controlled the assembly. In session 24, two further votes revolved around the issue of establishing a courthouse and gaol in Oneida, a strongly Federalist county. The assembly, dominated by Republicans, named commissioners whose role it was to select an appropriate place within the county. The senate, still under Federalist control, tried to replace the commissioners with more Federalist leaning ones. The first vote rejected the senate’s amendment (RID = 93), the second vote confirmed the decision (RID = 91).

Figure 4.14 demonstrates that these examples reflect a more general development. Here I examine how the votes in any session are related to the two dimensions of the W-NOMINATE space. Each vote can be projected into the two-dimensional space by simply regressing it (the vector of yeas and nays across legislators) onto legislators’ coordinates for the two dimensions.

The resulting coefficients give us a sense of the extent to which a vote is related to the first and the second dimension of the voting space. The figure shows the distribution of effects associated with both dimensions for each session (the solid line indicates the mean for any session). We see that most votes are related to the first dimension (party). The second dimension (region) often has only a small effect.¹⁸ But there is a small subset of votes for which this dimension has serious predictive power (see footnote 10). The most interesting finding, however, is related to dimension 1, which shows a transition from a bimodal to a unimodal distribution. In sessions 12, 16, and 17, I find a bimodal distribution for the party dimension, suggesting that there was one class of issues that was highly partisan and one class of issues that was not.¹⁹ By the third period of partisanship, however, this had transformed into a unimodal distribution. Substantive issues had aligned with procedural ones and the majority of votes were now split along party lines.

4.4 Conclusion: The Development of a Party System

Three main findings emerge from the analyses in this chapter. First, parties in New York were organized into voting blocs despite high levels of turnover from session to session. This suggests that parties were not spontaneous alliances that formed in the assembly but had a life outside the legislature. This allowed them to rebound quickly after disruptions to the party system. In the mid-1790s, the political inclusion of the frontier regions and the resulting shift of power led to disorganization and Federalist one-party dominance. Yet only two years later, the Republicans were back and able to pose a serious threat to Federalist control. And another two years later they took over the state assembly.

One plausible explanation for this high degree of coordination in legislative voting might

18. Remember that in periods in which the second dimension is of small importance, it does not really measure region. In those periods—with the exception of early cases in which region and party are closely aligned—region is not explaining much of voting behavior.

19. Again, it is worth bearing in mind that votes on which there was general consensus were unlikely to make it into my database, as they did not elicit a roll call.

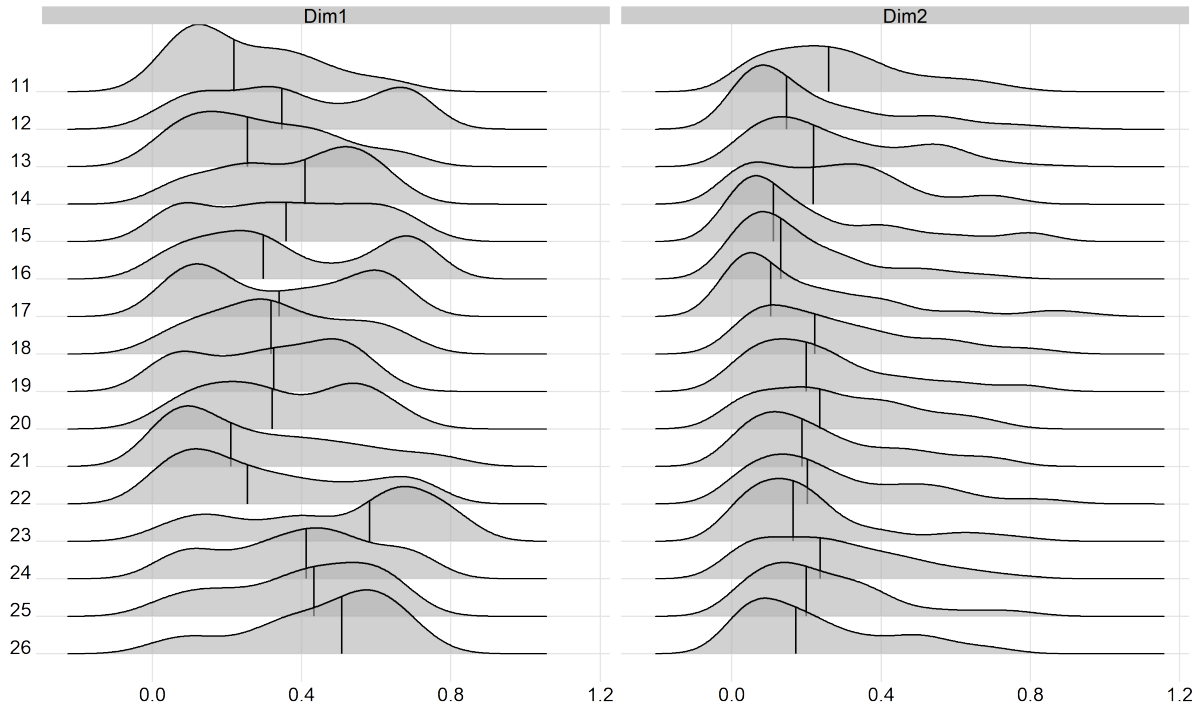


Figure 4.14: Distribution of effect of dimension 1 and dimension 2 on each vote, by session

be that it arose without any particular effort because of a fundamental mapping of the partisan structure onto existing social cleavages, along the lines of the argument developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Where parties disproportionately recruit from different social strata, they may function coherently simply as a result of members voting their own particular interests. Legislative “blocs” can form (Martin 2009), and can be identified as such, without presupposing that there is any attachment to a party identity, let alone an organizational component behind the scenes.

This argument, however, was ruled out in the previous chapter where I demonstrated that the Federalists and Republicans of the 1790s did not recruit their cadre from different socioeconomic groups. The Republicans and Federalists of New York did not form by mapping parties onto exiting interest-based cleavages. As Durkheim (Durkheim 1964, 204) wrote in *The Division of Labor in Society*, “There is nothing less constant than interest. Today, it united me to you; tomorrow, it will make me your enemy. Such a cause can only give rise

to transient relations and passing associations.” In the highly dynamic world of New York politics after the War of Independence, interests did not serve as a stable foundation for alliances. Something else was needed.

This leads me to my second finding: Parties came together over procedural issues concerning the rules of the game, and especially rules about who controls access to offices. Procedural issues provided the glue that held the parties together. As a party system was developing, party alignments were most clearly visible in disputes about the procedures for determining who will occupy a given office, rather than questions of ideology or policy. Procedural issues were where action became most intrinsically political in a sophisticated sense. This is where the outlines of the party system became clearest. Here political actors were not thinking in substantive terms about what was good for their constituencies, but how to maneuver to put themselves *and their allies* in the best position for future struggles.

This is, in retrospect, something that might have been implied by a serious consideration of the nature of the development of a party system as a political field. A key insight of field theoretic approaches is that much of the political struggle concerns the rules of the game (Martin 2003; Fligstein and McAdam 2011). In Lieberman’s (1987, 167) words, “Those who write the rules, write rules that enable them to continue to write the rules.” Those struggles over the rules of the game are particularly relevant during unsettled periods in which the established ways of doing things break down. New York in the 1790s fits that situation, not only because the creation of a federal government raised the question of where political authority would be located, but also because the revolution, together with population growth and in-migration, had dramatically altered New York’s social structure. In a world of uncertainty, a successful strategy can be to choose a position that gives one a strong position in the future. Setting the rules of the game does exactly that. It is a struggle over potential that can be actualized in the future rather than a struggle over substantive issues in the present. In other words, parties in New York emerged in the formal struggle for power, not

the substantive struggle for policy.

Third, New York's party system was not the result of the formation of the national one. In his study of voting in Congress from 1789 to 1803, Hoadley (1986) describes a process of monotonically increasing party development whereby, starting in the Third Congress (1793-1795), issue-based factions were molded into voting blocs that were stable across a broad range of issues.²⁰ If state parties had been the result of national cleavages, we should have seen the development of legislative parties in the New York State Assembly to follow that of legislative parties in Congress, perhaps with a slight temporal delay. In addition, we should have observed that the issues that gave rise to parties at the national level also drove party development in the state assembly. The temporal pattern of party development in New York, with its three peaks in 1788, during the early 1790s, and around 1800, does not conform to this story. Instead, my findings suggest that New York had its own party system which developed earlier than most analysts have dated the emergence of the federal-level system.

Clearly, New York had one of the more developed party systems at the time, but other states, too, had produced political structures that could then be aggregated into national parties. The irony, then, is that the national party system may actually have first emerged at the *state* level. It is these structures and their alignment with the emerging national party system that we need to understand and incorporate into our theories of party formation.

20. During the first two Congresses (1789-1793), voting was characterized by factionalism based on regional blocs. Domestic economic issues and the authority of the federal government were the dominant issues, with Hamilton's proposals for the assumption of the states' debt and the creation of a national bank at the center. During the Third and Fourth Congress (1793-1797) those regional blocs began to turn into partisan blocs, but party and sectionalism still largely overlapped. In the Fourth Congress, for example, 77% of the delegates from New England were in the Federalist bloc and 95% of the delegates from the South were in the Republican bloc. The Middle states, including New York, were divided. But between the Third and the Fourth Congress, northern Republicans moved from the Federalist bloc to the Republican bloc and southern Federalists moved in the opposite direction. Thus, party increasingly replaced region as the dominant dimension along which legislators arranged themselves. Some legislators still broke out of their voting blocs during particular issues such as the Jay Treaty or when regional and local issues were at stake, but overall membership in voting blocs predicted pretty well how a legislator would vote on a given issue. Foreign policy and the protection of the frontier were now the central issues, no longer the authority of the national government. During the last three Congresses (1797-1803), sectionalism further receded and party became the only dominant dimension. Again, foreign policy issues, in particular the XYZ Affair, the Quasi-War with France, and the Alien and Sedition Laws, dominated.

But neither was the New York party system independent of the federal one. While there were political divisions in New York prior to the constitution, the constitution significantly changed the stakes of the game. Because of the linkage to the national party system, choosing sides now had implications beyond the state. As Gould (1996) and others have found, the existence of trans-local political structures has fundamental implications for the balance of power between competing groups in different localities. The development of a party system in New York was neither the result of state-level issues indifferent to those at the national level, nor a mere projection of national-level cleavages, but, rather, provoked by the particular way that changes at the federal level mapped onto New York cleavages.

During the first period of partisanship, partisan issues were a direct consequence of the constitution when legislators divided over how to elect presidential electors and congressmen, or how to draw the boundaries of congressional districts. Clearly New Yorkers cared a great deal about these issues, because they understood the significance of the federal government in the political world after 1788. During the second period of partisan division, national issues appear less relevant, and a reconnection between state and nation does not occur until the late 1790s, when national issues like the Alien and Sedition Acts or the military conflict with France were increasingly tied into the existing state divisions.

CHAPTER 5

PARTIES AND NETWORKS

5.1 Introduction

Starting in the 1950s, social anthropologists began to conceive of social structure as a “network of actually existing social relations” (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, 190). In the following decades this theoretical perspective generated a series of fascinating studies that examined the relationship between social networks and politics (Schmidt et al. 1977). One strand of scholarship that came out of these efforts paid particular attention to how individuals manipulated their relationships to achieve their political goals (Mitchell 1974, 281–2). Instead of envisioning social structure merely as constraint, ties were seen as resources that could be used in political contests. In the words of Barth (2004, 4), “Political action, in this setting, is the art of manipulating these various dyadic relations so as to create effective and viable bodies of supporters—in other words, so as to create corporate political followings.”

One of the most interesting pieces was Mayer’s (1966) study of politics in India in the 1960s. Studying a local election campaign, Mayer analyzed the way in which a political candidate garnered political support by activating a variety of existing relationships based on kinship, caste, shared party activity, or wrestling that connected him either directly or indirectly (through intermediaries) to voters (see also Nicholas 1977 on the importance of different social bases for political support). He referred to the resulting structure as an “interactive quasi-group,” a subset of an ego’s (candidate) network that is activated by ego for a specific purpose (winning the election). What distinguishes a quasi-group from a group is its lack of temporal stability and the fact that the only relationships that matter are those between ego and alter, not those among the alters.

Mayer’s work helps us think about how political elites activate existing social relationships and use them for political purposes. Of course, quasi-groups are not parties. But if we

imagine that the quasi-group around the candidate reappears from election to election, we might see it become more permanent and transform into an electoral committee. And as electoral committees begin to coordinate their activities, they build larger structures that compete for political office and link alliances of candidates to political followings. In any case, the point is that Mayer urges us to think about the kinds of social relationships, dyads but also somewhat larger pieces of social structure, that can be strung together for the purpose of gaining political office.

Like anthropology, sociology also has a long tradition of studies that look at politics through the lens of social networks (Laumann and Knoke 1987; Knoke and Pappi 1991; Bearman 1993; Padgett and Ansell 1993; Gould 1995, 1996; see L. C. Freeman 2004 for a review). Again, this work is relevant for my purpose only in so far as it understands networks as the “independent variable,” the thing that helps explain the political structures we observe. Networks are able to explain political formations because ties among actors both constrain and facilitate action. But those two sides—constraint and facilitation—are not always given equal weight in sociological studies. Neither are they always equally important in the social worlds being studied. In Gould’s (1996) work on the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania in the 1790s, for example, networks appear as something that makes people act in a certain way. This is why he is able to predict whether an elite participated in the rebellion based on his position in the elite patronage network. In Padgett and Ansell’s (1993) study of the Medici family in Renaissance Florence, in contrast, networks appear largely as something that actors can use. Mapping the marriage and economic networks of Florentine families, the authors show how the Medici realized the potential that lay in their strategic position within these networks and exploited it to take over the state.

Below we will see how the social networks New York’s elites were embedded in pulled and pushed them so that some ended up on the side of the Federalists while others ended up on the side of the Republicans. But while a person’s social relationships go a long way

in predicting his choice of party, an approach that merely tries to predict party choice as a function of network position is likely to fail, because it neglects the essence of elite political action. Elite politics, I contend, is not about behaving in predictable ways. It is about preserving room to move, about not getting locked in. As a result, we will encounter elites as agentic bricoleurs who welded together different pieces of social structure into parties. As they tried to organize their activities in order to gain political office and control the state, they relied on existing relationships to create informal organizations that were recognized by contemporaries, and later by historians, as political parties. Yet, this process was not merely one of successive agglomeration. It required breaking apart existing alliances and reconfiguring them to one's own advantage. Party formation was a process that involved not only the making, but also the breaking of ties. It required elites to cut through the "Sargasso Sea of social obligation and context" (H. C. White 2008, 4). In other words, it required elites to break out of the roles defined by their position in social networks and to create room to act. Consequently, we will encounter cases where old friends become fierce political enemies, where clients betray their political sponsors, and where family members compete with one another in elections.

Analyzing the formation of parties in this way requires two things. First, it requires that we identify the social material that was available to build larger political structures, that is, the social relationships political elites could draw on as they were beginning to coordinate their actions. Second, it requires that we understand the dynamics that led to the construction and dissolution of social relationships as a result of political action. I am afraid that only the first goal will be sufficiently addressed in this chapter. While here and there we will catch a direct glimpse of the dynamics governing the construction and dissolution of ties, insights will mostly be derived from the conditions of possibility, that is, by showing what kinds of moves were possible.

5.2 Social Building Blocks

What, then, are the pieces of social structure eighteenth-century New Yorkers could work with? Existing scholarship identifies several candidates. Hillmann's (2008) work on Vermont shows that people who were tightly embedded in local credit networks played an important role in linking local factions to national politics and thus aided the construction of national parties. In a world in which money was scarce, credit created relationships of obligation that had important consequences for politics. We do not know how important credit relations were in New York. But there are good reasons to think that at least on the frontier the situation was similar to that in Vermont. Taylor (1995, 188–9), for example, suggests how William Cooper, owner of a store in Cooperstown, used store credit to gain political support from his customers.

It is therefore not surprising that contemporaries also perceived banking to be partisan (Murphy 2015, 77). The two banks in the state, the Bank of New-York and the branch of the Bank of the United States, were both in control of Federalist elites (Murphy 2015, 87), although there is little evidence to suggest that they exclusively served members of the Federalist party (Murphy 2015, 86). Still, the concentration of wealth and influence in the hands of Federalist elites, who used it to draw credit-seeking New Yorkers into their ranks, frustrated Republicans. Because the state legislature during the 1790s was hesitant to incorporate new banks, Republicans had to be creative if they wanted to insert themselves into New York's credit networks. When in 1799 the legislature debated a proposal for a water company, called the Manhattan Company, that would provide clean water for the City of New York, Republicans, with Aaron Burr leading the way, sensed an opportunity. Shortly before the Manhattan Company's charter was up for a vote, Burr inserted a clause that gave the company almost unlimited leeway in how it used its surplus capital (Murphy 2015, 92). This practically allowed the Manhattan Company to function as a bank and "Republican leaders to integrate themselves into the financial and civic lives of New York City voters. By offering

patrons and clients access to bank credit and by becoming an investor in fellow Republicans' enterprises, the company attached a material benefit to Republican Party membership [...]" (Murphy 2015, 108).¹

Land sales were another means of creating relationships. In post-revolutionary New York, land was at the heart of basically everything. The forfeiture of loyalist land, together with westward expansion, freed up large areas that had to be sold off by the state. This resulted in dramatic land speculation, especially in the frontier regions, allowing people with sufficient capital to buy large tracts of land and to sell them in smaller pieces once their prices had gone up. Again, Cooper serves as an example. He rose to power in part through land speculation, and he used the influence this afforded him for political purposes. Taylor (1995, 188–9) finds that 97% of those who had bought their land directly from Cooper sided with him politically. The person associated most with using land as patronage, however, is George Clinton. During his time as governor from 1777 to 1795, Clinton was regularly blamed by his opponents for using the sale of confiscated loyalist land to please his supporters, although actual evidence of such favoritism is scarce. Still, it is plausible that he, as well as the commissioners of forfeiture who were appointed to manage the land sales, were able to use their positions to build relationships they could rely on in their political struggles.

Brooke (2010, 90–4) discusses two other types of relationships. In his study of Columbia County, he shows that the Anti-Federalists and the Republicans came primarily from among those who had served on the revolutionary committees of correspondence during the war. Federalist recruitment, on the other hand, relied more heavily on Freemason lodges, at least up until the mid-1790s when a new generation of Republicans began to also use lodges as a means to advance socially and politically. What is important about Freemason lodges is that they provided "vertical connections to lesser men, who in turn had their own orbits of influence" (Brooke 2010, 191); service on committees of correspondence likely did the

1. For the role of banking in the Chesapeake states see Risjord (1978, 473–6).

same. This matters because in chapter 3 I found that the two parties looked very similar in social terms and that there was large variation in the kinds of people affiliated with both parties. Both the Federalists and the Republicans included powerful social elites as well as less wealthy and influential office-holders. If we believe that parties came from existing social networks, we must be able to identify those types of vertical connections.

One type of vertical relationship that has been particularly important in structural analyses of politics is that between a patron and a client. Sometimes these patronage relationships are connected into larger patronage pyramids, which, when politicized, can create a vertical cleavage structure (Scott 1972; Martin 2009). We saw this in the discussions of the structural-genetic and the dynamic-relational approaches to party formation in chapter 1. According to Bearman (1993), such a dynamic was present in the lead-up to the English civil war. The spread of national patronage increasingly linked local gentry to elites at the national center, producing two vertical structures that were then articulated in the language of national religious cleavages (see Zhang 2021 for a similar argument about the Taiping civil war, although with a slight twist as the initial vertical division quickly evolved into a horizontal one between rebels and those defending the state).

Gould (1996), in his work on the Whiskey rebellion in Pennsylvania in 1794, analyzes one particular type of patronage relationship: surety bonds. “By law, a Pennsylvanian elected or appointed to an office that afforded control over a public trust was required to present [...] at least one person—usually more than one—who would post a surety bond on his behalf. This procedure [...] consisted of a guarantee on the part of those acting as sureties to reimburse the state for funds lost or liability incurred through the actions of the officeholder” (Gould 1996, 416). Gould was able to rely, like many historical scholars, on the practice of the state to record the activities of its citizens. Scholars of New York are less fortunate. Nothing of the kind of surety bonds existed in the state, preventing us from conducting an analogous analysis. Patron-client relationships can only be observed in the personal correspondence

among political actors.

In chapter 1, I argued that what we need is an account that traces the emergence of parties out of smaller pieces of social structure. What follows is an attempt to elaborate on the specific kinds of relationships that served as building blocks for the formation of parties in New York. To do this, I draw on a novel dataset of relationships among political elites, which are described in section 2.2. The relationships I will discuss are those arising from kinship, shared college attendance, and law clerkships. I will further discuss the role of political sponsorship. Political patronage in the form of offices, as a relationship endogenous to politics and a way of binding together previously *unconnected* individuals with the potential of reaching into every corner of the state, is discussed in chapter 6.

5.3 Kinship

In many historical contexts, kinship was the dominant way of organizing politics (Padgett and Ansell 1993; Bearman 1993; Adams 1994, 2007, 2005). Even where other types of relationships were more important, kinship often serves as the backdrop against which scholars evaluate those relationships. For instance, Scott (1972, 101) argues that patron-client relationships became so important in Southeast Asia because of “the inability of the kinship unit to serve as an effective vehicle for personal security or advancement.” Similarly, Bearman (1993) finds that the decline of local kinship networks as sources of status led to uncertainty among the local gentry in England, which was overcome by creating new, patronage-based relationships.

In chapter 1, we saw that politics in colonial New York was organized by family factions. But to what extent did these types of relationships still structure politics after independence? On the one hand, the revolution significantly disrupted the New York kinship network. Some of the powerful families of the colonial period, like the Johnsons in the Mohawk Valley or the DeLanceys in Westchester County, had left the state as Loyalists. Population growth, migra-

tion patterns, and westward expansion further impeded the possibility to organize politics on the basis of stable kinship networks. But at the same time, the historiography of New York makes clear that kinship still played a crucial role after the war and even after 1787/8. As in Mayer's (1966) work, kinship was still one of the relationships elites could draw on to build electoral support. That this was the case is apparent in the personal correspondence among family members which often discusses upcoming elections and political strategies.²

Here I take a closer look at the kinship network of New York's office-holders. The analysis will focus on three questions in particular. How connected were New York office-holders through kinship? What is the relationship between kinship and party affiliation? And what is the geographic reach of those networks, in other words, are kinship relationships primarily local or do they span the entire state?

Figure 5.1 shows the kinship network of New York's political elites. Isolates are not shown. Nodes are colored by party and node shapes indicate whether the person held a federal office at some point in his life. Edges are colored by whether they are based on blood (e.g., father/son, brother, cousin) or marriage (e.g., father-in-law/son-in-law, brother-in-law). 208 of the 763 elites in the dataset (27% of all elites and 50% of those for whom I was able to find at least some kinship data) have at least one family tie to another elite in the dataset and thus appear in the graph. While many elites have only one tie to another elite and are part of smaller structures, often consisting of only two or three individuals, 84 elites appear in the largest component of the kinship network, a tightly connected cluster of elite families.

There are a total of 294 edges, most of which are between cousins (65), followed by brothers-in-law (53), brothers (53), between uncles and nephews (36), between fathers and

2. In a letter from January 28, 1793, for instance, David Thomas writes to his stepfather John Williams saying that "I am not able to make you so accurate a calculation as I wish to do as I have not the elections of Queensbury and Kingsbury nor Westfield, but I believe I have it fully with my calculations in this," adding a table with predictions for each town for the upcoming election (John Williams Papers, New York State Library, series HY 12382). Unless otherwise mentioned, all quotes in this chapter related to John Williams come from this source.

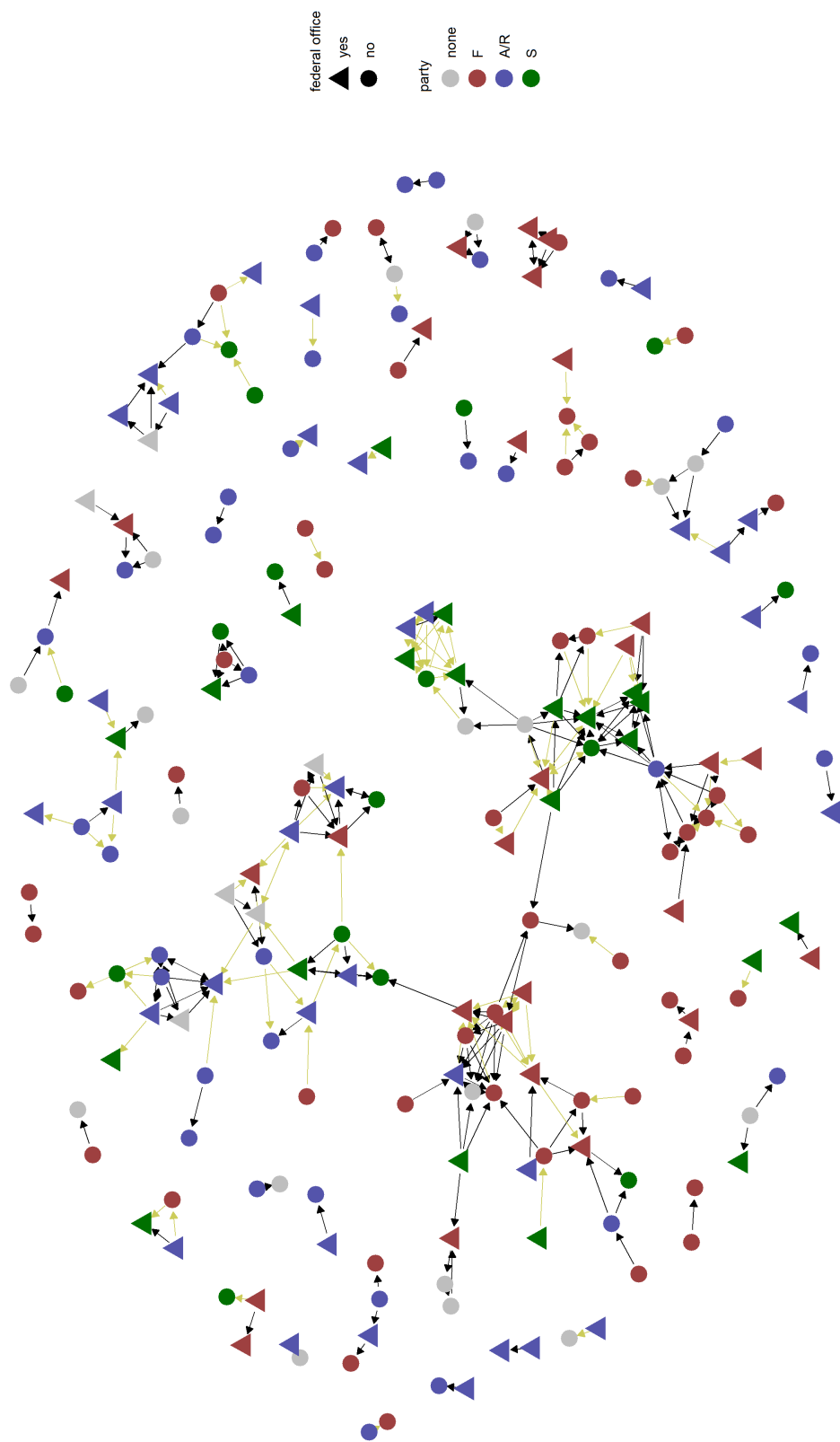


Figure 5.1: Kinship network

Note: Black edges show relations of descent, yellow edges show relations based on marriage. Arrows point to the younger person involved in the relationship.

sons (34), and fathers-in-law and sons-in-law (23), uncles-in-law and nephews-in-law (17), and people sharing the same father-in-law (13). Interestingly, I found not a single grandson/grandfather tie. Thus, between 1788 and 1801 no family placed members from three generations into elite political offices.

What it means that one quarter of the elites I sampled are connected through kinship to at least one other elite is difficult to judge without a comparison. Unfortunately, I am not aware of comparable studies in different states or of the state of New York at a different time. But a few comparisons with other political contexts may help us get a sense of the significance of this number. Reviewing the literature, Putnam (1976:61) observes that “43 percent of the cabinet ministers who ruled Holland between 1848 and 1958 were bound by kinship to other ministers, that approximately one-seventh of the deputies of the Third French Republic (1870-1940) were related to one another, and that about one-tenth of all U.S. congressmen from 1790 to 1960 had relatives who also served in Congress.” The samples underlying those numbers are clearly not directly comparable to mine. First, they focus on one office, while I sampled individuals from multiple offices (although about 90% of my sample served in the assembly). Second, I am looking at a smaller time window. Third, I only go two steps back in the family histories of each person in the sample. Going back further would, of course, increase density. Still, the numbers show that kinship played a relatively important part in connecting New York’s office-holders.

That said, the fact that one quarter of the political elites sampled appear in the kinship network means that three quarters do not. Unless most of this is due to missing data, this finding makes clear that while political parties could use pre-existing kinship relationships as material for larger structures, we cannot simply understand parties as an extension of kinship. The ability to organize politics through kinship alone was inhibited by population growth, migration, and westward expansion. In a rapidly expanding political context, other types of relationships were necessary. As we will see below, kinship networks may have

formed the core of the emerging state parties, but additional party cadre were drawn in not merely on the basis of family.

Before I take a closer look at the kinship network, let me examine to what extent kinship is related to party affiliation. I do this using logistic regressions with legislator pairs as the unit of analysis, an indicator for whether the two legislators are in the same party as the dependent variable, and an indicator for whether there is a family tie between them as the independent variable. This analysis shows that the odds of being in the same party are 64% higher for those with a family tie than for those without a family tie. If instead of combining all kinship relationships into a “family tie” variable, we examine the different types of kinship relations separately, we find significant differences across kinship relations. While a son/father relationship increases the odds of being in the same party by 367%, a son-in-law/father-in-law relationship increases them by only 24%. A nephew/uncle relationship increases the odds by 113%, being cousins increases the odds by 84%, and being brothers by 10%. (All coefficients are significant at the .01-level.³)

Those numbers are based on analyses that use all three party categories—Federalist, Republican, and switcher—and only discard those members for whom I have no party ID. Consequently, a relationship between a Federalist and a switcher is coded as not having the same party affiliation. If, instead, we ignore switchers and only consider relationships between Federalists and Republicans, the numbers change significantly. Now having a family tie increases the odds of being in the same party by 161% (as compared to 64% in the previous analysis). For a son/father relationship the coefficient changes only slightly from 367% to 379%, while for a son-in-law/father-in-law tie it increases dramatically from 24% to 474%. For brothers it changes from 10% to 50%, for cousins from 84% to 168%, and for a nephew/uncle tie from 113% to 72%. (Again, all coefficients are significant at the .01-level.)

3. Confidence intervals are constructed not taking into account the statistical non-independence across dyads and are thus likely to be overly narrow.

Most striking is the change in the coefficient for son-in-law/father-in-law ties.⁴ This suggests that relationships between sons-in-law and fathers-in-law tend to involve one person who is either a Federalist or a Republican and one switcher, as those cases would contribute to a negative relationship between “family tie” and “same party” when switchers are included in the analysis and would therefore drive down the otherwise positive relationship. (Note that this is *not* the case for father/son relationships.)

Why might that be the case? One possible explanation has to do with the role of marriage in cementing new political alliances. Political elites in New York were deeply embedded in a web of different kinds of social relationships. Switching sides in politics, therefore, often involved a reconfiguration of those social relationships. John Williams of Washington County, for instance, switched from the Republicans to the Federalists in 1795. That year, he also married his daughter to a future Federalist and changed from one local church to another and from one Freemason lodge to another. After switching sides, elites stabilized their new positions in the political field through the formation of new social relationships, and marriage was an important way in which this could be achieved.

Of the 23 son-in-law/father-in-law relationships in my data, 18 have complete data on party affiliation (table 5.1). Of those 18, nine are between pairs with different party affiliations. One might argue that in those nine cases, one of the two people is at risk of switching. And, in fact, in seven out of nine cases that is exactly what happened. There are three cases in which the father-in-law is a switcher. Two marry their daughter to a Republican and one marries his daughter to a Federalist. There are four cases where the son-in-law is a switcher. Two of them marry the daughters of Republicans, two the daughters of Federalists. Finally, there is also one relationship in which both the father-in-law and the son-in-law are switchers. What is interesting is that many of these marriages occurred during the 1790s

4. The low effect for brothers is, perhaps, also surprising. Of the 32 brother relationships in my data, 3 are between two Republicans, 8 between two Federalists, and 7 between a Federalist and a Republican. The remaining 14 involve at least one switcher.

father-in-law	son-in-law			
	A/R	F	S	none
A/R	3	1	2	2
F	1	5	2	0
S	2	1	1	1
none	1	1	0	0

Table 5.1: Father-in-law/son-in-law ties by party

or shortly after, indicating the close connection between kinship and shifting political alliances. In 1795 Federalist Anthony J. Blanchard married the daughter of John Williams, who in the same year switched from the Republicans to the Federalists. Ezra L’Hommedieu switched to the Republicans and married the daughter of Nicoll Havens in 1803, making him the brother-in-law of Jonathan Nicoll Havens, a Republican. The Clintons, in particular, used kinship to cement their newly formed political connections. In 1800, George Clinton’s daughter married Pierre Van Cortlandt, Jr., who, together with his father, had deserted the Federalists and joined the Republican alliance during the 1790s. Similarly, in 1808, James Clinton, George Clinton’s brother, married his daughter to Ambrose Spencer, who ten years earlier had switched from the Federalists to the Republicans. Now Spencer was DeWitt Clinton’s brother-in-law, putting him into an important political position. According to H. M. Flick (1934, 270), “When De Witt Clinton himself was elected United States Senator [in 1802], his brother-in-law, Ambrose Spencer, who had been made attorney general of the state, assumed leadership of the party.” Spencer’s switch is particularly interesting as he is closely tied to a Federalist cluster in the clerkship network (see below). DeWitt Clinton himself married the daughter of Samuel Osgood, a New York City merchant who during the 1790s switched from the Federalists to the Republicans.

Thus, existing family relationships not only structured people’s choice of party, but the emerging party system, in turn, shaped people’s marriage choices. In 1805 William Wilson of Columbia County was rejected by a woman, whose brother-in-law informed him in a letter that “[h]er sole and conclusive objection was yr Politics!! Your Whig Principles, and fixt

adherence to Whig Men and Measures formed the only bar of that *Party's* declining the connexion contemplated!! ... I should never think that her bigotry and fanaticism should extend so far, tho' I know that she was a violent *Briton*..." (cited in Brooke 2010, 347).

Now that I have examined the relationship between family ties and party, let me take a closer look at the core of the kinship network. To do this, I switch to a different visualization of the kinship network (figure 5.2). Instead of only including the elites in my dataset, the graph also contains each elite's father, mother, and grandfather, as well as his parents' fathers. And instead of visualizing all types of relationships discussed above, only two are shown: child/parent and son-in-law/father-in-law. Other relationships can be inferred. Brothers, for example, appear as two elites who share the same father and/or mother, cousins as elites who share the same grandfather but not the same parents. Nodes and edges are colored the same way as in figure 5.1. Larger nodes indicate that the person is part of the 763 elites in my dataset. Arrows point to the younger person involved in the relationship. Only elites in the largest connected component are shown ($N = 79$).

The first thing that we notice is that Federalists dominate the core of the kinship network. Almost half (33) of the elites in the network are Federalists, while only about one fifth (16) are Republicans. In addition, there are 21 switchers. Below we will see that the presence of switchers is no coincidence. In fact, the story that emerges from this analysis is one of a cohesive network of elite families that breaks apart and becomes reconfigured into the nuclei of the Federalist and Republican parties in New York.

Who are those families who brought together family and politics? Early Aaron Burr biographer James Parton identified three main family factions in New York and described them as follows: "The Clintons had *power*, the Livingstons had *numbers*, the Schuylers had *Hamilton*" (Parton 1876, 169). While Parton associated each faction with a different way of exercising influence, all of them appear in the largest component of the kinship network.⁵

5. The following discussion mentions many of the political offices held by these elites. The meaning of these offices will become clearer in chapters 6 and 7.

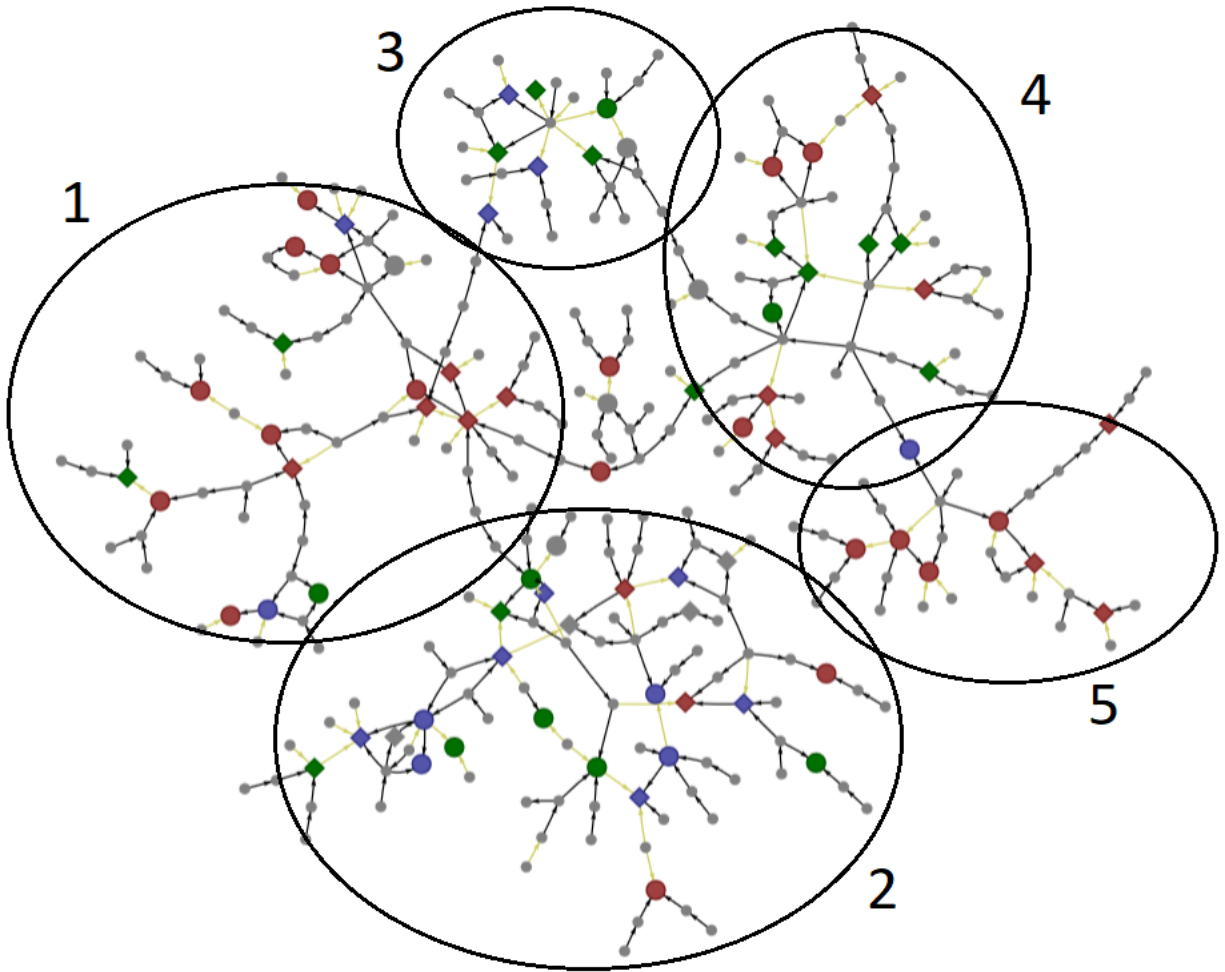


Figure 5.2: Kinship network, largest component

Note: Nodes are colored by party as in figure 5.1. Black edges show relations of descent, yellow edges show relations based on marriage. Squares indicate that the person held a federal office at some point in his life. Larger nodes indicate that the person is part of the 763 elites in my dataset. Arrows point to the younger person involved in the relationship. The numbers indicate different family clusters which are discussed in the text.

The Schuylers (cluster 1) were large landholders in Albany. At the center of the Schuyler family cluster is General Philip Schuyler, who through his wife Catherine Van Rensselaer was connected to the wealthy Van Rensselaer family. Philip Schuyler's daughter Elizabeth married Alexander Hamilton and his daughter Margarita married Stephen Van Rensselaer, patroon of the Manor of Rensselaerswyck and according to CNN the sixth richest American in history.⁶ In addition, one of Philip's sons married Stephen Van Rensselaer's sister, further stabilizing the Schuyler-Van Rensselaer connection. Through Stephen Van Rensselaer's grandfather there was a further connection to the Ten Broecks, who in turn were connected to the Ten Eycks.

In total, six members of the Schuyler family and seven members of the Van Rensselaer family appear in my sample, most of whom hold influential military and civil positions in the state. Philip Schuyler himself, one of the most influential individuals in Albany, served as a general during the revolution, a member of the colonial assembly, the Continental Congress, the state senate, the Council of Appointment, and the U.S. Senate, and as county judge and surveyor-general. His son served in the assembly for Dutchess County and later in the U.S. House. His nephew from Montgomery County began his career in the military and was an assemblyman, state senator, and member of the Council of Appointment. Three other Schuylers served in the assembly and held local civil and military positions. The Schuylers were, thus, not only able to occupy many important offices, but also to bridge several counties in the state.

Stephen Van Rensselaer began his career as a major and justice of the peace but advanced quickly. He served in the state senate and on the Council of Appointment and in 1795 became lieutenant governor under John Jay. In 1801 he ran for governor but lost against George Clinton. After that he served in the assembly and the U.S. House and became one of the canal commissioners for the Erie Canal. Robert Van Rensselaer was a deputy to the Provincial

6. <https://money.cnn.com/gallery/luxury/2014/06/01/richest-americans-in-history/7.html>

Congress and a member of the assembly in the 1770s and became the first county clerk of Columbia. His son also served as county clerk and was elected numerous times to the assembly before being appointed New York Secretary of State. Robert's brother, Jeremiah, was a U.S. Representative and became lieutenant governor in 1801, succeeding Stephen Van Rensselaer in that position. Jeremiah is the only person in the Schuyler-Van Rensselaer cluster who became a Republican. Jeremiah's son served one term in the assembly and then focused on his military career.

Cluster 2 in figure 5.2 contains the Clintons. George Clinton, governor of New York, his brother James Clinton, deputy to the Provincial Congress, assemblyman, and state senator, and James' three sons DeWitt Clinton, Charles Clinton, and George Clinton, Jr. DeWitt started his career in the military and later served in the assembly, the state senate, the Council of Appointment, the U.S. Senate, and as mayor of New York City, lieutenant governor, and canal commissioner, before being elected governor in 1824. His brothers were somewhat less successful politically, but still held positions in the assembly, the U.S. House, and the military.

The marriage between George Clinton's daughter and Pierre Van Cortlandt's son in 1800 connected the Clintons to one of the old aristocratic families in the state. Previously, the Van Cortlandts had been tied to the Schuylers, but that connection dissolved with the death of Stephanus Van Cortlandt in 1700 and was not renewed. Pierre Van Cortlandt was elected to the Provincial Congress and became the first lieutenant governor of the state in 1777 under George Clinton. His son Philip was a deputy to the Provincial Congress, assemblyman, state senator, member of the Council of Appointment, and U.S. Representative. His son Pierre Jr. was an assemblyman and U.S. Representative.

Another daughter of Clinton married Matthias B. Tallmadge, son of Colonel James Tallmadge, who had married the daughter of his colonel, Theodorus Bailey, himself a U.S. Representative and U.S. Senator. Matthias' political career began in 1801 and he later

became a judge on the U.S. District Court. His brother James Tallmadge, Jr. became a U.S. Representative and in 1825 lieutenant governor under DeWitt Clinton. Family also connected Clinton to the Platts and the Thompsons, who like the Tallmadges were families of lawyers. Zephania Platt served as a member of the Provincial Congress and Continental Congress and was, among other things, a state senator, member of the Council of Appointment, and county judge of Dutchess. His son Jonas was county clerk of Herkimer and Oneida, an assemblyman, a state senator, and a U.S. Representative. Ezra Thompson was elected to the Constitutional Convention in 1788 but was unable to build a successful political career, unlike his son Smith Thompson, whose career began as an assemblyman and who held a seat on the State Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court and also served as U.S. Secretary of the Navy.

The Livingstons (clusters 3 and 4) were the most numerous among the old families, but also the least united. The upper manor Livingstons were jealous of the more illustrious members of the family like William Livingston, governor of New Jersey, or Robert R. Livingston, a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence, chancellor of New York from 1777 to 1801, and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York, the largest and oldest Freemason lodge in New York. The Livingstons occupied a middle position in New York politics, moving their numbers into different alliances in order to gain power. Eleven Livingstons appear in the core kinship network. Robert's brother Edward served in the military and the U.S. House before being appointed U.S. District Attorney and mayor of New York City in 1801. Another branch of the family included Henry Brockholst Livingston, whose father became first governor of New Jersey and who himself, after a brief service in the assembly, made his way through the courts from associate justice on the State Supreme Court to a District Court judge to a judge on the U.S. Supreme Court. The upper manor Livingstons, in contrast, were individuals whose careers had a strong local focus with county level civil and military positions and service in the assembly and the state senate.

They had to wait for political accolades until the next generation when Henry Walter and his cousin Robert LeRoy became U.S. Senators.

A last cluster (cluster 5) contains the Roosevelt, Hoffman, and Varick families of New York City. At the center of this cluster is Martinus Hoffman. Through his first wife, Martinus was connected to Robert Benson, grandfather of Egbert Benson, New York's first attorney general, member of the Continental Congress and the U.S. House, associate justice of the New York Supreme Court, and later a judge on the U.S. Circuit Court. Through his second wife he was connected to the Livingstons. Martinus' son-in-law was Isaac Roosevelt, great-great-grandfather of Franklin D. Roosevelt and deputy to the Provincial Congress, state senator, and member of the Council of Appointment. Isaac's son-in-law, Richard Varick, was attorney general and mayor of New York City. Martinus' grandson, Josiah Ogden, served many terms in the assembly and was appointed attorney general. Josiah Ogden's brother-in-law was Cadwallader D. Colden, who served as district attorney in the 1790s and later as mayor of New York City and a representative in Congress.

Most people involved in the core of the kinship network belong to the old aristocratic families that had a long tradition of using family connections to build political power in the state and form alliances with other families. That this strategy was still successful is evidenced by the fact that most of these individuals held powerful positions in the state and at the federal level. But the network also reveals another type of elite—people who came from outside the network of the old families and attached themselves to them. All of them had extremely successful careers. One, Alexander Hamilton, who married into the Schuyler family, is likely familiar to the reader. Others include John Armstrong, Jr., Morgan Lewis, and Thomas Tillotson, all of whom married into the Livingston family. John Armstrong, Jr. was born in Pennsylvania and served as an aid to Horatio Gates during the revolution. After being a delegate for Pennsylvania in the Continental Congress, he withdrew from public office. In 1789 he married Alida Livingston, sister of Robert R. and

Edward Livingston, and moved to New York. In 1800 he was elected as a Republican to the U.S. Senate where he served until 1804 when he was appointed Minister to France before becoming U.S. Secretary of War in 1813. Morgan Lewis was the son of Francis Lewis, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. After graduating from Princeton, he married into the Livingston family in 1779. In 1791 he became attorney general of New York and later associate justice and then chief justice of the State Supreme Court. In 1804, he was elected governor of New York. Like Armstrong and Lewis, Thomas Tillotson also came from a respectable family that was unconnected to the old New York families. He married into the Livingston family the same year as Lewis. After serving in the assembly, the state senate, and the U.S. House, Tillotson was appointed secretary of state of New York in 1801. The Clintons also had these kinds of elites who married into their family. Ambrose Spencer, who married the daughter of James Clinton, was an assemblyman, a state senator, attorney general of New York, mayor of Albany, and a U.S. Representative. Samuel Osgood, who married the mother of DeWitt Clinton's first wife, was an assemblyman, U.S. postmaster-general, and naval officer of the port of New York.

We can think of these family clusters like planets whose masses created a gravitational field in the state to which other ambitious office-seekers had to react. This became evident around 1792 when Robert R. Livingston switched from the Federalists to the Republicans. The reasons for the switch are not entirely clear. As we saw in chapter 1, there have always been tensions among the elite families in New York. Those tensions intensified during the 1780s when elites divided over whether to establish a land (favored by Robert R. Livingston) or a commercial bank (favored by Schuyler and Hamilton). But a more proximate cause of his switch had to do with frustrations and jealousies resulting from a stalled career, and the fact that his position became weaker relative to that of other elite families, most importantly the Schuylers. Livingston received none of the federal patronage, while Philip Schuyler was chosen for the U.S. Senate and his son-in-law, Alexander Hamilton, became Secretary of the

Treasury. In a letter to Morgan Lewis from January 1791, Livingston explained, “What you say is reported of a coalition between me & the Govr. is so far true as it related to a union of interest in opposing Schuyler’s election & confounded if carried beyond that object” (cited in Kaminski 1993, 194). Whatever the reason, the switch was one of the most consequential political moves during the 1790s as it shifted the center of political gravity and allowed the alliance around George Clinton to form a competitive alternative to the Federalists. The reason why this switch was so important was that, at least initially, Robert was able to take most of the members of his family, including the upper manor branch, with him, demonstrating the stickiness of family relations. Tillotson, Armstrong, and Lewis, who had married into the family, also all became Republicans during the 1790s. By breaking the Livingstons (and also the Van Cortlandts) off from the Federalists and tying them into his alliance, governor George Clinton was able to divide the old aristocratic families.

In 1798, however, the upper manor Livingstons (cluster4) switched back to the Federalists, while Robert and his brother Edward (cluster 3) remained powerful Republicans. The network graph suggests one possible reason for this: those who switched back appear much more closely connected to other Federalists. Robert LeRoy Livingston, for example, one of the upper manor Livingstons who in 1792 switched to the Republicans and in 1798 back to the Federalists, was through his maternal grandfather Jacob Le Roy connected to the Federalist LeRoy family. The switch back to the Federalists, again, had consequences for the political system—although this time only local ones. When the Livingstons in Columbia County switched back to the Federalists in 1798, several other people (Jared Coffin, Elisha Jenkins, Thomas Frothingham) went the other way, likely because they understood that with the Livingstons on their side they were no longer going to have the same career opportunities.

Whatever their exact motivations, the Livingstons’ political moves paid off. Feeling pushed out after 1789, by 1801 the family was back on track. Robert R. Livingston was made Minister to France, Edward Livingston mayor of New York City, Brockholst Livingston a

judge on the New York Supreme Court, and Maturin Livingston a recorder. In addition, those who had married into the Livingston family also held important offices in the state. Morgan Lewis was chief justice and Smith Thompson a judge on the New York Supreme Court, Thomas Tillotson was secretary of state, and Armstrong was a U.S. Senator.

But how were the Van Cortlandts and the Livingstons, both of whom were tied through family to the Federalist families around them, able to move so freely and switch sides? A closer look at the ties that connect the different family clusters reveals that most of them were old and no longer around as these families entered the last decade of the eighteenth century. The Van Cortlandts were connected to the Schuylers through Stephanus Van Cortlandt who died in 1700. The Livingstons were tied to the Schuylers through Stephen Van Rensselaer II, who died in 1769. And so did Philip Livingston in 1749, who connected the Federalist Hoffman-Roosevelt-Varick cluster to the Livingstons. And the Duanes with William North become disconnected with the death of Robert Livingston, Jr. in 1790. Neither were the two Livingston cluster connected anymore after the death of James Livingston in 1763. While the Schuylers were still closely tied to the Van Rensselaers, their connections to the Livingstons and Van Cortlandts were not renewed. This gave those families room to move, which they used to throw their strength behind the Republican party.

Now that we understand the extent to which family connected some of the most powerful elites in the state, one task remains. The goal of this chapter is to understand the social material from which New York's parties were constructed. Given that those parties had to operate statewide and mobilize candidates and voters in all counties, we need to ask about the geographic reach of those kinship networks. To what extent were elites able to mobilize across the entire state on the basis of family connections? This question can be answered by turning the person-person network into a county-county network, where an edge between two counties represents the number of family ties that connect these two counties. I do this by assigning each person to their primary county, defined as the county in which they held

most of the offices during their career. The resulting graph is shown in figure 5.3. To be legible, the network only portrays edges between counties but not self-loops. Information on movement within county is reflected in the size of the nodes, which is proportional to the number of within-county ties. Interestingly, a large proportion (40%) of family ties are within counties. The remaining family connections seem to primarily connect adjacent counties. For example, there are strong connections between the Hudson River counties of New York, Dutchess, Columbia, and Albany. Hence, kinship connections seem to be primarily local and thus have only a limited capacity to organize parties at the state level.

Let me end by saying that, so far, I have primarily focused on the adhesive qualities of family. But family ties are not always a good predictor of party. When the rest of their family switched to the Republicans in 1792, William Livingston and his son-in-law, John Jay, remained with the Federalists. Both were tied into different political games and locked into their positions: William Livingston as governor of New Jersey, and John Jay as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Kinship ties to other Livingstons in the state did not provide the primary relationships for them. Neither of them had anything to gain, and much to lose, by participating in a political game that was played at the state level and involved the switching of the Livingston family to the Republicans.

In other cases, we simply do not know what caused people to break with other members of their family. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, for example, was a Republican, even though both his brother and his son were Federalists and he was through his father connected to the Schuyler family.

In yet other cases, family members violently opposed each other politically. Above we saw that John Williams' stepson, David Thomas, operated as his political aid. Yet after Williams' switch to the Federalists in 1795 the relationship changed. Thomas did not follow Williams and in 1799 the two almost ended up in a duel, before opposing each other in the

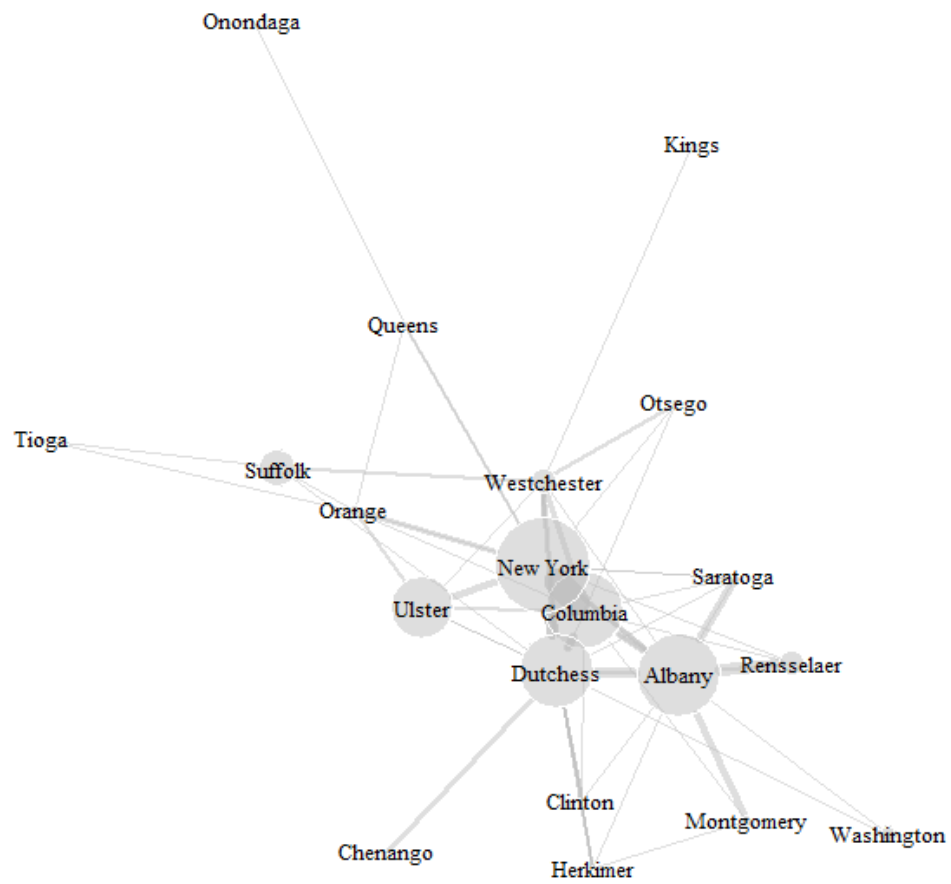


Figure 5.3: Geographic reach of kinship ties

elections to the U.S. House in 1800 and 1803.⁷

5.4 College

Elite institutions, and the relationships they help build, are another possible basis for the informal organization of politics. In chapter 3 I pointed to the possible role of the Society of the Cincinnati as a supplier of connections that could be used to construct parties. The Republicans in particular feared that the Society would do exactly that: create an elite group that would take over the state and become unresponsive to popular pressure. I then showed that in New York both parties recruited from this elite group. Around 10% of the members of both parties were members in the Society. Of course, membership does not automatically imply that the relationships the organization fostered were used in politics, although this seems a plausible hypothesis. More biographical work is necessary to establish whether this was the case.

I also discussed the importance of colleges as an elite institution. Again, I found that there were no systematic differences in the likelihood of Federalists and Republicans to have gone to college. But we also saw that one of the few differences in the careers of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr that may have been consequential for their diverging political paths was that Hamilton went to Columbia and Burr to Princeton, where his father was president until his death in 1757. Here I will take a closer look at the relationship between college and party affiliation.

The difference between Hamilton and Burr may indeed point to systematic differences between colleges. 73% of those who went to Columbia were Federalists, while only 18% were Republicans and 9% were switchers. This largely confirms Fox' (1965, 29) claim that

7. In 1804 Williams expressed his anger in a vivid, unsent letter to Thomas. "But Sir, if you had, had, but a single grain of sense, you might have known that an address calculated to mislead a *Virginian* will not answer in this enlightened County, where we have the proceeding of Congress weekly, and can read for our selves, your greatest and best friends pity your mistake, as not one of them can be made to believe that the address was pen'd by yourself."

Columbia was a school for Federalist leaders. At Yale, in contrast, only 52% were Federalists, 32% were Republicans, and 16% switchers. At Princeton, the numbers for Federalists, Republicans, and switchers were 36%, 41%, and 23%, respectively. Only three people in my data went to Harvard, two of whom were Federalists and one was a switcher. Thus, while college does not perfectly predict the party affiliation of its graduates, Columbia appears as a strongly Federalist institution, while Princeton leans more heavily towards the Republican party, with Yale somewhere in between.

Those numbers, however, do not take into account *when* people attended college. While there are good reasons to believe that attending the same college may have formed bonds between two individuals even if their attendance was years or even decades apart, closer relationships based on face-to-face interaction could only form if those individuals attended the same college at the same time. Using information on the year of graduation, we can construct a network based on co-attendance of the same college (figure 5.4). A tie is created if two individuals graduated from the same college no more than two years apart. No clear relationship between college ties and party affiliation emerges from these data. There are 10 ties between Republicans and 42 between Federalists, but also 52 connecting Federalists to Republicans. This is confirmed by regression analyses similar to the ones conducted above. If we use all three parties, the odds of being in the same party are 18% *lower* for a legislator pair with a college tie than they are for a legislator pair without a college tie. If we ignore switchers, the odds are 5% lower. (Both coefficients are significant at the .01 level.)

Of course, this does not mean that college ties did not matter. We all know that attending the same college at the same time can create relationships of friendship just as much as it can create relationships of enmity. And as with kinship, college ties, and even close friendships that formed during the years in college, never determined political alliances. John Jay and Robert R. Livingston became close friends during their years at Columbia. And yet, while working closely together during the 1770s, the two men opposed each other in the

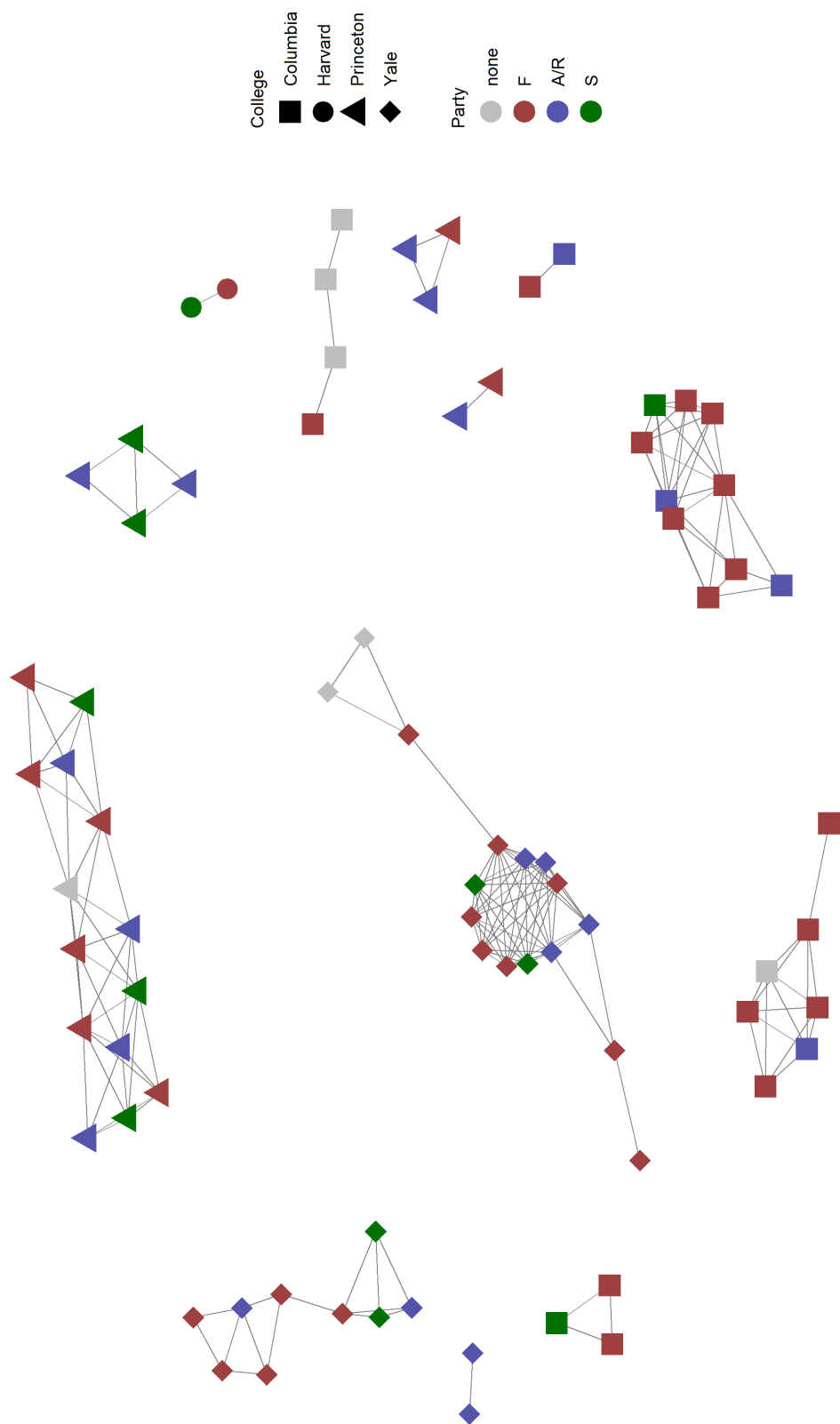


Figure 5.4: College co-attendance network

gubernatorial election of 1798 when Jay ran as a Federalist and Livingston as a Republican.

5.5 Law Clerkships

As discussed above, one type of relationship that is of particular importance in many political contexts is that between a political sponsor and his client. Unfortunately, although relationships of support similar to the ones described by Gould (1996) in his work on the Whiskey Rebellion existed in New York, there was nothing like the process of surety bonds that required their systematic recording, preventing an analogous analysis. Instead, here I turn to law clerkships as another form of sponsorship, before discussing a more direct form of political sponsorship below.

Although lawyers made up only a small proportion of the population during the colonial period,⁸ they had a strong presence among the political elite. Klein (1974) argues that by the mid-eighteenth century, New York was already under the leadership of lawyers, and between 1780 and 1787, 18.1% of the members in the New York State Assembly were professionals, most of which were lawyers (Main 1974, 124). In line with that, I found that 18% of the Federalists and 14% of the Republicans who were active between 1788 and 1801 were lawyers.

In the late eighteenth century, most American lawyers received their education by first attending college, usually for three years, and then clerking for an established attorney who certified the clerkship and attested the aspiring lawyer's good moral character (Surrency 1964, 132). As a clerk, they paid a standing member of the bar for mentoring, worked for him, and then received his endorsement (Hamlin 1939; Cole 2011). Working for another lawyer was essential in order to get access to law books, which were rare at the time, and to be admitted to the bar. Apprenticeships lasted usually three years, depending on previous education and time period.⁹ It is worth quoting Hamlin (1939, 40–1) at length on the char-

8. Of the professional groups, which made up only 1-2% of the population in the colonies, ca. 70% were lawyers (Klein 1974, 388).

9. In 1797 it was decided that candidates for admission to the bar must have served clerkships of seven

acter of these apprenticeship agreements: “An apprentice, for a small annual consideration, agreed to serve an attorney for a term of years, and in return he was to be instructed in the principles, practices, and procedures of the law. He agreed to work faithfully, to obey all lawful commands, to avoid all company and places which might tend to bring his master’s name and professional reputation into disrepute, to abjure matrimony and fornication, to inform his master of any and all matters which might do him damage, and under no circumstances to disclose his master’s secrets.”

This quote and the fact that clerks usually lived at their master’s house and ate at his table suggest strong relationships that were not merely professional. It also suggests that an incentive existed to follow the patron’s political stance. Koschnik (2007, 261–2) explicitly argues that lawyers transferred their political ideas to their apprentices, making clerkship ties crucial for my analysis.

The clerkship graph (figure 5.5) includes 83 clerkship ties as well as 11 co-working relations. Nodes are colored by party. Arrows point from the clerk to his patron. What is striking is how well connected this network is. Like the kinship network above, there is one large component surrounded by smaller ones. But here almost all of the lawyers are part of the large component. Although the nature of clerkships prevents triadic closure (no one clerks for the clerk of their law patron; but note that the graph contains a few co-working relationships that allow for triadic closure) and therefore the creation of tightly connected networks, New York’s lawyers were still highly connected through chains of clerkship. The network is characterized by a few hubs from which long paths radiate outwards. Take John Ten Eyck Lansing, Jr. (1754-1829) as an example. He clerked for one lawyer but had seven clerks. One of his clerks was Edward Livingston (1764-1836), whose clerk was William Peter Van Ness (1778-1826), whose clerk was Martin Van Buren (1782-1862). As a result, clerkships formed important cross-generational connections that could be used for political

years with a practicing attorney (Smith 1907, 515).

purposes.

It also appears that the resulting network tends to map onto party affiliation. This is confirmed by regression analyses. If we use all three parties, the odds of being in the same party are 42% higher for a legislator pair with a clerkship tie than they are for a legislator pair without a clerkship tie. If we ignore switchers, the odds of being in the same party are 234% higher for a legislator pair with a clerkship tie than they are for a legislator pair without a clerkship tie. (Both coefficients are significant at the .01-level.)

But at the same time, there are important cross-party ties. John Lansing, Jr., for example, an important Albany lawyer who studied with Robert Yates, another heavy-weight lawyer from Albany, was connected to four Federalist and three Republican clerks. In fact, both Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton studied under Lansing.

As with kinship, I end with a look at the geographic reach of these clerkship ties, by turning them into county-county ties. Again, I assign each person to their primary county, defined as the county in which they held most of their offices. Above we saw that 40% of kinship ties existed within counties. Given that it seems likely that parents sent their sons far away in order for them to be able to study with an established lawyer, we might expect the respective number for clerkships to be much lower. This, however, is not the case. In fact, 41% of clerkships occur within counties. What is interesting, though, is that when we look at two clerks who share the same patron, only 14% of them come from the same county. Thus, patrons seem to draw people from multiple counties and are thus able to form far-reaching webs of relationships.

Looking at the graph (figure 5.6), one thing that jumps out is the strong connection between New York City and Albany. This is not surprising given that those were the two urban centers in the state and that the State Supreme Court had offices in both cities. Furthermore, we see that the clerkship network spans a vast region, including frontier counties like Washington, Montgomery, Herkimer, Oneida, and Otsego. This might seem surprising.

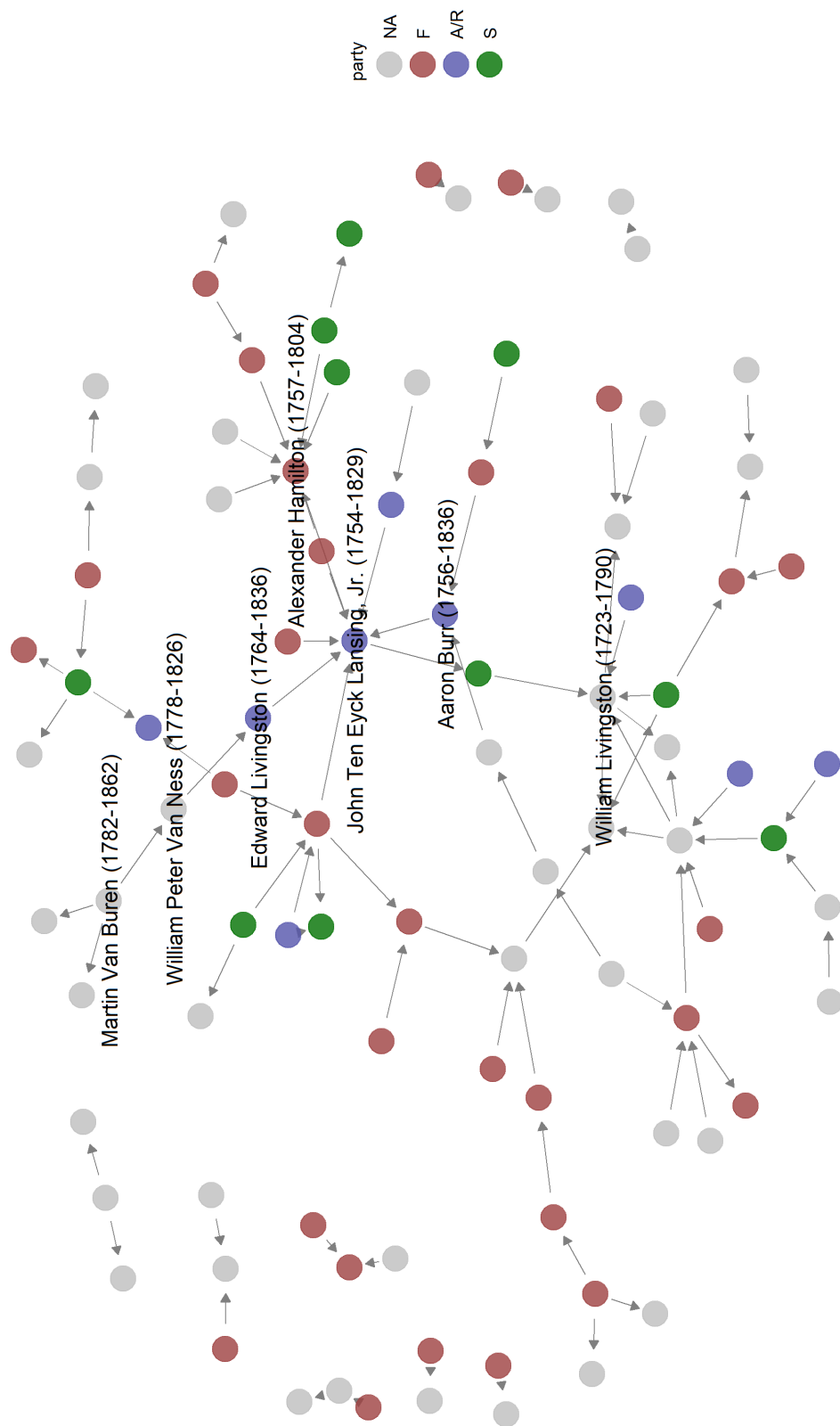


Figure 5.5: Law clerkship network

But, in fact, it was common for young lawyers, even those coming from the city, to move to the frontier to build a career. Anthony J. Blanchard, for example, was born in New York City but moved to Washington County where he worked for and became the protégé of John Williams. Similarly, Moss Kent was born in Croton-on-Hudson and moved to Oneida county where he worked for William Cooper.

It is worth noting that this analysis only considers clerkships within the New York law elite. Yet, clerkships, like college ties, also connected New Yorkers to elites in other states. One central person in the law network, for example, is William Livingston, whom we have encountered before and who served as governor of New Jersey from the revolution until his death in 1790. It is not until we have comparable data on other states that we can judge the full extent to which the relationships in this chapter organized politics.

5.6 Political Sponsorship

Unfortunately, the interactions that gave rise to the kinds of sponsorship relationships discussed in this section left only few traces in the historical record.¹⁰ Because they have never been codified and recorded, they can only be inferred from the personal correspondence of political elites, which prohibits a systematic analysis. Instead, I will here demonstrate the indisputable significance of political sponsorship by telling the stories of two such relationships: that between John Williams and Anthony J. Blanchard of Washington County and that between William Cooper and Moss Kent, Jr. of Otsego County. This will show how these relationships were used to do politics.

John Williams was born in England in 1752. After studying medicine and surgery in England, he emigrated to America and arrived in the town now called Salem in 1773. Soon after his arrival, he married Susannah Thomas Turner, widow of James Turner, one of the original patentees of the Turner patent and owner of the first store and tavern in Salem.

10. This section relies on work I am doing with Marissa Combs.

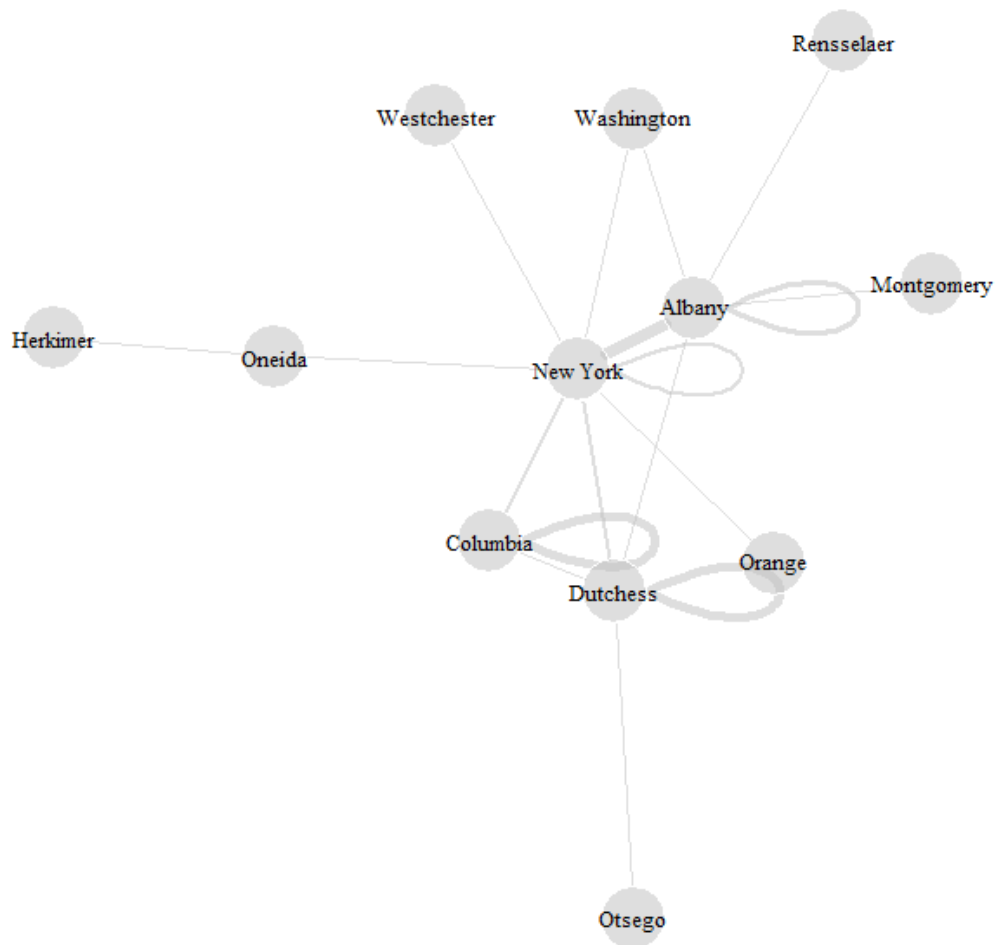


Figure 5.6: Geographic reach of law clerkships

Aided by his marriage as well as the relationships he was able to form through his military service during the revolution and his work as a physician in Salem, Williams became one of the most influential political elites in the area. His political career began in 1775, only two years after his arrival in the county, when he was elected to the Provincial Congress. After the war, Williams engaged heavily in speculation in loyalist land which made him one of the largest landowners in the area and perhaps the most important politician in the county. During his career he served as a county judge, a member of the state assembly and state senate, and in 1794 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Anthony J. Blanchard was born in New York City in 1768. After studying law under Cornelius I. Bogert, in 1789 he was admitted to practice in the State Supreme Court. He left the city and like other aspiring lawyers sought his fortune on the frontier. After his arrival in Salem, Blanchard became closely connected to Williams. He helped Williams with his political ambitions by riding from town to town talking to people, taking the pulse, and coordinating activities with other influential local elites. He was so involved in Williams' electoral campaigns that he was able to predict election outcomes with a remarkable accuracy. In a letter to Williams from January 18, 1796, he wrote: "I congratulate you on your success in the election. 750 votes is no contemptible majority out of about 2100 votes. You will see by my letters to you that I calculated with much accuracy, and that my apprehensions about Saratoga are verified, I think I wrote you that you would succeed by about 700." How exactly Blanchard was able to accomplish this is not clear. The letters between Blanchard and Williams mention conversations he had with other individuals in taverns, but whether he was in direct contact with voters or was able to predict their vote based on conversations with other local elites, I do not know.

In return for his services, Blanchard expected Williams to promote his career. When Blanchard heard that the clerk of the county court in Washington was about to be removed, he wrote to Williams informing him that several influential individuals in the county had

already endorsed him and had sent a letter to the governor recommending him for the appointment. He added: "I have now Sir to request, if a change in the Clerkship should take place, that unless you prefer somebody else, You will add your influence to that of those I have mentioned, which will more than probably procure me the appointment." After receiving the appointment, Blanchard thanked Williams in another letter for his "friendly interference."

At a first glance, the relationship between Williams and Blanchard looks like the classic case of a patron-client relationship, "a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron" (Scott 1972, 92). Yet there is one crucial difference between this type of relationship and that between Williams and Blanchard, which is better characterized as one of sponsorship. Patronage relations are inherently fixed. The patron remains the patron, the client the client. Sponsorship, on the other hand, is like the relationship between an advisor and an advisee. The advisor grooms the advisee until he is ready to stand on his own feet and eventually surpasses the advisor. The fact that he is not only able to rise to the level of the advisor, but expected to do so, distinguishes him from a client. While at first the relationship between Williams and Blanchard was asymmetric and Blanchard acted as Williams' client, he later married Williams' daughter Maria and went on to have a career of his own. In 1810, six years after Williams' death, he even became first judge of the county court of Washington, a position that had eluded Williams.

The nature of sponsorship becomes even clearer when we look at the case of William Cooper and Moss Kent, Jr. of Otsego County.¹¹ Cooper was born only two years after

11. You may remember Cooper from chapter 4. In 1792 he was charged by his Republican opponents for pressuring voters. Corruption is another parallel between Williams and Cooper. In 1779 Williams was expelled from the state senate for embezzling government money he received to pay his militia troops.

Williams. Like Williams he came from a humble background (his father was a small farmer and he himself worked as a wheelwright), married into wealth, moved to the frontier, became a highly successful land speculator, and was known as the “father” of his county. Like Williams he served on the county court. The two even met in the U.S. House in 1794.

If Cooper is the structural equivalent to Williams, Moss Kent is the structural equivalent to Blanchard. Like Blanchard, he studied law and was admitted to the bar. While his brother was a legal scholar at Columbia, he moved to Otsego County and became Cooper’s legal agent and protégé. He lived in Cooper’s house, managed his property, and became what in the language of the time was called a “runner”¹² or a “tool,” someone who acted on behalf of a political candidate by providing information, mobilizing voters, and coordinating activities. In a letter to his brother James from December 25, 1794, Moss Kent defends himself: “You are too well acquainted with the firmness & independency of my Character to infer from my riding so much in behalf of the Judge that I am becoming what in the Language of Party is called a *Tool*” (Moss Kent, Jr. to James Kent, Dec. 25, 1794, James Kent Papers, Library of Congress). Like Blanchard he pursued the daughter of his sponsor, but Hannah died at the age of 23 and he never married.

The case of Cooper and Kent makes clear just how vulnerable those types of relationships were, and how ambiguous the boundary between patronage and sponsorship. When in 1795 a group of young lawyers, who had all clerked for conservative lawyers including Alexander Hamilton, began challenging Cooper’s position in the county, they nominated Kent for the state senate instead of the candidate that was endorsed by Cooper (see Taylor 1995, 235–55 for details about this story). Although he owed Cooper because of his hospitality and support, the ambitious Kent sided with his fellow lawyers and accepted the nomination. Cooper, together with Albany elites like Stephen Van Rensselaer, Philip Schuyler,

12. An article in the Northern Centinel from July 23, 1798, written by “A Plain Dealer” reads: “hard fortune indeed, that one who had been so officious to obtain an election, even at the expense of large sums advanced to a hoard of mercenary drudges and runners, posting through the county, in almost every direction and in every quarter, and after all that trouble and cost, only the want of votes leaves him at home.”

and Leonard Gansevoort, urged Kent to withdraw from the race. But Kent refused and “published a blistering attack on the judge [Cooper] and the Albany gentry as aristocrats conniving to manipulate the election and dominate the settlers” (Taylor 1995, 241). While Kent managed to receive most of the votes in Otsego, because of the small number of votes he gained in the other counties in the district, he lost the election. A year later, still living in Cooper’s house, Kent supported Cochran who opposed Cooper in the congressional election. Cooper lost and blamed his defeat on Kent. Looking out the tavern window and seeing Cooper ride by, Kent wrote to his brother: “[I] did not speak to him. I suppose that he & myself shall be pretty distant towards each other for the future, as he will undoubtedly impute the Loss of his election to my exertions against him & I believe he can do it with truth, & it is a matter of Triumph to me to think so. He is a base Scoundrel & has used me most basely” (cited in Taylor 1995, 253). Even though Cooper was stabbed in the back and humiliated by Kent, he “repeatedly tried, but failed, to reclaim his resentful protégé, Moss Kent, Jr. Taken with Kent’s superior education, gentility, and élan, Cooper longed to win his affection as a surrogate son. [...] But the association sought by Cooper was repellent to Kent. Apparently terrified that other gentlemen would set him down as a mere tool of the rich but boorish Cooper, Kent was at pains to deride the judge’s rough manners and speech” (Taylor 1995, 254).

The Cooper-Kent story can be seen as a story about what it means to be a bad sponsor, or rather what it means to confuse sponsorship and patronage. Initially, both men were satisfied with their respective roles in the relationship. But as Kent rose to power with Cooper’s help, his career began to stall as Cooper tried to keep him in the position of “a mere tool.” Kent’s solution to being stuck in this way was to break not only from his patron, but from the Federalist party that dominated the county. With his feet still under Cooper’s kitchen table, he betrayed his old patron. In 1798 the two men faced each other in the congressional election, Cooper as a Federalist and Kent as a Republican.

Blanchard chose a different route and remained loyal to the Federalists, even after 1800 when political sentiment in Washington County had shifted in favor of the Republican party. Even though the Federalists took care of him and he was able to use the brief moment of Federalist dominance in the assembly around 1810 to snag an appointment as county judge, all of his attempts to gain elective office failed. Electorally he was sidelined, highlighting the possible dangers of sticking to one side.

5.7 Conclusion: The Cutting of Ties

In this chapter I discussed several types of relationships that functioned as building blocks for parties. We began to see how people actively used those relationships to coordinate actions and form larger, albeit informal, organizations. Yet, in many cases these relationships did not determine an elite's position in the emerging party system. In fact, we saw several cases in which elites cut those relationships in order to make political moves. Robert R. Livingston broke with his college friend John Jay and the two opposed each other in the gubernatorial election of 1798. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer was able to join the Republican party even though the rest of his family was at the center of New York Federalism. And when John Williams of Washington County switched from the Republicans to the Federalists in 1795, he completely reconfigured his social network. He married one of his daughters to his close ally and future Federalist Anthony Blanchard, almost ended up in a duel with his stepson, a Republican who a year later defeated him in the congressional election, and even switched from one church community to another.

Those cases should not be viewed as mere exceptions. Instead, I suggest that they can tell us something fundamental about the nature of political action. Ties tie one down, but politics requires room to move. It requires fresh action. And acting involves the making as well as the breaking of ties. At least some of the elites involved in forming New York's first party system were sophisticated political actors and understood this well. They used the

relationships they found themselves in, formed new ones, but also cut themselves loose when they felt locked in and their political ambitions demanded it. (In chapter 8, I will provide a more systematic look at those who switched parties.)

Social network analysis in sociology, as well as anthropology, developed as a response to structuralist approaches that based theories of action on large social categories like class or ethnicity (Padgett and Ansell 1993; Bearman 1993; Gould 1995). Network analysts argued that instead of crude social categories we must study the concrete social relationships people find themselves in. But just as categories are abstractions of patterns in social relations (Bearman 1993, 10), so relationships are abstractions of concrete social interactions. A father-son tie, as coded by the analyst, is an abstraction. Regularities in action produce role structures which in turn give rise to expectations about behavior (Bearman 1997). But roles do not confront actors as rules they must obey. Instead, a role should be understood as the range of justifiable actions, the range of actions one can get away with. In some cases, actors are so locked in by their social relationships that the range of actions they try to get away with is quite small. In those cases a binary coding of ties as 0 and 1 as a way to predict action tends to work well. In the case of the Whiskey Rebellion, for example, actors seem to have been locked in to an extent that allowed Gould (1996) to use network position to predict action. But in other cases, people try to get away with much more. In fact, part of what it means to be a political elite is to be able to not be tied down by social obligations. We should therefore not be surprised to see that while most sons adopt the party of their fathers, some choose the opposite side, especially when they enter politics at a time when choosing the opposite side affords greater opportunities. And when they do, they often come up with elaborate explanations for their behavior (as did John Quincy Adams, son of Federalist John Adams, when he joined the Republican party). As a result, studies of elite action that overemphasize the idea that networks lead people to do things will inadvertently fail.

CHAPTER 6

PARTIES AND PATRONAGE

6.1 Introduction

In *Politics as a Vocation* Weber complained about the degree to which political patronage dominated politics in nineteenth-century America. Referring to the spoils system under Andrew Jackson, he wrote: “What does this spoils system, the turning over of federal offices to the following of the victorious candidate, mean for the party formations of today? It means that quite unprincipled parties oppose one another; they are purely organizations of job hunters drafting their changing platforms according to the chances of vote-grabbing, changing their colors to a degree which, despite all analogies, is not yet to be found elsewhere” (Weber 1958, 108). Many, including Weber and Tocqueville, saw this as a departure from the practices of the first American parties which to them were based on principles, not patronage.

The reason federal patronage became so important in nineteenth-century America can be found in the relative timing of democratization, party formation, and state-building (Shefter 1994; King and Lieberman 2009). In Europe, state bureaucracies formed under absolutism (for the case of Prussia, see Rosenberg 1958). As merit became the basis for appointments, appointments in the state apparatus became less sensitive to changes in government. When these countries democratized and parties began to mediate between mass electorates and the state, appointments were largely isolated from political control. In America, in contrast, parties formed long before the creation of an independent merit-based civil service. This made administrative positions in the American state accessible to party elites who used them to form patronage-based political alliances, giving rise to a state dominated by political parties (Skowronek 1982).

While at the national level it took a few decades for patronage politics to develop, largely

because of the small size of the federal government during the first party system, at the state level the systematic usage of patronage for political and partisan purposes occurred much earlier. And nowhere was it as central as in New York. “New York was the first state in which the offices were openly and continuously used for partisan purposes” (Fish 1904, 86).

The importance of patronage in New York was the result of the Council of Appointment, a body which had the authority to distribute almost all appointive offices at the state and county level. When the Council was finally abolished in 1821, it was responsible for filling approximately 7000 civil and 8000 military positions in the state (McBain 1907; H. M. Flick 1934).

New Yorkers who grew up during the colonial period knew what it meant to have a system in which political patronage was concentrated in a single person, in this case the royal governor, who was appointed by the Crown. To avoid such a concentration of power and to account for the different geographical sections in the state, the authors of New York’s first state constitution created the Council of Appointment. The constitution provided that the council consist of the governor, who was now chosen by popular election, and four senators, one from each of the four senatorial districts.

This institutional arrangement had two important consequences. First, patronage, although no longer centralized in a single person, was still highly concentrated in a small group of individuals. Local elites, unlike those in England, did not have patronage in the form of offices at their disposal and therefore always had to act as intermediaries between their clients and the Council (unless, of course, they sat on the Council themselves).¹ According to Hammond (1844, 168), this was a unique situation among the states: “In Vermont, and in several other of the United States, nearly all the appointments are made by the most numerous branch of the legislature, and in other states they are made by the governor and senate.” The second consequence was that it tied the appointment power of the Council

1. The letters of application that were written to members of the Council and that are discussed in McBain (1907) attest to this.

to electoral success. In order to capture all seats on the Council, a party had to win the gubernatorial election, elect one of their men to the state senate in each of the four senatorial district, and then have enough votes in the assembly to elect these men to the Council. By tying elective and appointive positions together, the constitution prevented the pattern of ins (who had the favor of the governor) and outs (who had to appeal to the people and use elections to gain power) that was characteristic of the colonial period. Instead, it created a system in which competition for appointments led to electoral competition, producing two parties that competed for office at all levels of government. Because control of the Council required large-scale organization, the constitution created conditions that were conducive to the formation of political parties.

This did not escape contemporary observers. In his history of political parties in New York, Jabez D. Hammond (1844), himself a Republican member of the Council of Appointment in 1818, places the Council at the center of New York politics. “It has often been remarked by citizens and politicians of our sister states, that the action of political parties in the state of New-York was to them unaccountable and mysterious. [...] The cause of this mysterious development of the action of parties will, I think, be in a great measure found in the manner in which the appointing power executed its function, after the alteration of the constitution by the convention of 1801” (Hammond 1844, 168). Hammond concludes: “From this hasty view of the council of appointment, one cannot fail of perceiving that it constituted a branch of the government which would be likely to be wielded for the immediate benefit of the councilors themselves, or that its members were extremely liable to become the tools of artful and designing men, either in or out of the legislature” (Hammond 1844, 170).

If Hammond’s assessment is correct, an analysis of the Council will reveal a great deal about the nature of party competition in New York. In chapter 3 I found that the Federalists and Republicans in New York looked very similar in social terms, and I suggested that an

answer to the question of side-taking must be found in the political process itself. Given that the key task of political parties is to control the offices of the state (Downs 1957; Schlesinger 1991; Aldrich 1995), it is plausible that the process that sorted people into two opposing camps had to do with competition for office. Analyzing the appointments of the Council is also important because it suggests an explanation for how the little people were drawn into the emerging party system. The previous chapter was largely focused on the core of New York’s political elite, and we saw that the elite networks they were embedded in were restricted in their geographic reach. Political patronage may have been the tool that allowed parties to mobilize local and less elite party cadre that were not already tied into the political system through social ties. Because every county in the state had a set of political offices that could be used for this purpose, patronage could reach into every corner of the state.

In this chapter, I will first examine the elections of the council members. I will then turn to an analysis of the appointments made by the Council. In the following chapter, I will take a broader look at the structure of offices in New York. The data used in both chapters are described in section 2.4.

6.2 Electing the Council of Appointment

Article 23 of the Constitution of the State of New York from 1777 states that the “Assembly shall, once in every year, openly nominate and appoint one of the Senators from each great district, which Senators shall form a Council for the appointment of the said officers.” These nominations were recorded in the assembly journals. For each assemblyman, the journals list the four senators he voted for. Here I will draw on these votes to examine how partisan the struggle over the Council was.

Before I turn to these votes, it is important to note that control over the Council was so tightly linked to electoral success that the party that controlled the assembly also always

controlled the Council.² This can be seen in table 6.1, which shows for each year the party composition of the Council, the assembly, and the state senate, as well as the party of the governor.

I begin by looking at voting blocs. I do this by pulling out each unique combination of nominees. For example, imagine that twenty assemblymen nominated senators A, B, C, and D and ten assemblymen nominated senators A, B, E, and F. In this case, I would record the combination A, B, C, D with a frequency of twenty and the combination A, B, E, F with a frequency of ten. Figure 6.1 shows for each session the percentage of votes that went to the most frequent combination (solid line), the second most frequent combination (dotted line), and the remaining combinations combined (dashed line). I do this for sessions 12 (1789) to 35 (1812). Small values for the dashed line showing the remaining combinations indicate a high degree of coordination, as votes are concentrated in two main voting blocs and few votes are wasted. This is the case in sessions 14, 19, 25, 27, 30, and 33 to 35. A small difference between the two lines representing the two largest voting blocs indicates a high degree of competition. This is the case in sessions 13, 22, 23, 30, and 33. Similar to the results presented in chapter 4, where I found three periods of partisanship in session 12, sessions 16 and 17, and sessions 23 to 26, I again find an up-and-down of partisanship.

This analysis of voting blocs, however, contains no information on the partisan composition of the blocs. To provide a closer look, I use the Rice index of difference introduced in chapter 4, which I calculate for each of the four *successful* candidates, separately for each session (table 6.2). The index runs from 0 to 100. A value of 0 indicates that both parties gave all of their votes to the winning candidate; a value of 100 indicates that the winning candidate received 100% of the votes from one party, while he received none of the votes from the other party. The analysis is restricted to sessions 12 to 26. For readers who prefer

2. Two sessions seem to violate this rule. Using my data, it looks as if in sessions 16 and 39 the assembly was controlled by Federalists and the Council by Republicans. But in both cases this has to do with the large number of switchers in the assembly. At the time, most of these switchers were Republicans, giving that party a small majority in the assembly.

Year (Session)	Governor	4 Council Members (F:R)	Assembly (F- R)	State Senate (F-R)
1777-1786	G. Clinton	—	—	—
1787	G. Clinton	2:2	—	—
1788	G. Clinton	<u>3:1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
1789 (12)	G. Clinton	0:4	-14	0
1790	G. Clinton	2:2	<u>20</u>	<u>1</u>
1791	G. Clinton	<u>3:1</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>1</u>
1792	G. Clinton	<u>3:1</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>
1793 (16)	G. Clinton	1:3	<u>4</u>	0
1794	G. Clinton	<u>3:1</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>4</u>
1795	G. Clinton / <u>J. Jay</u>	<u>3:1</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>
1796	<u>J. Jay</u>	<u>3:1</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>5</u>
1797 (20)	<u>J. Jay</u>	<u>4:0</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>30</u>
1798	<u>J. Jay</u>	<u>4:0</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>28</u>
1799	<u>J. Jay</u>	<u>3:1</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>21</u>
1800	<u>J. Jay</u>	<u>4:0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>21</u>
1801 (24)	<u>J. Jay</u> / G. Clinton	1:3	-22	<u>7</u>
1802	G. Clinton	1:3	-51	<u>3</u>
1803	G. Clinton	1:3	-28	-8
1804	G. Clinton / Lewis	0:4	-46	-20
1805 (28)	Lewis	0:4	-38	-22
1806	Lewis	0:4 ²	-52	-32
1807	Lewis / Tompkins	0:4 ³	-32	-32
1808	Tompkins	0:4 ²	-37	-32
1809 (32)	Tompkins	0:4	-17	-24
1810	Tompkins	<u>3:1</u>	<u>13</u>	-18
1811	Tompkins	0:4	-22	-19
1812	Tompkins	0:4	-22	-20
1813 (36)	Tompkins	<u>3:1</u>	<u>10</u>	-16
1814	Tompkins	2:2	<u>12</u>	-21
1815	Tompkins	0:4	-34	-20
1816	Tompkins	0:4	<u>6</u>	-14
1817 (40)	Tayler ¹ / D. Clinton	0:4	-40	-18
1817-1822	D. Clinton	0:4	—	—

Table 6.1: Party control of governorship, Council of Appointment, assembly, and state senate

Note: The third column shows both the number of Federalist and the number of Republican members on the Council. In columns four and five I subtract the number of Republican legislators from the number of Federalists legislators. Cells in bold show Republican control, underlined cells show Federalist control. The governorship changed on July 1, halfway through a session, which is why for some sessions two governors are listed.

¹ Acting.

² The Republicans were divided into a faction around Clinton and a faction around Lewis. The Clintonians had a majority.

³ The Republicans were divided into a faction around Clinton and a faction around Lewis. The Lewisites had a majority.

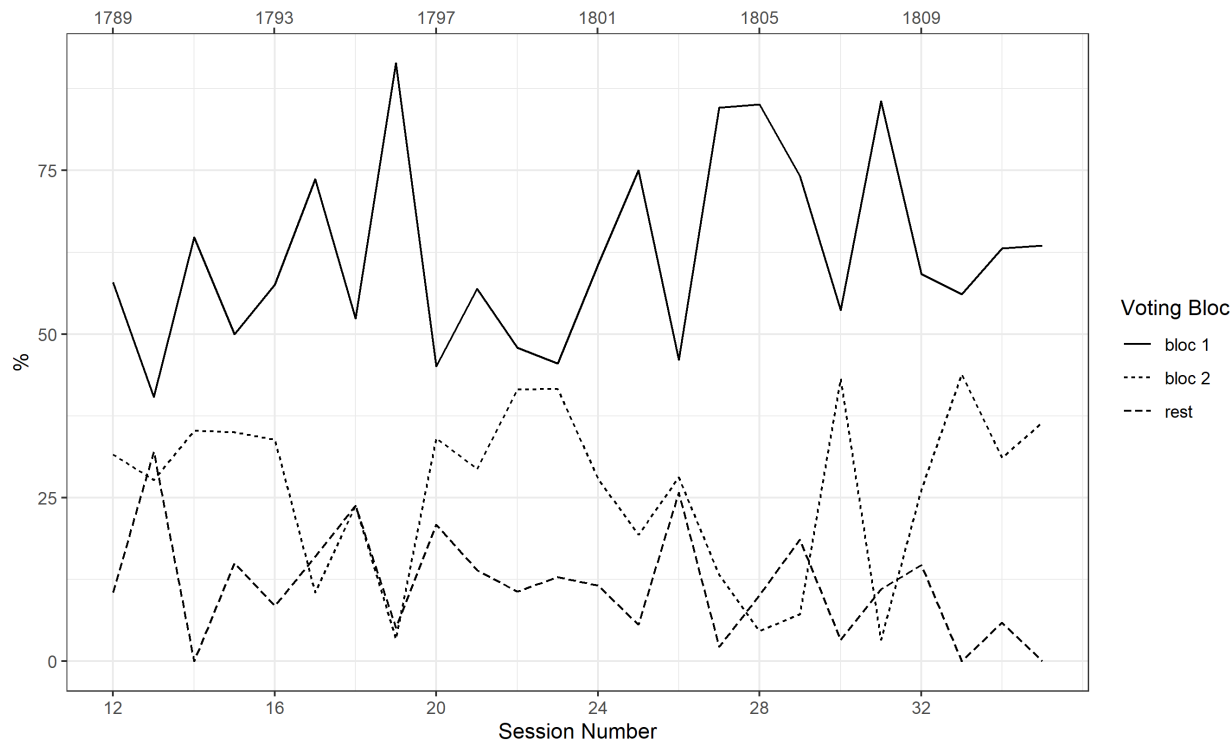


Figure 6.1: Voting blocs in elections for the Council of Appointment

to look at network graphs, appendix D visualizes these data as two-mode networks between candidates and assemblymen.

Overall, there seems to be an increase in partisanship as shown in the higher frequency of high RID values towards the end of the time period. But, again, this is not a monotonic trend. Instead, I find three moments of high partisanship that roughly align with the periods identified in chapter 4: in session 12 (and to a lesser extent in session 13), in session 18, and in sessions 21 to 25 (and in particular in sessions 22 to 24). These three moments are also clearly visible in the structure of the network graphs in appendix D. What this tells us is that the change in the degree of partisanship throughout the 1790s was not just the result of new sets of issues that entered the assembly, but there really was an up-and-down in the degree to which the assembly's behavior was structured by parties.

But even during periods of high partisanship, we sometimes see assemblymen from both parties agree on one candidate (low RID values in table 6.2). In fact, session 23 is the only

Session Number	Eastern	Middle	Southern	Western
12	0*	13	89	89
13	0*	64	44	57
14	0*	0	34	0
15	6	0	15	0*
16	28	0*	84	0*
17	10	10	30	67*
18	88	5*	92	81*
19	8	8*	31	0*
20	0*	16	1*	28*
21	61*	66	3	15*
22	1*	93	91	0*
23	86*	86	91	79*
24	0*	91	94	94
25	58	80	86	0
26	0	37*	60	60

Table 6.2: RID for each successful candidate, by session

Note: Rice index of difference for the winning candidate in each district. The RID measures the degree to which the two parties in the assembly agree on the winning candidate. Cells marked with a * show uncontested districts, that is, districts where all senators came from one party and assemblymen can only choose from among that party.

session in which parties divide in all four districts. Given the political importance of the Council, we might wonder why agreement across parties was so common. Part of the answer can be found in the complexities of the election process which helped mitigate complete partisan division. Remember that assemblymen selected members of the Council from four pools of senators corresponding to the four senatorial districts in the state. Sometimes a senatorial district was completely dominated by one party, restricting the choice of assemblymen. If we look at cases where parties agreed on one candidate, we find that many occur in uncontested districts where the pool from which the assemblymen could choose consisted of senators from only one party (marked with a * in table 6.2). For example, from session 15 to session 23, the western district only elected Federalist senators so that Republicans had no choice but to elect a Federalist from that district to the Council.³ But there are also several exceptions when a district was contested and yet both parties agreed on a candidate. (But note that there are no exceptions in session 22 to 24, the third period of high partisanship.) In six of these thirteen exceptional cases, the minority party simply did not put up a fight; in four cases there seems to have been an agreement to give one of the four seats to the minority party; and in three cases everyone agreed on a switcher.

Let me end the discussion of the Council elections with a few words about cases where parties were internally divided. Those cases occur either relatively early (until session 15 or so) or they occur when one party has a strong majority in the assembly and it is clear that no senator from the other party will be elected to the Council. In session 20 in the middle district, for example, the Federalists give 31 votes to Ambrose Spencer and 23 votes to Peter Silvester, both Federalists. Spencer wins by only a single vote. Similarly, in the western district Federalists give 28 votes to Thomas Morris and 22 votes to Joseph White,

3. Uncontested districts did not always produce unanimous votes, however. In session 26, for example, the Republicans controlled the middle districts, but Federalists gave most of their votes to the second Republican, leading to a relatively high RID. Similarly, when the Federalists controlled the eastern district in sessions 21 and 23 and the western district in sessions 17, 18, and 23, the Republican assemblymen gave the majority of their votes to the second Federalist.

again both Federalists.⁴ Thus, as the western part of the state gained new seats in session 20, and the Federalists completely dominated the assembly elections, an intra-party factional struggle broke out among the frontier Federalists (see chapter 4), which led to competing camps in the election of the Council. Republicans show a similar behavior in session 26 when they distribute their votes across three Republican candidates instead of uniting them behind a single one.

6.3 Appointments Made by the Council of Appointment

6.3.1 *Partisan Appointments*

I now turn to the appointments made by the Council. I begin by asking whether appointments were partisan in that there was a relationship between the party that controlled the Council (shown in table 6.1) and the party of those who received appointments. To answer this question, I take all the people in the office dataset for whom I have information on party affiliation, and run a logistic regression with party affiliation (0 = Federalist, 1 = Republican) as the dependent variable. As predictors I include the following three variables: the number of appointments each person had received by councils dominated by Federalists, the number of appointments each person had received by councils dominated by Republicans, and the number of appointments each person had received by split councils. The analysis shows that each additional appointment by a Republican council increases the odds of being a Republican by 25% and each additional appointment by a Federalist council decreases the odds by 39% (both effects being significant at the .01-level); there is no effect for appointments received by split councils (results not shown). These findings provide evidence that the appointments made by the Council were structured by party.

4. The reader may remember this case from chapter 5, where we saw that a group of young lawyers in the western district challenged the reign of William Cooper. They threw their weight behind Thomas Morris who challenged Cooper's friend Joseph White (Taylor 1995, 235–41).

This aggregate picture, however, hides important temporal variation. Hammond (1844) seems to have believed that the partisan nature of the Council found complete expression only after 1801, when the state constitution was revised to give the power to make nominations to both the governor and the four members of the Council (an issue that was highly partisan, see chapter 4). McBain (1907), on the other hand, suggests that it was the Federalists during the second half of the 1790s who began to make partisan appointments. Based on the minutes of the Council of Appointment as well as personal correspondence and letters of application,⁵ he argues that until 1794 the Council was largely nonpartisan. It was in 1794, when Clinton was governor but the Council was controlled by Federalists, that disagreements broke out and appointments became partisan.⁶ When Jay became governor in 1795, the Federalists continued their work of excluding Republicans from public office, so that by 1800 the Federalists held almost all appointive offices in the state.

To examine temporal change, I estimate a logistic regression similar to the one above with people as the unit of analysis and party affiliation (0 = Federalist, 1 = Republican) as the dependent variable. But this time I include indicator variables for each session that capture whether the person was appointed in that session or not. The corresponding coefficients represent the effect of being appointed in a particular session, conditional on being appointed in other sessions. The results are shown in figure 6.2, which plots the regression coefficient for each session dummy together with its 95% confidence interval. Values above zero indicate

5. Letters of application that were sent to the Council appeared in the Civil Files of the Council of Appointment. For example, on July 22, 1801, Aaron Burr wrote to George Clinton recommending several people for office: “The family of Bartow is numerous and respectable [...]—Several of them have at all times been with us—most, if not all, were so at the last election” (cited in McBain 1907, 132). Unfortunately, these files were destroyed by the State Capitol fire of 1911.

6. Clinton even went so far as to refuse to sign the minutes that documented certain appointments (McBain 1907, 37). For instance, in a meeting on January 29, 1794, Egbert Benson was appointed a judge of the New York State Supreme Court. Everyone but Clinton signed the minutes. Since 1790, the Federalists had tried to get a position on the Supreme Court for Egbert Benson. In 1793 the Council debated the issue, but because the Federalists were in the minority, it was dropped. Now that they controlled the Council, they pushed through the appointment of Benson, against the will of Clinton, awakening the partisan character of the Council.

that being appointed in that session increases the odds of being a Republican, values below zero indicate that being appointed in that session increases the odds of being a Federalist. For example, in session 24 the coefficient is 0.6, which means that receiving an appointment in session 24 increases the odds of being a Republican by $(\exp(0.6) - 1) \times 100 = 82\%$. The colors of the bars correspond to which party controlled the Council (red = Federalist, blue = Republican, gray = split).⁷

We clearly see that Republican councils tend to appoint Republicans and Federalist councils Federalists. There are only two exceptions to this rule. First, in 1807 (session 30) the Republicans control the Council, but appointments favor Federalists. This likely has to do with factional struggles inside the Republican party. While in 1806 and 1808 the faction around DeWitt Clinton dominated the Council, in 1807 the supporters of Morgan Lewis were in power and they formed an alliance with some of the old Federalists. Second, in 1814 (session 37) the Council is split 2:2 and there is a Republican governor; yet appointments favor Federalists.

Similar to what we have seen before, there seems to be no monotonic trend towards more partisanship. Some sessions are strongly partisan, while others are not. Partisan sessions tend to occur around transitions of power. We see a very strong version of this phenomenon around 1800. In 1799 and 1800 (sessions 22 and 23) the Federalists dominate the Council and make highly partisan appointments. In 1801 (session 24), the Republicans gain control of the assembly and the Council and make equally partisan appointments. Similar patterns can be found when the Republicans gain control in sessions 16, 34, and 38 and when the Federalists gain control in sessions 33 and 36.

These moments of partisan appointments also align with two of the three moments of

7. The measure of party control is the difference between Republican and Federalist members on the Council, plus an additional .5 value that is given to the party that holds the governorship. It ranges from -4.5 (strongly Federalist) to 4.5 (strongly Republican). For instance, if there is a Federalist governor and there are 3 Republicans and 1 Federalist on the Council, the measure of party control is 1.5. See table 6.1 for the composition of the Council in each session as well as the party of the governor.

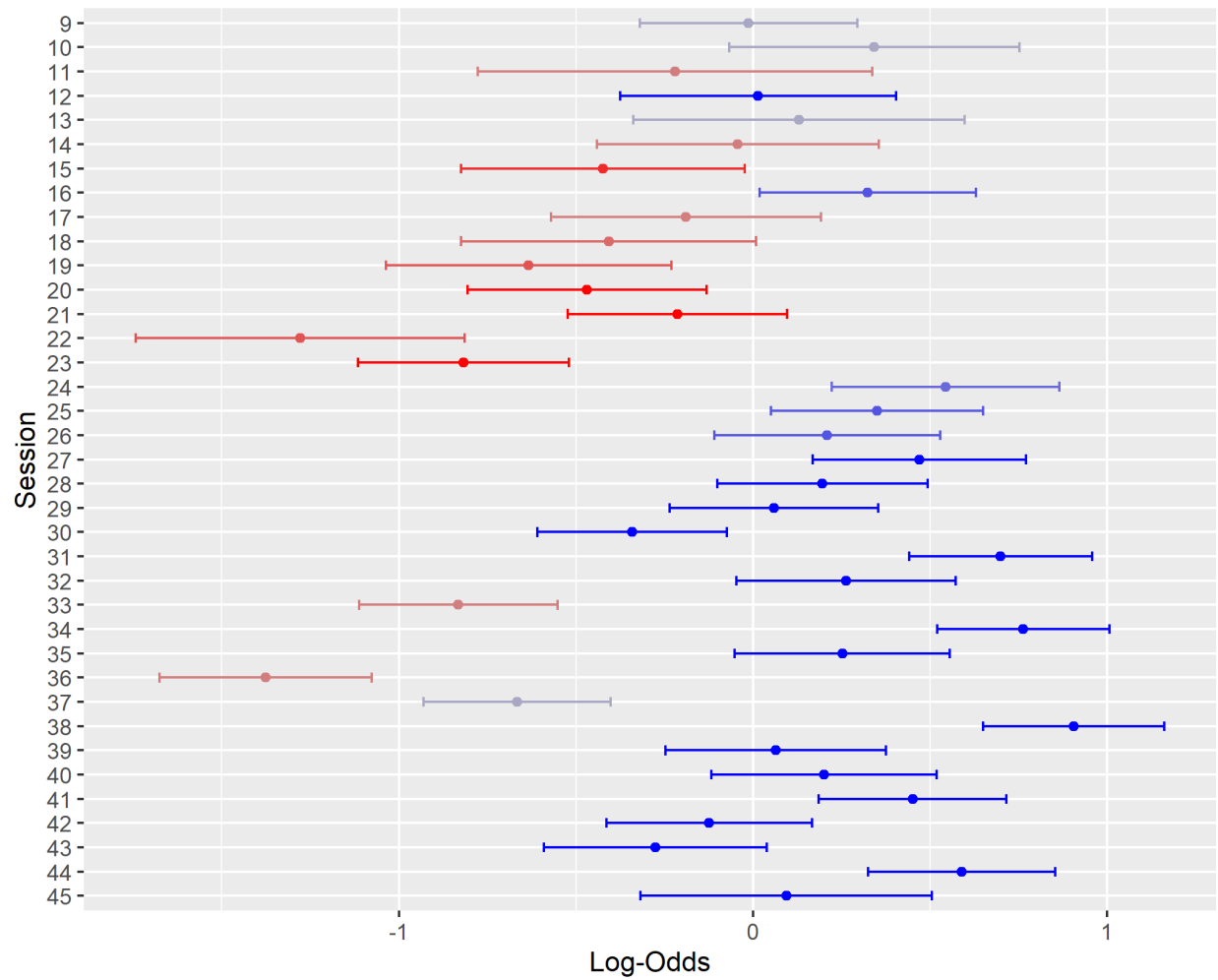


Figure 6.2: Predicting party affiliation using session dummies

high partisanship identified in chapter 4. There we found that partisanship was high around session 12, around session 16, and around session 24. Interestingly, the first moment of partisanship did not produce partisan appointments. While procedural issues surrounding the creation of federal electoral institutions produced two voting blocs, the appointments made by the Council were still largely nonpartisan. This is in line with McBain's (1907) evaluation of the Council under governor George Clinton. While Clinton clearly used appointments to build political alliances, overall his appointments appear to have been nonpartisan (until he returns as governor in 1801, that is). Many of those who were appointed under him became Federalists. It is not until session 15 (1792) that the Council began to make partisan appointments, and this process was driven by the Federalists, not the Republicans. This finding suggests that McBain may have been wrong about the exact timing of when partisan appointments began. While he argued that it was session 17 (1794) when the Federalists began to make partisan appointments, I find partisan appointments in sessions 15 and 16, but no significant effect for session 17. Partisanship only reappears in session 19.

So far, the analyses have combined all offices. I only asked whether a person was appointed and did not differentiate by the kind of office he received. But it is likely that appointments to some offices were more partisan than others. To investigate this, for each person and office, I create a variable that captures whether he received that office by a Federalist Council and a separate variable that captures whether he received that office by a Republican Council. In other words, for each person I create $2 \times N$ dummy variables, where N is the number of offices (or rather office groups) considered. I then regress the person's party affiliation on these $2 \times N$ variables. Figure 6.3 plots the coefficients and their confidence intervals. I find that some types of offices are more partisan than others. While military and minor offices do not show a strong partisan pattern, appointments to the Court of Common Pleas, other county positions, as well as state level offices show strong partisanship. A closer look confirms these findings. For example, between sessions 17 and 23, when the Federalists

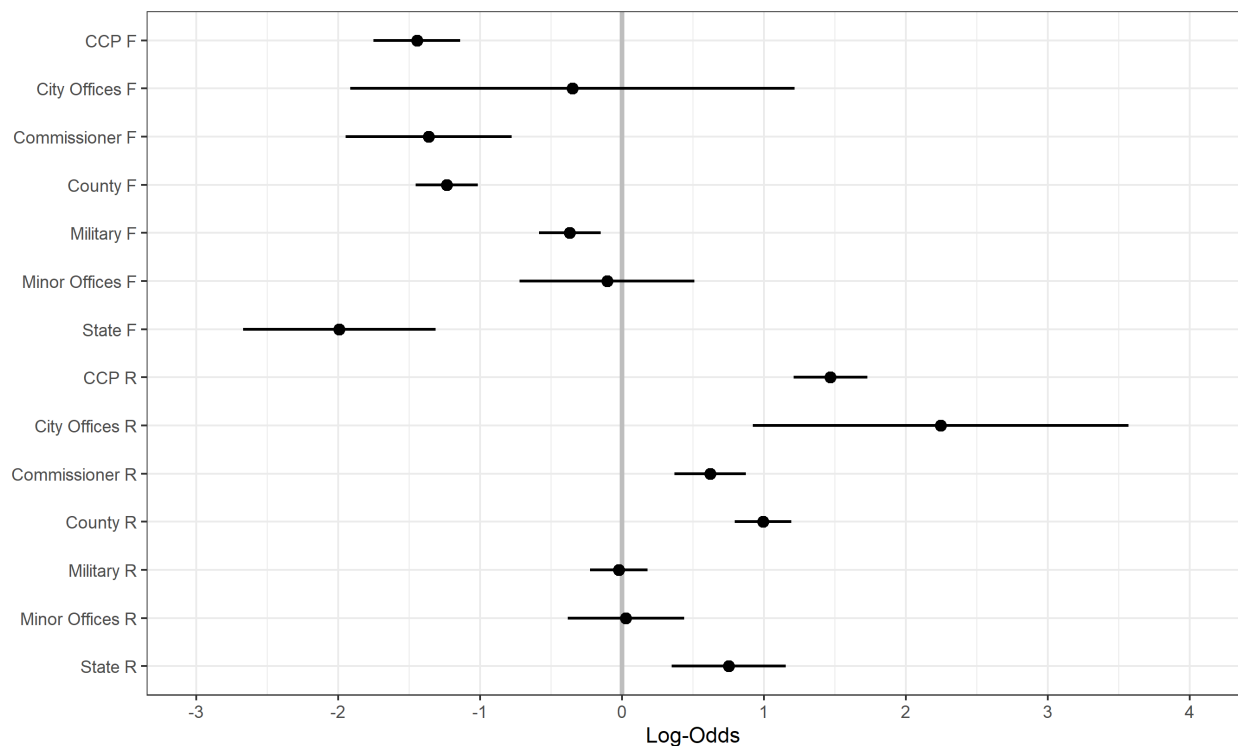


Figure 6.3: Office heterogeneity

Note: “CCP” stands for Court of Common Pleas, which is the county court. “County” contains all county level positions except those on the CCP. “State” contains all state level positions.

were in control of the Council, they appointed 23 Federalists and only 7 Republicans to state offices. Similarly, when the Republicans were in control in sessions 24 and 25, they appointed 9 Republicans and only 1 Federalist to state level offices. A similar pattern, although less pronounced, exists for county positions. Between sessions 17 and 23, Federalists appointed 229 Federalists and 84 Republicans to the Courts of Common Pleas, while Republicans in sessions 24 and 25 appointed 79 Republicans and 55 Federalists to the county courts.⁸

8. There is another set of highly partisan positions: commissions that deal with a specific task and are usually temporary. First, “An act for the assessment of taxes” created commissioners of taxes who were appointed in 1799. 76% of them were Federalists and only 4% Republicans. Second, “An act for loaning monies to the Citizens of this State” created commissioners of loans who were appointed in 1808. 70% of them were Republicans and only 12% Federalists. Third, commissioners of deeds began to be appointed in 1818. 63% of them were Republicans and 26% Federalists.

6.3.2 *Partisan Appointments and Region*

In addition to temporal variation and variation by office, we can also examine regional variation in the distribution of appointments. We saw earlier (chapter 4) that the expansion of the state had significant consequences for the structure of politics in the 1790s. Do we see this reflected in where different councils send patronage? To answer this question, I assign every county level appointment to the senatorial district to which the county belonged at the time of the appointment. For state level positions, which have no county information, I use the county where the person who was appointed received most of his appointments during the 5-year time window around the year of the state level appointment. If that procedure does not provide a county, I use the county he received most appointments in between 1788 and 1801. Using this county information, I then assign each appointment to a senatorial district.

Table 6.3 shows the percentage of appointments that go to Federalists for each session and district, for sessions 11 to 26.⁹ Reading the table from top to bottom, we see the temporal variation discussed above. Reading it from left to right, we get a sense of variation across districts within sessions. One particularly interesting case is when a council is dominated by one party but has members from both parties. In this case, does the member from the minority party get to distribute patronage in his district? In other words, do we see that the district of the member from the minority party has a larger share of appointments that go to the minority party than the other districts? Or does the majority party double down on that district? To examine this question, each cell in table 6.3 also shows the party the council member from that district affiliated with at the time. Take session 22, for example. In that session, Federalists were elected in the eastern, western and middle districts, while a Republican was elected in the southern district. While there clearly are sessions with

9. Note that, overall, the percentage of appointments that go to Federalists is 63%, in part because there are more Federalists than Republicans in my sample.

significant cross-district variation, no clear pattern emerges. If anything, the Council seems to give *fewer* appointments to the minority party in districts that had a member from the minority party. For example, in session 22, the Republican southern district saw 89% of the appointments go to Federalists, which was not much different from the Federalist districts in the same session. Overall, then, it seems that what mattered was which party controlled the Council, not the party of the representative from the district.

Session Number	Southern	Middle	Eastern	Western
11	50 (F)	40 (F)	100 (R)	75 (F)
12	55 (R)	58 (R)	40 (R)	56 (R)
13	62 (F)	67 (R)	57 (R)	58 (F)
14	44 (F)	86 (F)	71 (R)	63 (F)
15	60 (R)	66 (F)	70 (F)	68 (F)
16	50 (R)	41 (R)	43 (R)	57 (F)
17	67 (F)	56 (R)	70 (F)	65 (F)
18	75 (F)	67 (R)	60 (F)	72 (F)
19	65 (F)	70 (R)	74 (F)	79 (F)
20	61 (F)	66 (F)	73 (F)	86 (F)
21	72 (F)	62 (F)	61 (F)	64 (F)
22	89 (R)	72 (F)	94 (F)	85 (F)
23	83 (F)	68 (F)	80 (F)	82 (F)
24	32 (R)	42 (R)	<u>35 (F)</u>	46 (R)
25	44 (R)	29 (R)	<u>65 (R)</u>	<u>44 (F)</u>
26	60 (R)	45 (R)	<u>44 (F)</u>	<u>47 (R)</u>

Table 6.3: Percent of appointments that went to Federalists

Note: Cells in bold show districts where the Republicans were able to elect one of their members when they were in the minority. Underlined cells show districts where the Federalists were able to elect one of their members when they were in the minority.

In table 6.3 I combined all appointments made by the Council, including both state and county level offices. I now look at state level positions only. Which districts received the state patronage? The answer is shown in figure 6.4, top. Until session 18, state positions went almost exclusively to elites from the southern and the middle district. (This is somewhat surprising given that the city and county of Albany belonged to the western district until session 19.) But starting in session 19, state level appointments were also given to elites

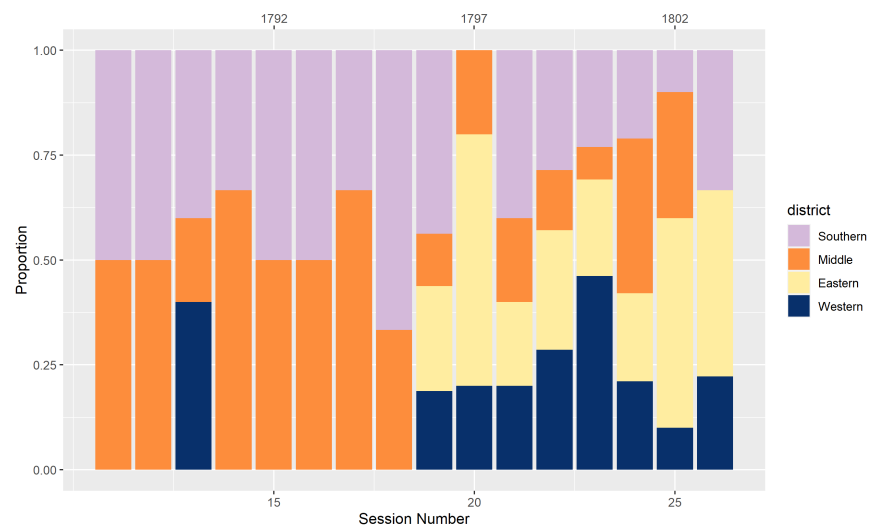
from the western and eastern districts. Thus, similar to what we saw in chapter 4, we find a reorganization of the political system and a shift of power north- and westward. And again we see that this process is driven by the Federalists, who control the Council in sessions 19 through 23. In fact, when the Republicans gain power in session 24, we see a drop in the proportion of appointments that go to the western district, demonstrating that the western part of the state was now clearly associated with the Federalist party. Compare this to figure 6.4, bottom, which shows the same graph but for appointments to the Court of Common Pleas (the county court). Here no comparable change is visible. This is, of course, not surprising given that the constitution regulated that each county should receive a certain number of judges, but it shows that state level appointments, which were at the Council's discretion, played an important role in parties' usage of patronage to mobilize cadre.

I end by looking at appointments in newly created counties. Parties in New York formed during a period of rapid expansion. As the state's population grew and moved westward, several new counties were being created. And with new counties came new offices. Arguably, the creation of new counties was, at least partly, endogenous to party competition, as the creation of new counties offered parties a way to entrench themselves in these new areas.¹⁰ Further, the drawing of county lines and the settling of the location of the county seat were often important sites of partisan competition (Slez 2020; Schellenberg 1970). This raises the question of which party was able to benefit from the creation of these new counties.

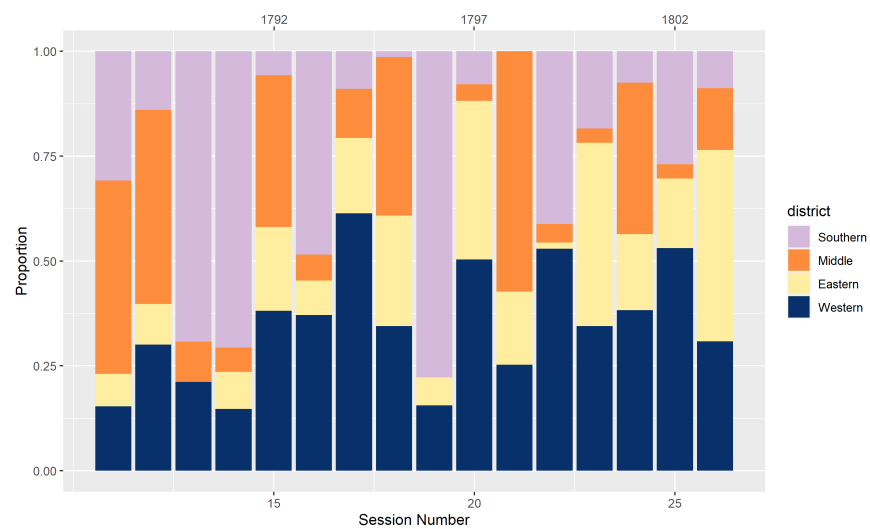
Between 1786 and 1803, New York's state legislature created 20 new counties. In most cases, the people who were appointed in these new counties did not hold positions in the parent county from which the new county was created.¹¹ This suggests that the areas that

10. There is evidence to suggest that the creation of new counties was endogenous to party competition, although this requires further investigation. In 1798 Oneida split from Herkimer, which had voted Federalist in 1795. Oneida became a strongly Federalist county, while Herkimer became Republican.

11. This is true even in cases where relatively populous areas were broken off. Take Columbia County as an example. When Columbia was broken off from Albany in 1786, the old Albany officials remained in their positions and the newly created offices went to people who had held no appointments in the parent county (although some of them had been elected to the state legislature). Going through the offices of first



(a) Proportion of state level appointments by senatorial district



(b) Proportion of appointments to the Court of Common Pleas by senatorial district

Figure 6.4: Appointments by senatorial district

became new counties had been largely excluded from county offices and that the creation of new counties opened up career opportunities for people who had been locked out.

For each of these counties, table 6.4 shows the number of appointments that went to Federalists and the number of appointments that went to Republicans. It does so separately for four types of offices: the top four offices in the county (first judge of the Court of Common Pleas, county clerk, sheriff, and surrogate), positions on the Court of Common Pleas except for the first judge, other county offices, and military positions. The first thing we notice is that the numbers are low. Because these counties were created relatively late, people from those areas had a smaller chance of making it into my dataset, which is why party affiliation is available for only a few of them. In the case of the eight counties that were created before 1794, there seems to be no clear partisanship in the appointments, although military positions always favor Federalists.¹² This changed in 1794 under the Federalist Council. If we look at the four highest positions in the county, we see that between 1794 and 1800 ten went to Federalist and only four to Republicans. Interestingly, of those four Republicans, three later switched to the Federalists. Especially in Oneida County appointments favored Federalists; only a single one went to the opposition. Similarly, when Genesee was created after the Republicans captured the state legislature and the Council in 1801, most appointments went to Republicans. Overall, then, it seems that appointments in new counties became more partisan starting in 1794, but this never happened in a way that completely excluded one party from patronage (Oneida County being the exception). And similar to what we saw before, the Federalists were the party that was able to capitalize most on the expansion of

judge, county clerk, sheriff and surrogate, I found only a few exceptions to this general rule: Moses DeWitt was surrogate of Herkimer before he became surrogate of Onondaga in 1794; John LaGrange Mersereau was surrogate of Tioga before he became surrogate of Chenango in 1798; Jedediah Sanger was first judge of Herkimer before he became first judge of Oneida in 1798; Jonas Platt was county clerk of Herkimer before he became county clerk of Oneida in 1798; William Colbrath was sheriff of Herkimer before he became sheriff of Oneida; Benjamin Ledyard was county clerk of Onondaga before he became county clerk of Cayuga in 1799; Seth Phelps was first judge of Onondaga before he became first judge of Cayuga in 1799.

12. The role of military appointments for the dominance of the Federalists in these new areas is something that requires further investigation.

County	Year	Top 4 (F:R)	CCP (F:R)	Other (F:R)	Military (F:R)
Columbia	1786	1:0	0:0	2:1	16:6
Clinton	1788	0:1	1:0	0:0	1:0
Ontario	1789	0:0	0:0	1:1	1:0
Herkimer	1791	1:1	1:3	3:3	14:2
Otsego	1791	2:0	0:0	3:3	3:3
Rensselaer	1791	0:1	4:3	7:2	10:8
Saratoga	1791	1:2	5:2	3:7	8:7
Tioga	1791	0:0	1:3	1:0	5:2
Onondaga	1794	0:1	4:2	4:0	2:1
Schoharie	1795	0:0	1:0	2:1	0:0
Steuben	1796	1:0	0:1	0:0	1:0
Delaware	1797	2:1	2:1	1:1	1:0
Chenango	1798	1:1	4:1	5:1	2:1
Oneida	1798	2:0	4:0	7:1	3:0
Rockland	1798	1:0	0:0	1:0	0:0
Cayuga	1799	0:0	2:3	1:0	2:0
Essex	1799	1:0	1:1	1:1	0:0
Greene	1800	2:1	5:1	3:0	1:5
Saint Lawrence	1801	1:0	0:0	1:0	0:0
Genesee	1803	0:1	0:3	2:3	3:4

Table 6.4: Number of appointments in new counties by office type and party

the political system.

6.3.3 *Quid Pro Quo*

In addition to partisan patronage, where the Council gives out appointments based on party affiliation, we might also be interested in more direct forms of patronage. In particular, we might wonder if assemblymen were directly rewarded for helping senators get elected to the Council. To investigate this question, for each session, I count the number of votes each assemblyman gave to the four candidates that were ultimately elected to the Council (ranging from 0 to 4), ignoring uncontested districts. I use this number as a predictor in a logistic regression with an indicator for whether the assemblyman received an appointment *by the Council he voted for* as the outcome. Instead of running separate regressions for

each session, or including sessions as dummy variables, I estimate a hierarchical logistic regression with people nested in sessions. This allows me both to control for session and to examine change over time. To do this, I include the number of votes each assemblyman gives to the successful candidates as both a fixed and a random term in the model. Finally, I also include dummies for party (F, A/R, S, none) because it might be the case that, say, Federalist assemblymen voted for a Federalist Council which then handed out appointments to Federalists. In this case, I would just confirm the previous finding that appointments were partisan. Controlling for party ensures that I am really estimating the effect of the votes, not that of party. The analysis is restricted to the period from 1789 (session 12) to 1812 (session 35).

The results show that assemblymen were indeed rewarded with appointments for their votes. The model gives a fixed effect for the number of votes of .39. This means that each additional vote increases the odds of being appointed by that Council by $(\exp(.39) - 1)100 = 48\%$. (The effect is significant at the .01-level.) This, however, hides some important temporal variation. Figure 6.5 shows the corresponding random effects from the same model. Adding the random component for each session to the direct one of .39 gives us the total effect for each session. First, we see that the total effect is never negative (because the random component is never smaller than -.39). Second, we see that the total effect is particularly strong in sessions 16 and 17, in sessions 22 to 26 (with the exception of session 24) and after session 33. The first two of these moments correspond to the second and third period of high partisanship identified in chapter 4. Thus, in times of strong partisan division, direct support for councilmen matters the most. Interestingly, the indicators for party are all insignificant.¹³

13. While including variables for party decreases the effect, the change is very small. Another interesting finding is that when I drop switchers from the analysis, the direct effect increases from .39 to .48 (or from 48% to 62%). (Further dropping people without party affiliation does not do anything.) Thus, it seems that switchers are somehow isolated from the dynamics identified here. Arguably their elite status gives them access to appointments no matter what they do. But this needs further investigation.

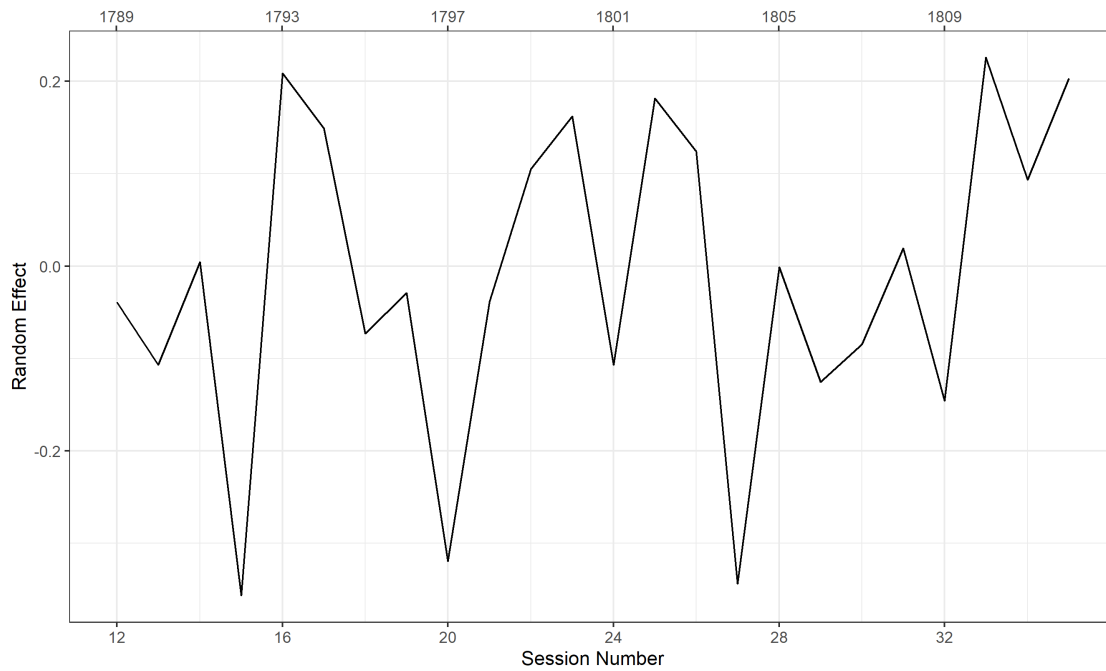


Figure 6.5: Random effects from hierarchical logistic regression

Note: The figure shows results from a hierarchical logistic regression with people nested in sessions. The dependent variable is whether the person received an appointment. As independent variables I include a variable that captures the number of votes each person gave to successful candidates as well as dummies for party affiliation. The former is included as a fixed and a random term, the latter as a fixed term only. Shown are the random effects (exponentiated coefficients) for the former.

I repeat the same analysis but with whether electing members of the Council had an effect on the likelihood of being appointed in the year *before* and the year *after* the Council the person voted for. In the first case, the effect drops to .11 (12%); in the second case, it drops to .05 (5%). Both effects are insignificant. This further supports the argument that helping someone get elected to the Council is rewarded with an appointment by that very Council.

6.4 Conclusion

In his study of the political economy in New York state in the early republic, Murphy (2015, 108) observes that “[i]n a period before parties could rely on state patronage networks or autonomously fund and staff their own organizations, corporations like the Manhattan Company served as poles of profit and opportunity around which partisanship was encouraged, maintained, and even incentivized.” This chapter casts serious doubt on the accuracy of the first part of this statement. State patronage networks not only existed, but were at the core of party formation. Starting in the 1790s political patronage was increasingly given out in a partisan fashion. Appointments were particularly partisan around transitions of power from one party to another. Further, these partisan appointments were bound up with the expansion of the political system into previously unsettled areas. Given that this is a study of New York, this high degree of partisanship in political patronage may not surprise the reader. Yet, Republican governments often put institutions in place that are designed to suppress the very factional or partisan divisions we see here (Schoots et al. 2020), and the behavior of the early Council suggests that appointments based on consensus were possible. But as parties began to take shape in the state, control over patronage became central to partisan struggle.

CHAPTER 7

PARTIES AND CAREERS

7.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 I showed that there were no pre-existing interest constellations that divided the two parties in New York. In chapter 4 I showed that parties formed around procedural issues related to office-holding, suggesting that it was largely competition for offices that drove the dynamics of the first party system. And in chapter 6 I found that starting in the early 1790s, political patronage at the state and county level became increasingly partisan. This is quite plausible considering that political scientists understand parties primarily as groups of people trying to gain office. This office-seeking view is clearly articulated in Down's (1957, 25) definition of a party as "a team of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election," and it is further developed in Schlesinger's (1966, 1991) ambition theory of politics. In the early republic, offices took on an additional significance because political and social hierarchies were deeply entwined. Wood (1993, 88) observes that "[t]ranslating the personal, social, and economic power of the gentry into political authority was essentially what eighteenth-century politics was about." As a result, "election to public office was the capstone of social ascent" (Taylor 1995, 228).¹

1. In a letter to John McLean from August 18, 1828, Edward Everett of Massachusetts wrote: "In this country [the United States], according to an ingenious remark of Mr. Canning, in one of his election-speeches at Liverpool, office is more important, than in England. In England, where families are hereditary, the hereditary family politics are of vast consideration. I question not but the Duke of Norfolk takes greater pride, in his exclusion from the House of Lords as a Catholic, than the newest made peer does, in his admission to it. Besides this, mere Rank is of vast consequence there, and fills the utmost ambition of many persons in a large class in Society. Here it is unknown. Prodigious accumulations of fortune exist there, conferring of themselves very extensive influence and power, and making mere office a small thing with its possessors. The overgrown naval and military establishments open a career, in which the ambitious find scope for their talents. In place of all these, we have nothing, to which the ambitious can aspire, but office: I say nothing because all the private walks of life are as wide open in England as here, and afford, in that country, as well as in this, occupation for much of the active talent of the Community. But office here is family, rank, hereditary fortune, in short everything, out of the range of private life. This links its possession with innate principles of our nation; and truly incredible are the efforts men are willing to make, the humiliations they will endure, to get it" (cited in Massachusetts Historical Society 1909, 375–6).

Because of that, it is necessary to embed the political actors who sorted themselves into two opposing parties not only in their social networks, but also in the broader institutional context in which they operated. To do this, this chapter provides a systematic analysis of office-holding between 1777 and 1822, drawing on the office data discussed in section 2.4 and the party affiliation data discussed in section 2.1.2. The first part of the chapter presents the changing ecology of offices as the institutional structure in which parties formed. Once I have shown what this structure looks like, I examine how the Federalists and Republicans moved through it. The goal is to search for differences between the members of the two parties that can help us identify the political (as opposed to social) dynamics that gave rise to these emerging oppositions. Can the division between the two parties be attributed to different political experiences that put people on different paths that ultimately led them to oppose one another (see Bonomi 1971 on how political experiences shaped side-taking during the colonial period)? Did the two parties draw on different kinds of people who can be identified based on their career histories? Or was the political field already so well established that both parties competed at all levels of government and the careers of members of both parties had become practically indistinguishable?

7.2 The Structure of Offices

7.2.1 Office Size

I begin by looking at office size (figure 7.1). Size here does not mean the number of positions, but the number of terms, that is, the number of times someone was elected/appointed to the office between 1777 and 1822. The system of offices has a pyramid shape. The most numerous offices are military positions in companies, followed by justices of the peace (JP) and coroners, both positions at the county level. Other large offices include military positions in regiments, staff positions in the military, auctioneers/vendue masters, positions on the

county court called the Court of Common Pleas (CCP), commissioners of deeds, sheriffs, inspectors of goods and measures, masters in chancery, and public notaries. At the top of the pyramid are positions at the state level that are appointments for life (or rather, as the state constitution stated, “during good behavior or until they shall have respectively attained the age of sixty years”) such as chancellor, positions on the New York Supreme Court, Secretary of State, and attorney general, as well as appointments at the federal level. The most numerous elective office is that of the assembly, followed by the state senate and the U.S. House. (U.S. Senators from New York were not popularly elected but chosen by the state legislature.)

This expansive pyramid is the result of a significant increase over the course of the study period in county level offices that was not matched by a comparable increase at the state level. For example, the number of yearly appointments to the position of JP increased from 103 in the decade from 1786 to 1795 to 435 in the decade from 1806 to 1815 (table 7.1). Similarly, the average number of appointments per year to the Court of Common Pleas increased from 58 to 216, the number of coroners went from 32 to 101, and the number of auctioneers from 15 to 57.

Growth at the state level was much more limited. The number of assembly seats increased from 70 to 108 in 1796, decreased to 100 in 1802, increased again to 112 in 1808, and increased further to 126 in 1815. The number of senate seats increased from 24 to 43 in 1796 and was then lowered to 32 in 1802. As far as appointive positions at the state level are concerned, most offices saw no change at all. There was only one chancellor, only one attorney general, only one Secretary of State, and so forth. The number of positions on the Supreme Court increased but only slightly, from three (including the chief justice) to four in 1792 and to five in 1794. But because these positions had no term limits, opportunities for appointment were small. The Court of Chancery increased the number of masters/examiners from one appointment per year to 27 per year (table 7.1). In addition, in 1796 the position of district

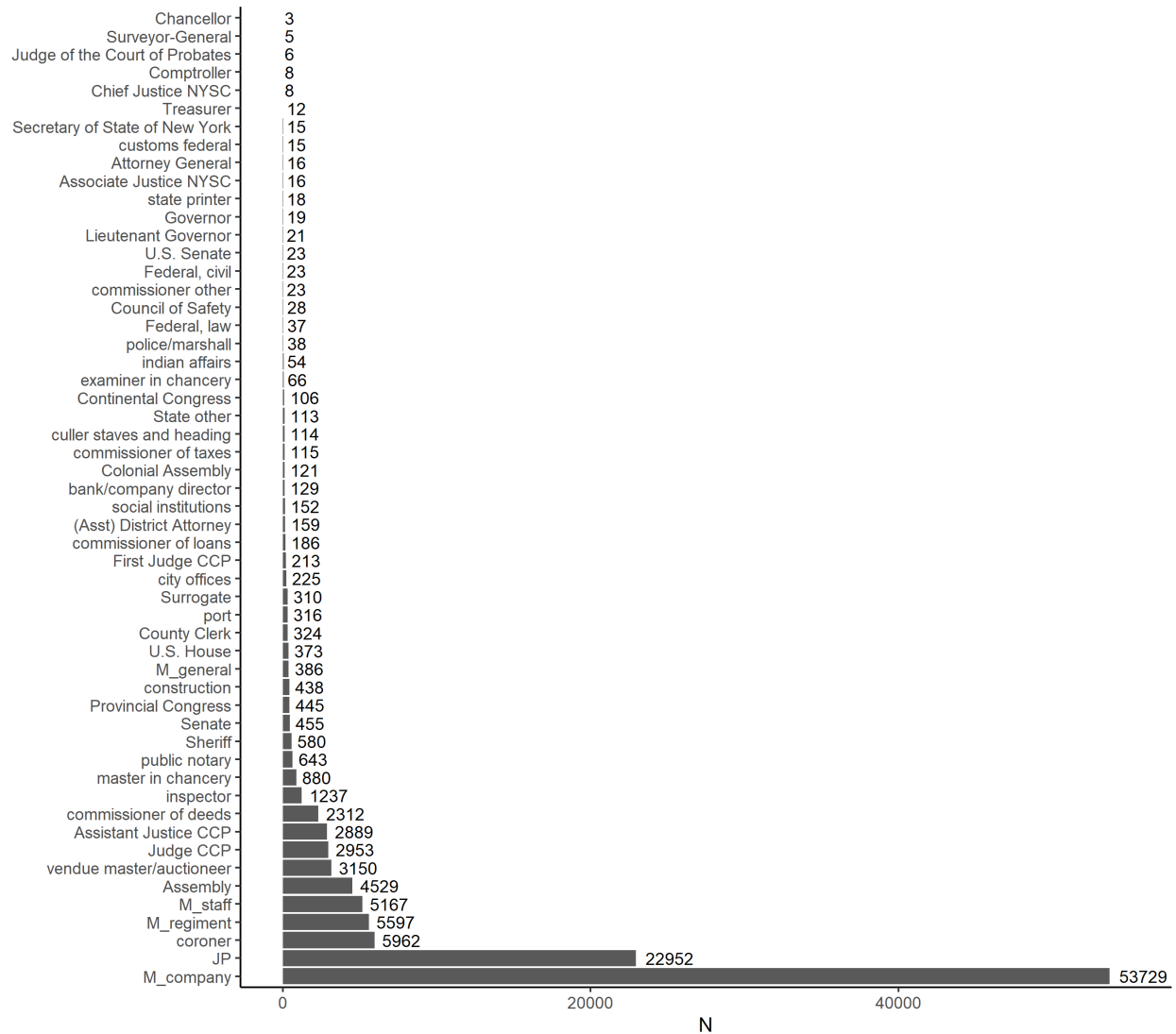


Figure 7.1: Number of terms by office

Note: M stands for military. CCP stands for Court of Common Pleas.

Office	1786-1795	1796-1805	1806-1815
Justice of the Peace	103	251	435
CCP	58	100	216
Coroner	32	72	101
Auctioneer	15	41	57
Master/Examiner in Chancery	1	3	27
district attorney	0	2	4

Table 7.1: Average number of appointments per year for select offices

attorney was created. Although only a few positions were available, we will see that they often served as springboards for lawyers trying to build a career in the courts.

Federal appointive offices were very rare and because they usually had no term limits, opportunities were scarce. Seats in the U.S. House grew from an initial six to 10 in 1793, to 17 in 1802 to 27 in 1812 to 34 in 1822. U.S. Senate seats, obviously, had been capped at two.

Thus, as different generations of New Yorkers entered politics, they encountered an increasingly expansive office pyramid. This created more opportunities at the local level, thus tying more and more New Yorkers into the political system. But it also meant that a substantial number of people now entered low-level positions with nowhere to go. This, in turn, may have led to increased competition, as higher-level offices now recruited from a larger pool of lower-level offices. Further, the growth in the number of assembly seats, although relatively small compared to the changes at the local level, together with higher turnover (see chapter 4), meant that more people were exposed to the face-to-face contact this body facilitated and were socialized into partisanship.²

2. The effects these changes had on the political system are difficult to ascertain without data on how office-seekers perceived these changes. More work is necessary, and the data presented here will help us direct future inquiries in that direction.

7.2.2 *Transitions Between Offices*

To better understand the structure of offices, it would be useful to know the status associated with each office. One way to get at that would be to use office size as a proxy. But while office size may be inversely related to office status, such a relationship is not guaranteed. And, in fact, the ordering we obtained in figure 7.1 makes one doubt the feasibility of such an approach. Alternatively, we could use the economic value associated with each office. But that information is difficult to obtain. Some elite appointive positions received annual salaries that we could use, but most of the local officers obtained their income through fees. This meant that the income associated with an office was highly dependent on the amount of business the office-holder was able to do, which in turn depended on location. In addition, the value of an office was not restricted to the direct income it generated, but also had to do with social capital and reputational benefits.

I take a different approach and try to infer the status ordering of offices from the movements of elites through those offices. To do this, I create an office-office transition matrix and use it to estimate a Goodman row-column association model (L. A. Goodman 1979). The row and column scores estimated by the Goodman RC(M) model can be interpreted as a status-ordering of the offices. Before estimating the model, I set all values on the main diagonal to zero to ignore transitions within offices and normalize the transition matrix using marginal weights. I then estimate the model with one dimension and constrain row and column scores to be equal. The resulting scores can then be used to arrange the rows and columns when visualizing the transition matrix (with high-status offices in the top-left corner). Instead of plotting the raw counts of the number of transitions, I show adjusted Pearson residuals, which were calculated after setting the main diagonal to zero. The adjusted (or standardized) Pearson residual for a cell in a two-way table is defined as

$$r_{ij} = \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})}{\sqrt{E_{ij}(1 - p_{i+})(1 - p_{+i})}},$$

where O_{ij} is the observed value for the cell in the i th column and j th row, E_{ij} the expected value for the cell in the i th column and j th row, p_{i+} the row total divided by the grand total, and p_{+i} the column total divided by the grand total. The adjusted Pearson residual follows a standard normal distribution, meaning that an adjusted residual of more than 1.96 (given a .05 significance level) indicates that the number of cases in that cell is significantly larger than would be expected if the null hypothesis of no association between the rows and columns were true. To make the figure more legible, I set values above 20 to 20 and values below -20 to -20. (For readers who are reading a black-and-white print version, appendix E contains grayscale friendly versions of the transition matrices in this chapter.)

A perfect career structure would produce high values just below the main diagonal of the transition matrix and low values everywhere else. In fact, this is exactly what we see when we look at field military positions only (figure 7.2). New York's military at the time consisted of companies (with a captain, lieutenant, and ensign), which were nested within regiments (commanded by a colonel and two majors), which were nested within brigades (commanded by a brigadier-general), which were nested within divisions (commanded by a major-general). New Yorkers' careers follow this formal hierarchy almost perfectly. They enter the system as ensigns or lieutenants and then make their way up (although upward mobility was possible only for some, as evidenced by the first column in the matrix which shows that people have a high chance of transitioning into retirement from all offices except ensign).³ Each rank recruits almost exclusively from the rank below. While seen through our modern eyes this might not appear surprising, it is not clear that we should have expected such orderliness in eighteenth-century New York. In particular, in a world in which high office was related to social standing, we may have expected it to be common for social elites to enter the hierarchy at the top. But, as can be seen in the last row, the chances of doing so were low.

3. Remember that "Source" is the fictitious position people held before their first office and "Sink" the one they held after their last office.

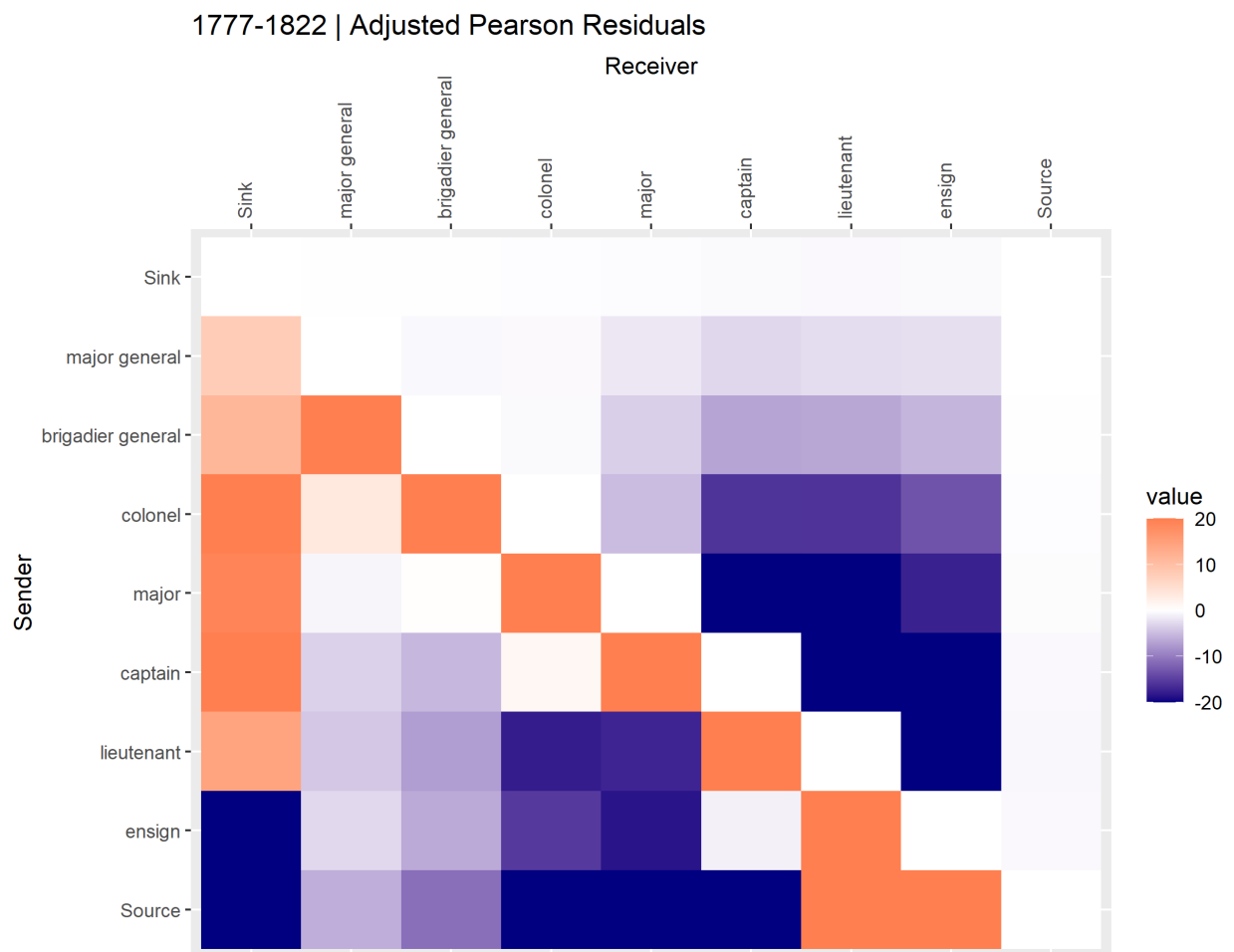


Figure 7.2: Adjusted Pearson residuals for field military offices, 1777-1822

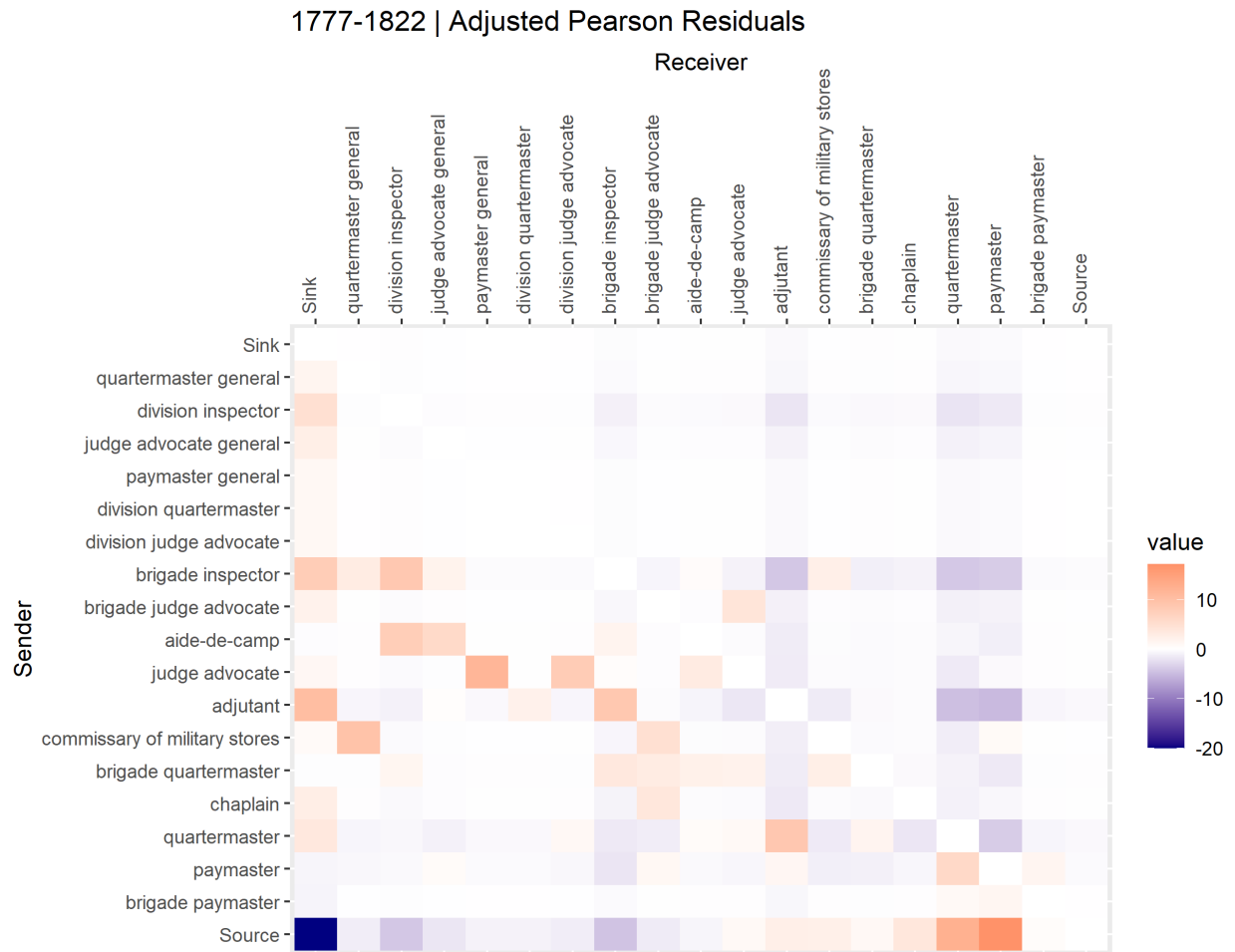


Figure 7.3: Adjusted Pearson residuals for staff military offices, 1777-1822

The picture is somewhat less orderly when we look at staff positions in the military (figure 7.3). This might in part be because there are somewhat parallel staff hierarchies for people dealing with payments (paymasters) and people dealing with supplies (quartermasters, commissaries of military stores). But there still seems to be an interpretable hierarchy.

What about civil positions? For this analysis I drop Source and Sink because they made it impossible for the model to converge, likely because almost all offices led to retirement. The results are shown in figure 7.4. The resulting hierarchy makes intuitive sense. At the bottom of the office hierarchy, we find local offices like culler of staves and heading, coroner, port official, and JP. At the top of the hierarchy, we find elite appointive positions in the state

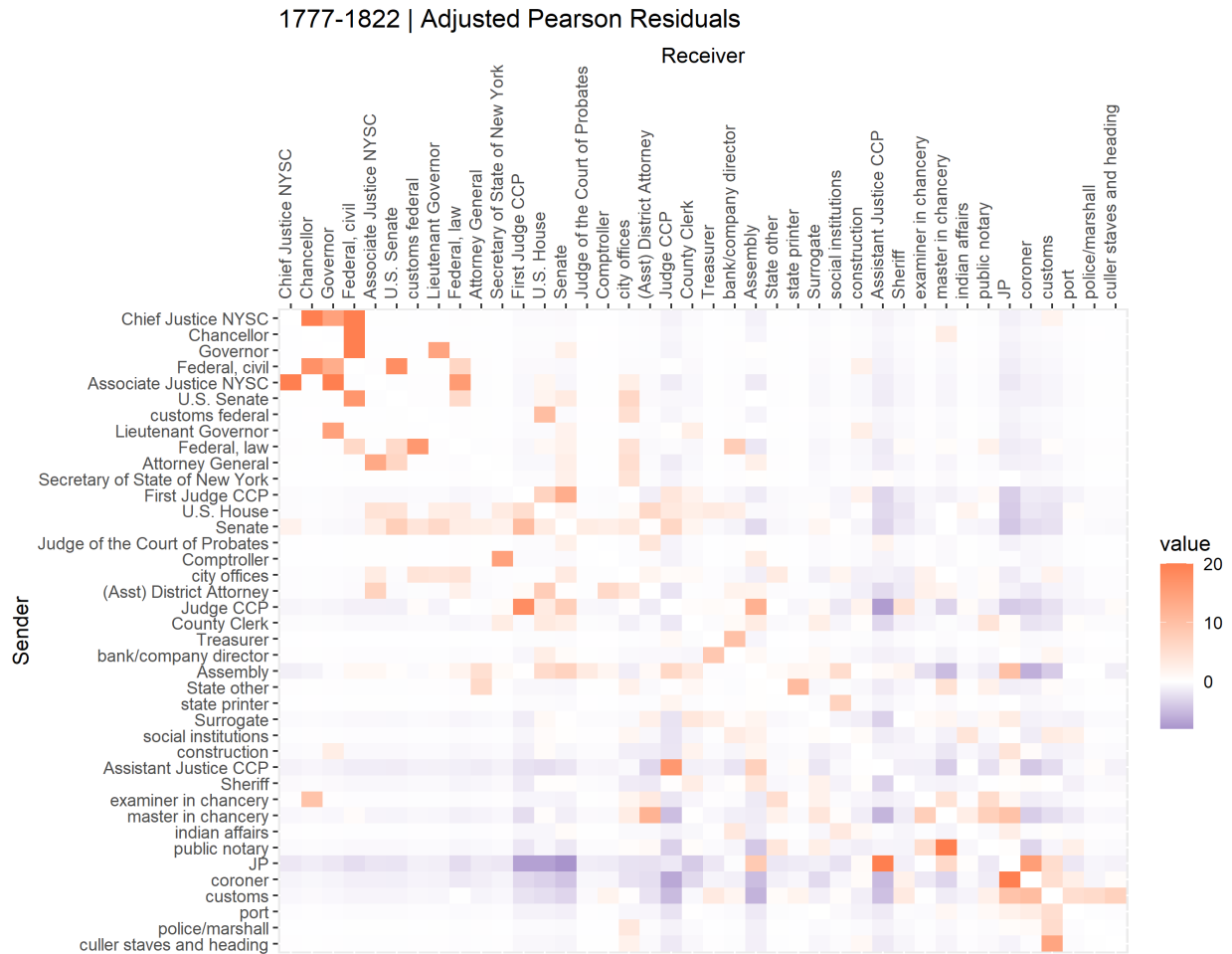


Figure 7.4: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1777-1822

and federal government (chief and associate justice of the State Supreme Court, chancellor, U.S. Senate, law and civil positions at the federal level). We also see two elective positions at the top: that of governor and lieutenant governor. The U.S. House and the state senate appear right next to each other about one third down from the top. The assembly is situated right in the middle and connects high- and low-level offices.

In one of the very few works that look at early political careers, Kernell (1977, 691) argues that “[w]ith the rise of national government, a status hierarchy of offices formed which directed political ambitions toward Washington.” For the early period studied here, this statement is only partially true. While federal offices, in particular appointive ones,

appear near the top of the hierarchy, it is not clear that they were more sought after than elite state level offices. Most contemporaries probably understood that much political power would be concentrated at the national level, but in a political world still largely structured by state governments, aspiring to national office was not a given. Many remained at the state level and build powerful political careers there. Others, following Madison's vision, served at the national level but then returned to positions in their home states.

In addition to being intuitive, the inferred hierarchy also maps onto the very few formal hierarchies that existed. The chief justice of the New York Supreme Court is recruited from among the associate justices, the first judge of the Court of Common Pleas is primarily recruited from among the judges, who, in turn, are recruited from among the assistant justices, who, in turn, are recruited from among the JPs.

Overall, people tend to move along the main diagonal, although there is quite a bit of noise. Some of that noise is due to errors in the data where two different people are mistakenly combined into one career because they shared the same name.⁴ While some of those cases have been spotted and corrected, others likely remain. In addition, there is the issue of simultaneous office-holding.⁵ In some of the cases where people seem to go from one office to another and vice versa, they held both positions simultaneously. George Clinton famously occupied the office of county clerk of Ulster for 52 years from 1760 until his death in 1812 while being elected governor multiple times, which, because of the way the data are

4. For example, there is another Alexander Hamilton who is an assemblyman, public notary, and commissioner of deeds in NYC.

5. Some offices did not allow the occupant to hold another office. New York's constitution of 1777 states: "That the chancellor and judges of the supreme court shalt not, at the same time, hold any other office, excepting that of Delegate to the general Congress, upon special occasions; and that the first judges of the county courts, in the several counties, shall not, at the same time, hold any other office, excepting that of Senator or Delegate to the general Congress. But if the chancellor, or either of the said judges, be elected or appointed to any other office, excepting as is before excepted, it shall be at his option in which to serve. [...] That sheriffs and coroners be annually appointed; and that no person shall be capable of holding either of the said offices more than four years successively; nor the sheriff of holding any other office at the same time." And on January 27, 1790, the state legislature resolved that it was "incompatible with the U.S. Constitution for any person holding an office under the United States government at the same time to have a seat in the Legislature of this State."

constructed, leads to movement between the two offices. Simultaneous office-holding also often occurred for people who were elected to the assembly while also serving on the county court.

Besides these data issues, there are also “real” reasons why we do not observe a clear career path. First, there seem to be sets of offices through which people rotate without progressing in a single direction. This is particularly true in the top-left and bottom-right corners of the matrix. For example, the office of the chancellor recruits from civil positions at the national level and vice versa. Similarly, the offices of coroner and JP seem to exchange officials. Second, a clear office hierarchy is also disrupted by offices that receive from and send to many other offices. This can be seen more clearly if, instead of visualizing the adjusted Pearson residuals, we use row and column percentages (figures 7.5 and 7.6). Row percentages give us a sense of where offices send; column percentages give us a sense of where offices receive from. When we look at these figures, we see vertical and horizontal bands that are particularly pronounced for the assembly and the JP (and to a lesser extent also for the judge of the CCP and the state senate). These offices serve as ladders that allow people to climb up to higher offices (and to some extent also down again), thus connecting otherwise disconnected worlds of offices. As a result, the people who serve in these offices are rather heterogeneous, making a clear status ordering of offices difficult (e.g., national elites like Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton served in the assembly together with a number of “yes men”). This is further complicated by the fact that the assembly and the senate are elective offices. Yes, one can use them to rise up, but one can also lose an election and then has to go somewhere else, which in some cases involved downward mobility.

Those complications notwithstanding, it appears that early on New Yorkers moved through offices in an orderly way. And, in fact, work about twentieth-century careers suggests that modern American careers would not show a much clearer pattern (Schlesinger 1966; Ruchelman 1970).

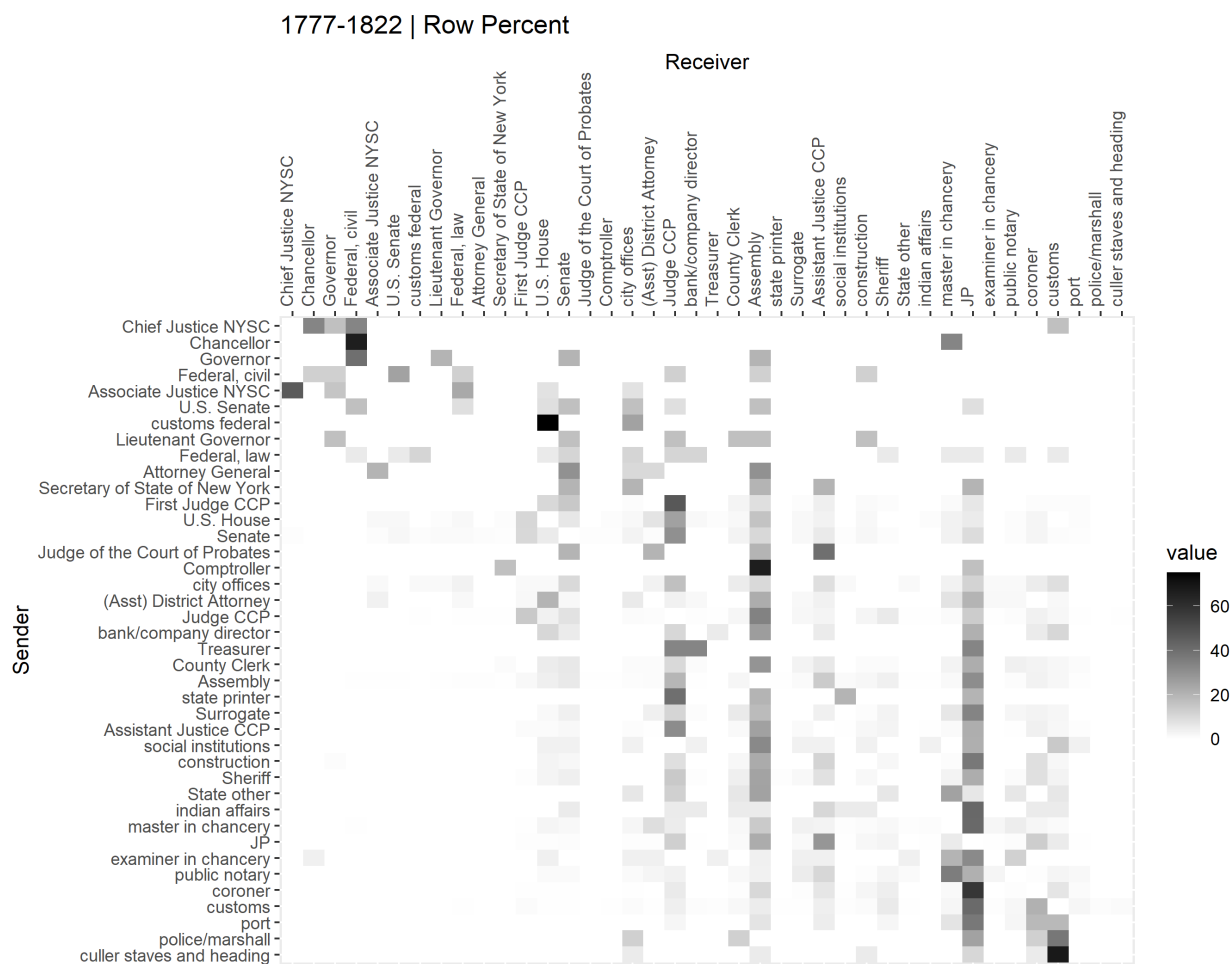


Figure 7.5: Row percentages for civil offices, 1777-1822

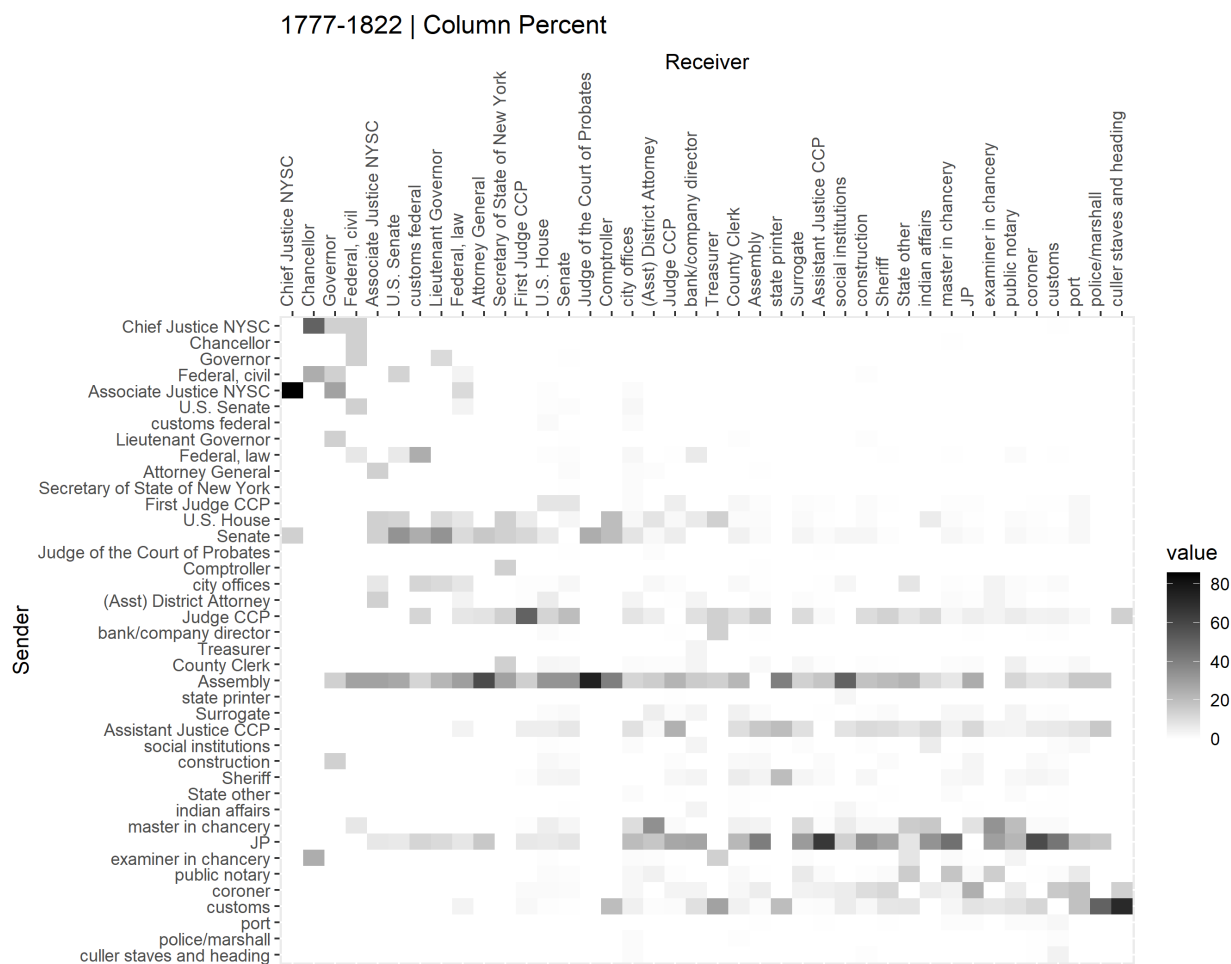


Figure 7.6: Column percentages for civil offices, 1777-1822

I end this section with a closer look at the relationship between offices. To do this, I turn the transition matrix into a network graph (figure 7.7). The edges in this graph represent the row percentages of the transition matrix. An edge of value X between offices A and B means that $X\%$ of the people who leave office A go to office B . Here, row percentages were calculated including the Sink. Because almost all offices send to the Sink, which would make the graph difficult to read, the Sink is not shown. Instead, the percentage of people who go from an office to the Sink is given in parentheses after the office name. In addition, node size is set proportional to these values. Only edges with a value of at least 10% are shown.

The resulting visualization confirms many of our previous findings and shows them more clearly. Again, the assembly and the JP appear as hubs that receive from a large number of offices and also send to a large number of offices.⁶ But they operate at different levels of the hierarchy. The JP connects low-level offices to the assembly; the assembly connects the JP and other county positions to the world of state and national offices.

In addition, the data allow us to take a closer look at retirement. There are three types of offices among those with a high retirement rate. First, there are low-status ones like coroner, JP, auctioneer/vendue master, and other minor offices. People enter through these offices and immediately leave again, without ever holding another office. This is not surprising given the pyramid structure of the office hierarchy. Second, there is the set of structurally equivalent positions on the right side of the graph: civil positions at the state level, bank and company directors, sheriffs, county clerks, and city offices like mayor. From there, people either go to the assembly or retire. What distinguishes them from the first type is that they have no connection to the position of the JP and to other low-level offices. Third, there are federal positions, and in particular appointive positions (which include the U.S. Senate which was not popularly elected and instead chosen by the state legislature). Those offices

6. The assembly has a low percentage of retirements (27%) and only two outgoing edges (to JP [20%] and to judge of the Court of Common Pleas [13%]), which means that 40% went to other offices, but each connection remained below the 10% cutoff.



Figure 7.7: Office network

Note: Edge values are based on the row percentages of the transition matrix. In other words, they show sending percentages. The number in parentheses after the office name shows the sending percentage to the Sink, providing information about movement into retirement. Node size is proportional to the sending percentage to the Sink.

have a high retirement rate for two reasons: as high-level offices they appear relatively late in people's careers and they often have no term limits.

Finally, the network graph suggests that there might be different career tracks. One seems to lead through the positions of the county court, which were often combined with service in the assembly and also with commissions (taxes and loans). In addition, there seems to be something like an administrative track connecting the offices of public notary and master/examiner in the chancery court, which in turn are connected to clerk positions in the assembly, the state senate, and in courts (which are not shown in figure 7.7).

7.2.3 *Office Status and Age*

Given that there seems to be something like an office hierarchy, we might expect that the Goodman scores will correlate positively with the average age of the office-holders at the time of their appointment/election, such that as people get older they move up the career ladder. Yet, this line of reasoning only applies to people who were willing and able to build a career in the sense of a progression through a series of offices. For people who did not have a career, we need to assume that they dropped out of the system early in their lives. If instead they moved from one low-level office to another low-level office, the average age for those offices would be high, which, in turn, would drive the correlation down.

Table 7.2 shows the average age of the office-holders for each office together with their standard deviation. Interestingly, the Goodman scores and the average age correlate at only .07. There are several reasons for this. First, the relationship between the two follows an inverse u-shape where people receive high status appointments in their 40s. In other words, the highest positions are rarely entered at a very young or very old age. Further, some lower-level positions like JP are held by people at all ages as indicated by an average age near the center of the distribution and a high standard deviation. Finally, even though some low-level offices served as stepping stones to higher office (e.g., district attorney or surrogate), others

seem to have occurred relatively late in people's careers and appear to have been retirement offices (e.g., port officials or customs officials). Similarly, we find positions as first judge or judge on the Court of Common Pleas relatively late in people's careers, either because they appeared at the end of careers that remained at the county level or because people returned to them after service at higher levels.

7.2.4 *Structuredness of Transitions Between Offices*

Is the status hierarchy identified above the product of the gradual emergence of career structures that we can observe in the data? In other words, does movement through offices become more orderly over time? To take a first stab at this question, we can split the transition matrix into two time periods, using 1801 as a cutoff, and redo the analysis. The results can be seen in figures 7.8 and 7.9, which plot the adjusted Pearson residuals for each time period. Comparing the two figures, we find little evidence that transitions became more orderly over time. To the extent that a clear ordering of offices and clear career paths emerged, they did so early on.

We can study changes in the degree to which transitions were structured more systematically using a moving window strategy. For each year, I sample an equal number of transitions as follows: 200 transitions from the focal year, 500 from the two years before, and 500 from the two years after. Based on these samples, I then create separate transition matrices for each window. Instead of plotting each of these matrices, I summarize the information contained in them using a concentration measure. More precisely, for each window I turn the absolute counts of the transition matrix into row percentages and then calculate the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) separately for each row. The index is normalized to account for the fact that the number of offices is not constant over time. Because the size of these samples is relatively small, leading to unstable results, I repeat this process 1000 times and create an average for each year. For each office this gives us a measure of how structured

Office	Average Age	SD Age
state printer	29.5	3.5
(Asst) District Attorney	36.7	6.7
Attorney General	37.1	6.7
Comptroller	38.2	13.1
Associate Justice NYSC	38.9	6.1
examiner in chancery	39.3	11.6
master in chancery	40.0	15.1
public notary	40.3	16.4
Surrogate	40.7	12.7
indian affairs	40.8	13.8
Judge of the Court of Probates	41.5	9.2
Federal, law	42.3	9.8
Chancellor	43.0	10.6
Sheriff	44.0	11.3
U.S. House	44.0	8.9
Federal, civil	44.1	8.8
JP	44.2	13.0
city offices	44.4	10.7
Assembly	44.7	11.5
Chief Justice NYSC	45.6	6.9
construction	46.2	11.3
U.S. Senate	46.7	9.3
Secretary of State of New York	47.0	10.3
customs federal	47.2	8.9
Assistant Justice CCP	47.4	11.3
Treasurer	47.6	4.8
bank/company director	47.9	12.6
Senate	47.9	11.4
Governor	48.5	9.8
coroner	48.8	16.9
First Judge CCP	49.1	8.8
Judge CCP	50.8	11.0
social institutions	51.4	12.7
County Clerk	51.5	17.5
State other	52.3	15.7
port	55.3	13.5
customs	55.4	15.3
Lieutenant Governor	62.3	13.7

Table 7.2: Average age at appointment/election by office

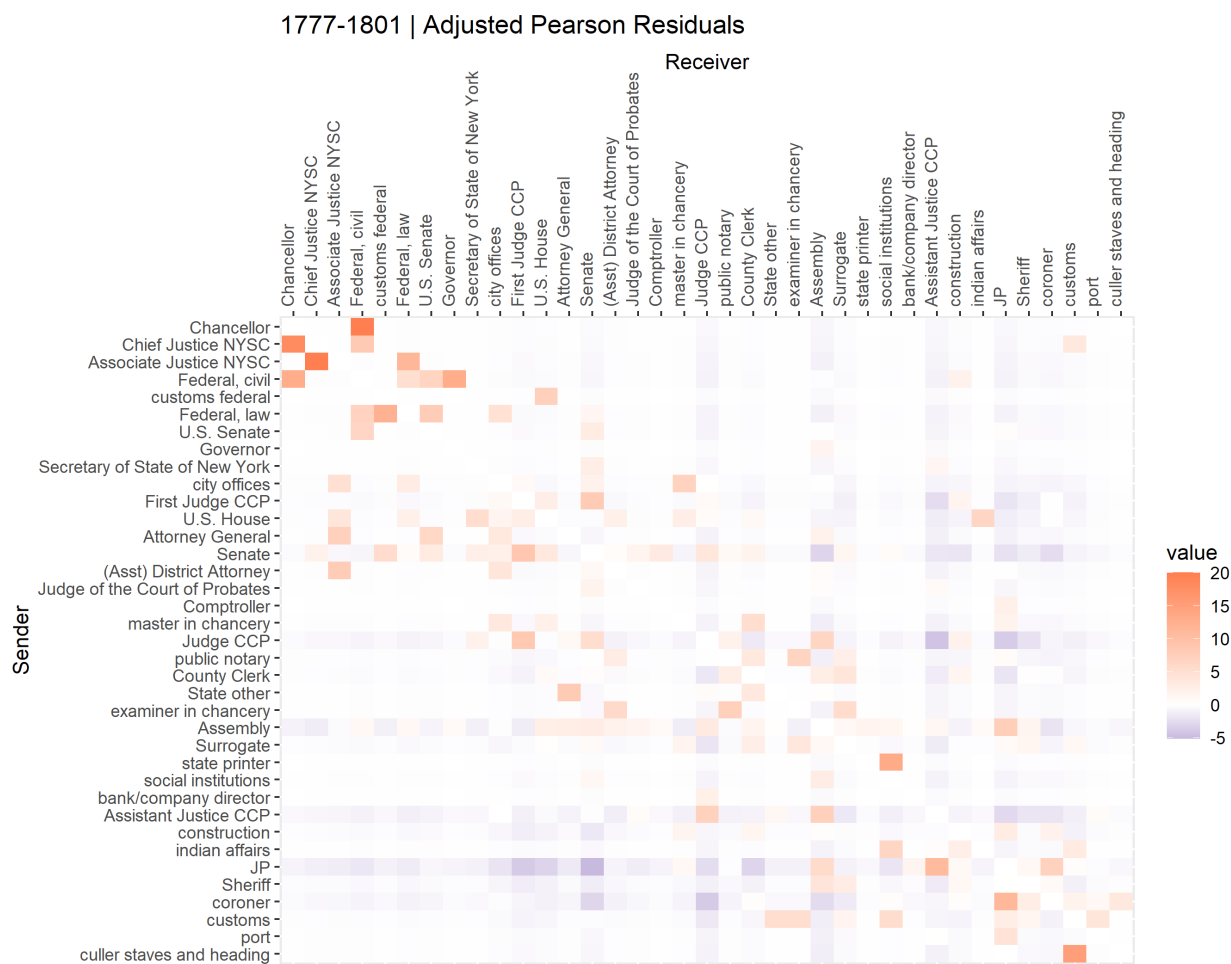


Figure 7.8: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1777-1801

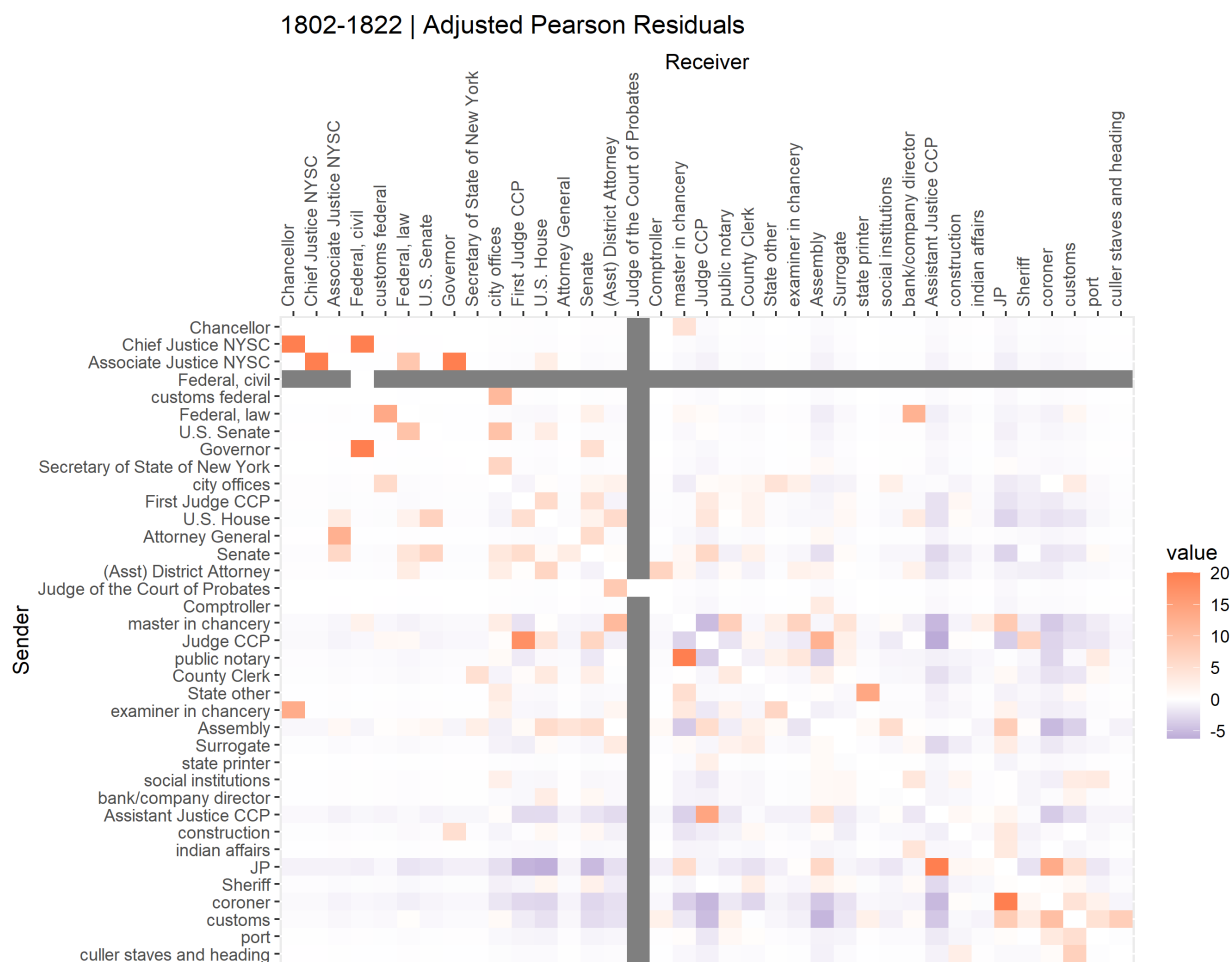


Figure 7.9: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1802-1822

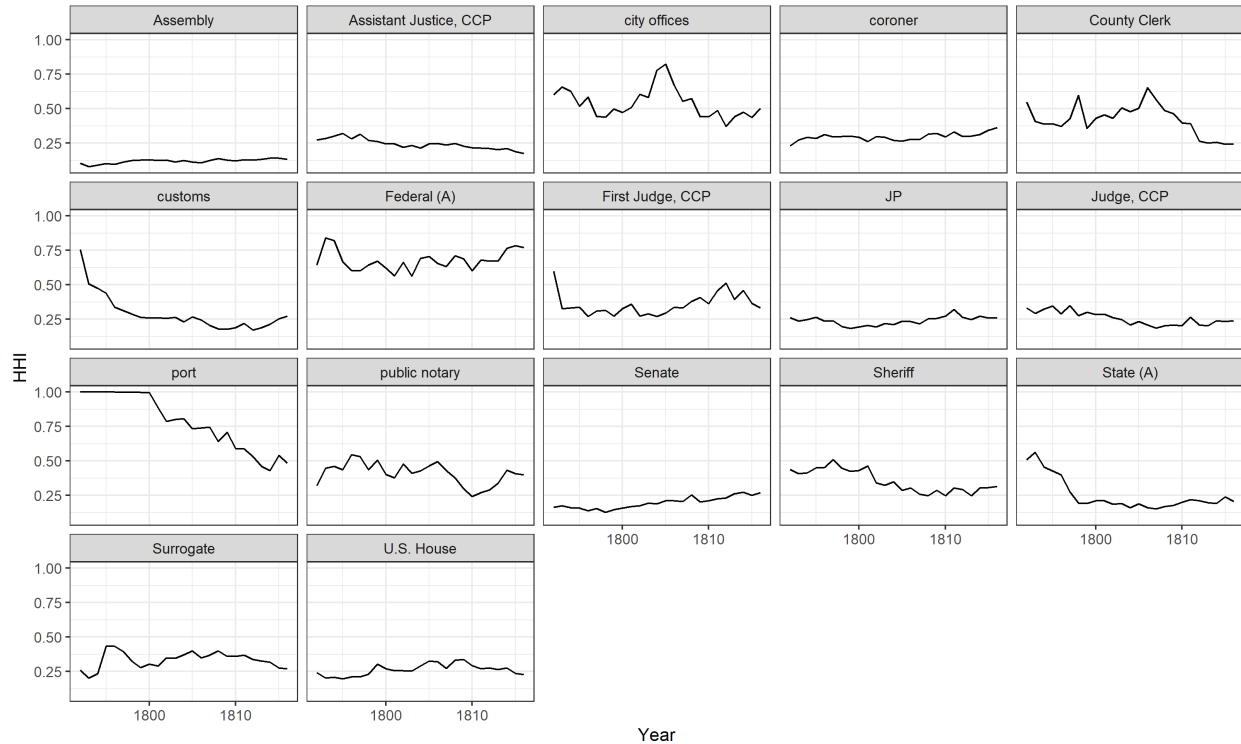


Figure 7.10: Structuredness of office transitions

exits from that office were. An office that sends equally to all other offices in the system would have an HHI of 0; an office that only sends to one other office would have an HHI of 1. (Source and Sink are again excluded from the analysis because they would trump most of the other patterns.) The results are shown in figure 7.10.

Again, we find little change over time. For some offices, in particular customs and port officials, the HHI drops significantly over time. But this is likely due to the fact that there were only very few positions at the beginning of the time period. Other offices show change (e.g., city offices), but there is no overall trend. For most offices, however, the curve is relatively flat. Thus, movement between offices did not become more orderly over time, confirming our previous finding.

Overall, these results indicate that very early on a political system had developed in which people moved through offices in a relatively orderly fashion. Although the system experienced dramatic growth due to the creation of new counties in the state, these changes

did not radically alter the way people moved through offices. Given the stability of the office hierarchy, it becomes plausible why the contest between the Federalists and the Republicans in New York was so focused on procedures that had to do with who would control access to these offices. Everyone agreed what competition for office should look like and that politics was about exactly that kind of competition.

7.2.5 *Career Types*

So far I have looked at transitions between offices. While this type of analysis has revealed a great deal about the structure of the system of offices, by aggregating over all people, it also lost much of the information about individual careers. Yet, the system we observe is the product of multiple intersecting career histories. Here I will take a first step towards an analysis of careers by organizing them into career types. I do this by classifying each person's career in three ways: (1) whether it contained civil or military appointments or both; (2) whether it contained elective or appointive offices or both; and (3) whether it contained offices at the local (mostly county), the state, or the federal level or a combination thereof. To explore if the composition of career types changed over time, I again divide the office-holders into two groups: those who received their first office before 1802 and those who received their first office after 1802. The results are shown in table 7.3.

Several findings emerge from the analysis. First, people increasingly hold either military or civil positions and the percentage of those who combine both declines from 22 to 9%. Second, because of a large increase in the number of appointive positions that is not matched by a similar increase in the number of elective offices, the share of people whose careers include only appointive offices increases from 64 to 88%. The proportion of people who either held only elective or elective and appointive positions declines from 9 to 4 and from 27 to 8%, respectively. Third, looking at how people's careers combine levels of government, we find that the majority of people hold positions at the local level only. That is true for both

Type	Gen 1 (N=14,501)	Gen 2 (N=38,304)
A: Civil and Military		
C	25.0	30.6
M	53.3	60.3
C&M	21.7	9.1
B: Elective and Appointive		
A	64.4	88.3
E	8.2	3.7
A&E	27.3	8.0
C: Federal, State, and Local		
F	0.2	0.3
S	9.3	4.2
L	62.2	86.8
F&S	0.9	0.2
L&F	0.5	0.3
L&S	22.9	7.5
L&F&S	3.9	0.7

Table 7.3: Percentage of career types by generation

Note: C = civil office, M = military office, A = appointive office, E = elective office, F = federal office, S = state office, L = local office (mostly county, but also some city offices). Panels B and C exclude military positions. Generation 1 is defined as all those who held their first office in 1802 or before; generation 2 is defined as all those who held their first office after 1802.

generations, but holding only local offices becomes even more common over time, climbing to 84% of all careers in generation two. In generation one, one quarter of people also combined local and state offices, but that group declines to only 9% in generation two. The remaining career types never had a large representation and declined even further in generation two. In fact, only 1346 out of the 55,000 people in my dataset held a position at the federal or state level but not at the county level.

7.2.6 *Connecting the Federal System*

The previous discussion makes us wonder to what degree the different levels of government were connected through elites who moved between them. Were the different levels of government populated by the same people, or were they isolated from one another such that there was a national elite separate from state and local elites. If people moved back and forth, the alignment of state and national parties that we observed in chapter 4 may, in part, be the result of the same people operating at both levels, facilitating organization and transporting ideologies between levels.

In table 7.4, I examine the connection between the state and federal level by looking at three elective offices: the U.S. House, the state senate, and the assembly. For each office, I obtain the proportion of people who held the other offices before or after the focal office. I do this separately for two generations of people: those who held the first focal office before 1802 and those who held the first focal office after 1802. The table can be read as the probability of holding the office in the row conditional on holding the office in the column.

We see a clear ordering in that U.S. Representatives are more likely to have had prior experience in the state legislature than vice versa and that state senators are more likely to have had prior experience in the assembly than vice versa. 68% of those elected to the U.S. House in generation one and 51% in generation two had previously been elected to the assembly, and 21% in generation one and 6% in generation two had been elected to the state

	U.S. House						senate						assembly					
	Gen 1			Gen 2			Gen 1			Gen 2			Gen 1			Gen 2		
	before	after		before	after		before	after		before	after		before	after		before	after	
U.S. House	0	60.5		0	29.4		1.4	11.3		7.9	3.4		0.2	7.2		0.8	5.0	
senate	21.1	23.7		6.0	5.5		0	49.6		0	13.6		1.4	14.1		0.7	4.7	
assembly	68.4	34.2		51.2	12.4		52.5	24.8		57.6	10.7		0	60.4		0	34.8	

Table 7.4: Connections between U.S. House, state senate, and assembly

Note: Generation 1 is defined as all those who held their first office in 1802 or before; generation 2 is defined as all those who held their first office after 1802.

senate. About half of the state senators had previous experience in the assembly. On the other hand, almost none of the assemblymen had prior experience in either the state senate or the House and almost none of the state senators had experience in the House.

It might be useful here to compare those numbers to modern careers, which, it turns out, do not look too different. In 1996, 42% of the U.S. Representatives from New York had previous experience in the state legislature. 0% of New York state legislators, on the other hand, had previous experience in the U.S. House (Stolz 2003). Even though there is a stronger separation between the state legislature and Congress in the 1990s, and in particular the likelihood of moving from the national level to the state is much lower, very early on we see a tendency for people to progress from the assembly to the state senate and to the U.S. House.

The results also show that the three elective bodies become increasingly disconnected during my study period. This effect is particularly strong when we compare what people do after their service in the focal office. Here the percentage of those who later serve in one of the other two bodies tends to drop by at least 50%. For example, while 24% of those who served in the U.S. House in generation one held a position in the state senate later in their career, that percentage drops to only 6% in generation two. At this point I cannot explain why this occurs, but the fact that the likelihood of receiving *the same* office again *also* declines, suggests that it might be related to an overall increase in turnover (which is in line with what we saw in chapter 4).

In table 7.5, I look at the connection between county, state, and federal offices more generally. I find that around 2/3 of those who held an office at the federal level had prior experience at the state level, and this does not change much over time. When it comes to prior experience at the county level, however, I find that the percentage more than doubles from 23 to 63%, suggesting that in generation two low-level political office becomes increasingly

common before making it to the national level.⁷ County level offices also become more prevalent in the careers of those who make it to the state level, increasing from 27 to 53%. Thus, while we saw an increasing separation between the U.S. House, the state senate, and the assembly, the different levels of government become more connected, a change that is driven by appointive offices.

At the same time, county and state offices become *less* likely *after* federal service, declining from 51 to 28% and from 61 to 23%, respectively. This suggests that people increasingly move in one direction from the local to the state and the federal level—something we saw with elective offices, too. Further, the chance for someone holding a county position to continue on either to the state or the federal level is very low from the start and declines further over time, which, as we saw, is related to the expansion of the political system at the bottom of the office hierarchy that created a pool of office-holders who never moved up the hierarchy.

7.2.7 *The Careers of the Chief Justices of the New York Supreme Court*

The results in many of the previous analyses were dominated by local appointive positions. Perhaps a better strategy to get at career structures is to see how highly successful individuals progressed through the office hierarchy. At the beginning of the chapter, I identified the chief justice of the New York State Supreme Court as the office with the highest status, making it a good case. Tables 7.6 and 7.7 show the careers of all chief justices who were appointed between 1777 and 1822. What did highly successful careers look like, and did they change over time?

First, it appears that none of the chief justices were appointed merely based on their social status. Everyone had prior political experience, either in the state legislature or in

7. Remember that county level positions get more numerous, thus increasing the overall likelihood for someone to hold a county position. But the fact that county positions do not become more likely *after* having been to the federal level means that size is not the only factor here.

	Federal						State						County					
	Gen 1		Gen 2		Gen 1		Gen 1		Gen 2		Gen 2		Gen 1		Gen 1		Gen 2	
	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after
Federal	0	67.8	0	30.3	1.2	10.2	0.7	4.3	0.4	1.8	0.2	0.6						
State	66.7	61.1	65.1	22.9	0	62.6	0	35.1	5.9	18.1	3.1	6.4						
County	23.3	51.1	63.3	28.4	26.7	55.7	53.4	44.4	0	59.8	0	43.7						

Table 7.5: Connections between federal, state, and county level

Note: Generation 1 is defined as all those who held their first office in 1802 or before; generation 2 is defined as all those who held their first office after 1802.

Year	John Jay (1745-1829) Westchester F	Richard Morris (1730-1810) New York F	Robert Yates (1738-1801) Albany S	John Lansing, Jr. (1754-1829) Albany R
1774	Continental Congress (1777)			
1775			Provincial Congress (1777)	
1776	Provincial Congress (1777)			
1777	Governor [†] + Council of Safety (1778) + Chief Justice NYSC (1779)	State Senate (1779)	<i>Associate Justice NYSC (1790)</i>	
1778	Continental Congress (1779)			
1779	Minister to Spain (1782)			Assembly (1784)
1780		Chief Justice NYSC (1790)		
...				
1783	Secretary of Foreign Affairs (1789)			Continental Congress
1784	Continental Congress			
1785				Captain + Assembly (1787) + Clerk of the assembly + Mayor of Albany (1790)
1786				Continental Congress (1788)
1787				Constitutional Convention + Assembly (1789) + Assembly Speaker
1788	Constitutional Convention	Constitutional Convention		
1789			Governor [†]	
1790	U.S. Supreme Court (1795)		Chief Justice NYSC (1798)	<i>Associate Justice NYSC (1798)</i> + State Senate [†]
1791				
1792	Governor [†]	State Senate [†] Auctioneer (1797)		
...				
1794	Minister to GB (1796)			
1795	Governor (1801)	U.S. House [†]	Governor [†]	
...				
1798			State Senate [†]	
1799			State Senate [†]	Chief Justice NYSC (1801)
1800			State Senate [†]	
1801		Electoral College [†]		Chancellor (1814)
...				
1816	Electoral College [†]			

Table 7.6: Careers of Chief Justices 1 - 4 of the New York Supreme Court

Note: NYSC = New York Supreme Court. Years in parentheses show the end of a term in cases where the end is not the same as the start. The office of chief justice is highlighted in bold; the office of assistant justice is highlighted in bold and italics.

[†] The person ran unsuccessfully.

	Morgan Lewis (1754-1844) New York/Dutchess S	James Kent (1763-1847) New York/Dutchess F	Smith Thompson (1768-1843) Dutchess R	Ambrose Spencer (1765-1848) Columbia S
1786	Colonel	Paymaster		
...				
1789	Assembly (1790)			
1790	Judge, CCP (1792)	assembly (1792)		assembly [†]
1791	Attorney General (1792) + Assembly			Assembly [†]
1792	Assembly [†] + <i>Associate Justice NYSC (1802)</i>			Assembly
1793		U.S. House [†]		Assembly [†]
1794				State Senate (1798)
1795				District Attorney (1801)
1796		Master in Chancery + Assembly (1797)		
1797		Recorder	Paymaster	Council of Appointment
1798		<i>Associate Justice NYSC (1804)</i>		State Senate (1802)
...				
1800				Council of Appointment
1801	Chief Justice NYSC (1804)		Assembly (1801) District Attorney + Constitutional Convention	
1802			<i>Associate Justice NYSC (1814)</i>	Attorney General (1804) + assembly [†]
...				<i>Associate Justice NYSC (1819)</i>
1804	Governor (1807)	Chief Justice NYSC (1814)		
...				
1807	Governor [†]			
1808				Electoral College
...				
1810	State Senate (1814)			
...				
1814	Council of Appointment	chancellor (1823)	Chief Justice NYSC (1819)	
...				
1816	Judge, CCP (1792)	Electoral College [†]		
...				
1818				
1819			U.S. Secretary of the Navy (1823)	Chief Justice NYSC (1823)
...				
1821		Constitutional Convention		
...				
1823			U.S. Supreme Court (1843)	

Table 7.7: Careers of Chief Justices 5 - 8 of the New York Supreme Court

Note: NYSC = New York Supreme Court. Years in parentheses show the end of a term in cases where the end is not the same as the start. The office of chief justice is highlighted in bold; the office of assistant justice is highlighted in bold and italics.

[†] The person ran unsuccessfully.

New York's court system. The assembly emerged as a particularly important building block in careers that led to the State Supreme Court. Of course, those appointed right after the creation of the state could not have served in the assembly (although they could have served in the colonial assembly, which they did not). But starting with John Lansing, Jr. all chief justices either served in the assembly or, like Ambrose Spencer, tried desperately to get in but failed. That the assembly was important for aspiring lawyers was understood by contemporaries. Moss Kent, Jr., an ambitious lawyer who the reader will remember from chapter 5, described his thoughts about the assembly in a letter to his brother and future Chief Justice James Kent: "Political Honors and [illegible] ought possibly to be the objects of my ambition. They are indeed the prizes most generally contended for by the enterprising Men of our profession. A Seat in the assembly would make me more generally known and possibly more respected though I should not flatter myself with the hopes of acquiring much distinction either as a Speaker or as a Man of Business" (Moss Kent, Jr. to James Kent, Feb. 27, 1796, James Kent Papers, Library of Congress). Serving in the assembly connected a young lawyer to other people of influence and had important reputational benefits. Interestingly, the assembly is more prevalent in the careers of chief justices than the more elite state senate.

Another stepping stone on the way towards the position of chief justice were court positions. With the exception of the first two chief justices, all were recruited from among the associate justices of the court. At least at the top of the office hierarchy, a career path had developed that required someone with the ambition of becoming a chief justice to first serve as an associate justice. Often future chief justices also had worked as attorney general or district attorney. Morgan Lewis, for example, first served on the county court and then became attorney general of New York; Smith Thompson served as a district attorney; and Ambrose Spencer was first district attorney and then attorney general.

Further, there is an affinity between the position of chief justice and other high-level

offices, something we already observed in the transition matrices. Two chief justices later became governors and another one ran unsuccessfully for that position; two served as chancellor; and two held appointive positions at the federal level.

Finally, these careers suggest that there may have been different career orientations even among this very select group of individuals. While John Jay and Smith Thompson were oriented towards national office, with positions as foreign minister, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, and service on the U.S. Supreme Court, the rest of the chief justices focused on building careers in New York.

7.3 Offices and Parties

Now that we have an understanding of the structure of offices in the state of New York, we can introduce party into the analysis and see how the Federalists and Republicans moved through these offices. Here I restrict the analysis to those who appear in the sample described in section 2.1 and for whom I have information on party affiliation. In chapter 3 we saw that the two parties looked surprisingly similar in terms of the social characteristics of their members, and we struggled to identify exogenous interests that united partisans and that pre-existed elites' entrance into politics. Of course, it might be that the interests that united the two parties were endogenous political interests. This is all the more plausible given that the key issue dividing the parties appeared to be support for the new federal government, and it would be natural if those who had a position in such government tended to be those supporters (similar to the court-country division in eighteenth-century England [Elkins and McKittrick 1993, 18–21]). Indeed, the New York Republicans were long buoyed by the skill with which the Anti-Federalist/Republican governor, George Clinton, was able to use the state and its largesse to counter the monopolization of federal patronage on the part of his opponents (see chapter 6). On the other hand, one may argue that in a well-developed party system with two competitive parties, we should see two parties that compete at all levels of

government, producing individuals with similar career structures. What follows are a series of analyses that try to identify differences in office-holding that can illuminate the dynamics that led to the formation of two opposing political parties.

7.3.1 An Aggregate View

I begin with an aggregate view. It is undoubtedly the case that the first generation of elite Federalists at the highest level were more likely to occupy federal level positions, and that the power base of the Anti-Federalists, then the Republicans, was at the state level. But as table 7.8 shows, very quickly, we see the two parties having very similar profiles in terms of the offices their members held. Differences are marginal at all levels of government. In particular, we see that for both parties, the mass of active elites serve in the assembly. This suggests that the difference between the two parties is not one where one party holds appointive positions and the other one elective positions, or where one party holds federal positions and the other state positions. Instead, we see competition on all levels.

This surprising rejection of the hypothesis of difference between the parties goes along with other remarkable findings about their similarity in career structures. To give just two examples, tables 7.9 and 7.10 show the kinds of offices Federalists and Republicans held before and after their first time in the assembly and the U.S. House, respectively. They demonstrate that there was quite early a convergence between the two parties in terms of the typical careers that their partisans underwent.

Given earlier analyses, one surprising finding is how few assemblymen had experience at the local level before entering the assembly.⁸ Perhaps even more surprising is that U.S. Representatives were more likely to have held local offices than assemblymen. It is as if people entered the assembly first, then received appointments at the local level (the proportion of

8. Remember that the sample of elites analyzed here is based on activity during the 1790s, which means that all of these elites fall into generation one as previously analyzed. For this first generation service at the local level was much less common than for generation two.

	Anti-Federalist/ Republican	Federalist
A: Federal		
Federal appointive	3.2	4.1
U.S. senate	2.0	2.0
U.S. House	11.6	8.2
B: State		
State appointive	9.2	9.6
Council of Appointment	14.3	9.1
Senate	25.1	18.1
Assembly	85.7	92.7
C: County		
First Judge, CCP	10.8	8.5
Judge, CCP	33.5	21.9
Assistant Justice, CCP	28.7	24.3
Justice of the Peace	45.0	50.6
County Clerk	5.2	5.6
Sheriff	9.2	8.2
Surrogate	6.0	3.2
Coroner	9.2	9.1

Table 7.8: Percentage of people within each party who held each office at any point in their career

Note: The table shows the percentage of elites within each party who ever held the position. CCP stands for Court of Common Pleas.

Office	Anti-Federalist/Republican		Federalist	
	before	after	before	after
Federal appointive	0	4	0	4
U.S. House	1	21	2	13
State appointive	1	11	3	9
senate	4	30	2	20
assembly	0	81	0	72
First Judge CCP	1	9	1	6
Judge CCP	8	30	4	20
Assistant Justice CCP	12	22	8	19
Justice of the Peace	26	31	34	36
County appointive	12	22	8	19
Commissioner	2	20	5	21
Revolutionary govt	8	1	5	1
Military	51	45	42	44

Table 7.9: Percentage of people who held each office before and after their first election to the assembly

people who held local offices *after* the assembly is considerably higher), and then were elected to the U.S. House. It is also noteworthy that 80% of the members of the U.S. House had prior experience in the assembly and 40% returned to the assembly after their service in Congress, supporting our understanding of the assembly as an important bridge between the state and the federal level.

7.3.2 Career Types

The same picture emerges when we look at careers. Let me begin by showing the careers of two arbitrarily selected partisans of the old generation: Abraham Yates, Jr. (1724-1796), a Republican from Albany, and James Duane (1733-1797), a Federalist from New York (table 7.11). The point here is not to explain why one went to the Republicans and the other to the Federalist. The point is only to demonstrate that early on elites in both parties could have very similar political careers and to give the reader a sense of what similarity looked like in this context. That being said, some differences in the two men's careers suggest themselves

Office	Anti-Federalist/Republican		Federalist	
	before	after	before	after
Federal appointive	2	6	1	10
U.S. House	0	53	0	51
State appointive	8	18	15	21
senate	36	33	29	29
assembly	82	47	78	45
First Judge CCP	12	3	14	8
Judge CCP	27	30	25	23
Assistant Justice CCP	27	11	19	4
Justice of the Peace	39	11	33	16
County appointive	24	20	19	15
Commissioner	08	20	18	22
Revolutionary govt	12	0	14	0
Military	62	33	55	34

Table 7.10: Percentage of people who held each office before and after their first election to the U.S. House

as possibly consequential. Yates served on the revolutionary Council of Safety, while Duane did not. Duane, on the other hand, was a representative to the Continental Congress early on, while Yates only joined after the war in 1787. Those minor differences may have been important and we will return to some of them below. (Of course, there is also the obvious difference that one was from Albany and the other from New York City.)

To explore this more systematically, we can again classify each career according to whether it contained civil/military, appointive/elective, and local/state/federal offices (table 7.12). Two thirds of both parties combine civil and military offices, while only one third holds civil positions only. About 85% combine elective and appointive positions and only 15% have no appointments. (Because of how the sample was constructed, there are, by definition, no people with only military or only appointive offices.) Finally, most people combine local and state positions (around 60%), but there is also a sizable proportion who hold offices at all three levels (around 20%). Another 20% or so hold state and/or federal

	Abraham Yates, Jr. (1724-1796) Albany R	James Duane (1733-1797) New York F
1774		Continental Congress (1775)
1775	Provincial Congress (President) (1776)	
1776	Provincial Congress (President)	Provincial Congress (1777)
1777	Council of Safety + state senate (1778)	Continental Congress (1784)
1778	state senate (1782)	
...		
1782	state senate (1786)	state senate (1784)
1783	Postmaster Albany	
1784	Council of Appointment	Mayor of NYC (1789)
...		
1787	Continental Congress + state senate (1790)	
1788	Continental Congress (1789)	state senate (1789) + Constitutional Convention
1789	Mayor of Albany (1796)	U.S. District Court (1794)
...		
1792	Electoral College	

Table 7.11: Two careers

	A/R	F	S
A: Civil and Military			
C	31.9	37.1	39
M	0	0	0
C&M	68.1	62.9	61
B: Elective and Appointive			
A	0	0	0
E	14.3	16.7	10.4
A&E	85.7	83.3	89.6
C: Federal, State, and Local			
F	0.4	0	0
S	15.6	19.4	10.4
L	0.4	0.6	0
F&S	4.4	4.4	9.1
L&F	0.4	0.6	2.6
L&S	56.4	59.2	41.6
L&F&S	22.4	15.8	36.4

Table 7.12: Percentage of career types by party

Note: C = civil office, M = military office, A = appointive office, E = elective office, F = federal office, S = state office, L = local office (mostly county, but also some city offices).

office but no position at the local level.⁹

Instead of this deductive approach, which classifies careers based on a theoretical framework that was imposed from the outside, we can also take an inductive approach. A common procedure in sociology when it comes to these types of career data is to treat careers as sequences of offices, calculate distances between these career sequences (for example, using optimal matching), and then cluster careers based on those distances (Abbott 1983, 1995; Abbott and Hrycak 1990; Abbott and Tsay 2000; Jäckle and Kerby 2018). Following this approach, I calculate the distances between sequences using optimal matching with substi-

9. This last group consists of powerful office-holders. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, it also contains a large proportion of lawyers (one third), much larger than that for the sample as a whole, suggesting that being a lawyer allowed people to be more detached from their localities and adopt more cosmopolitan career orientations.

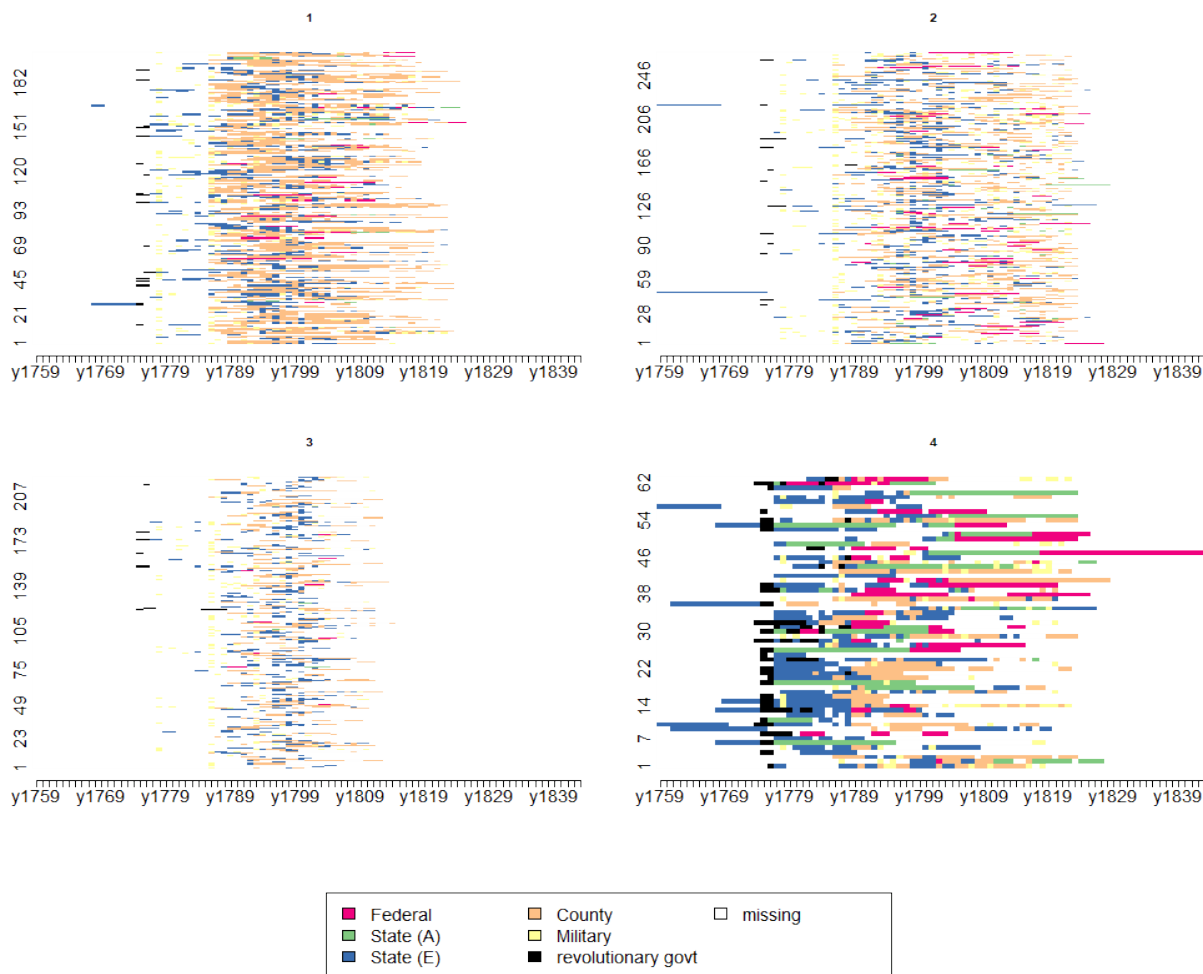


Figure 7.11: Sequence index plots grouped by cluster

tution costs based on transition rates. I then use the PAM algorithm introduced in chapter 4 to cluster sequences based on those distances. Based on standard measures for the evaluation of clustering solutions as well as visual inspection, I opt for a 4-cluster solution. The resulting clusters are shown in figure 7.11. The figure presents so-called sequence index plots in which each horizontal line represents an individual career, and different colors represent different states (here office types).

The clusters clearly pick up differences in the length and timing of sequences, which is common for optimal matching (Studer and Ritschard 2016). But the method is also able to identify a cluster of elite careers (cluster 4) that tend to begin in the revolutionary govern-

Cluster	A/R	F
1	28.1	24.2
2	36.9	34.5
3	24.9	35.1
4	10.0	6.2
Σ	100	100

Table 7.13: Distribution of parties across clusters

ment, continue in the state legislature during the 1780s, and often involve state appointive positions as well as offices at the national level. But the specifics of the four clusters, while interesting, do not concern us here. Instead, it is more important to see the relationship between clusters and parties. Table 7.13 shows how the two parties are distributed across the four clusters. As far as clusters 1 and 2 are concerned, there are only very small differences. But Federalists seem to be more likely to fall into cluster 3, which contains careers that began around the Constitutional Convention and started to fizzle out after 1800, while Republicans are somewhat more likely to fall into the cluster of elite careers (cluster 4). This points to some important differences between the parties. I will return to this issue below by looking more closely at actors' career histories.

Thus, at least in the aggregate, the Federalists and Republicans look almost identical in terms of their political careers. But how is this possible given the highly partisan nature of both elective (chapter 3) and appointive (chapter 6) offices? If there are any differences, they require a more focused look.

7.3.3 *Candidates for the State Senate and the Assembly*

Chapter 3 argued that the Federalists and Republicans emerged as divisions among social equals. In this chapter I have shown that this equality also existed in terms of office-holding. But this finding was based on a rather aggregate view. Perhaps a more targeted approach will produce important differences in the backgrounds from which the two parties recruited their

cadre. To take such a focused view, I compare the careers of candidates who participated in the same elections. For each election (say, the assembly election in Kings County in session 20) I take all candidates and obtain the set of offices each of them had held prior to that election. I then calculate the similarity between each candidate pair based on their sets of offices using the Jaccard similarity. The Jaccard similarity is defined as the number of offices two candidates share divided by the number of offices at least one of them held. In other words, it measures the size of the intersection of the offices of both candidates divided by the size of the union of these offices, $J(A, B) = \frac{|A \cap B|}{|A \cup B|}$.¹⁰ (The frequency of the offices is ignored.) For each session (and separately for the assembly and the state senate), I then pool the candidate pairs from all counties (for assembly elections) or districts (for senate elections).¹¹ Using these data, I estimate a series of OLS regressions, one for each session, with candidate pairs as the unit of analysis and the Jaccard similarity as the dependent variable. As a predictor I include whether the two candidates affiliated with the same party. If people in the same party are more similar than people in different parties, the effect for “same party” should be positive.

The results are presented in figure 7.12, which shows the coefficient for each session and its 95% confidence interval. What we see is that in senate elections being in the same party does not predict career similarity; the coefficient remains around zero for the entire time period. For assembly elections, the story is different. Here we see moments in which people who are in the same party had more similar careers than people who are not in the same party. This is particularly true in sessions 14 through 18 and also in sessions 22 and 24. But given that the dependent variable ranges from 0 to 1 with an overall standard deviation

10. One problem with this measure is that two individuals who just entered the system for the first time would end up with a similarity of 0, as neither of them has held any offices prior to their candidacy, making the union 0. To avoid this, I include the artificial Source “office.” Although this inflates the overall similarity because now every pair shares at least one “office” (which is not a problem if we are just interested in group mean differences), it also ensures that people who held no office prior to their candidacy have a similarity of 1 instead of 0.

11. But note that each candidate is only compared to the candidates in his county/district.

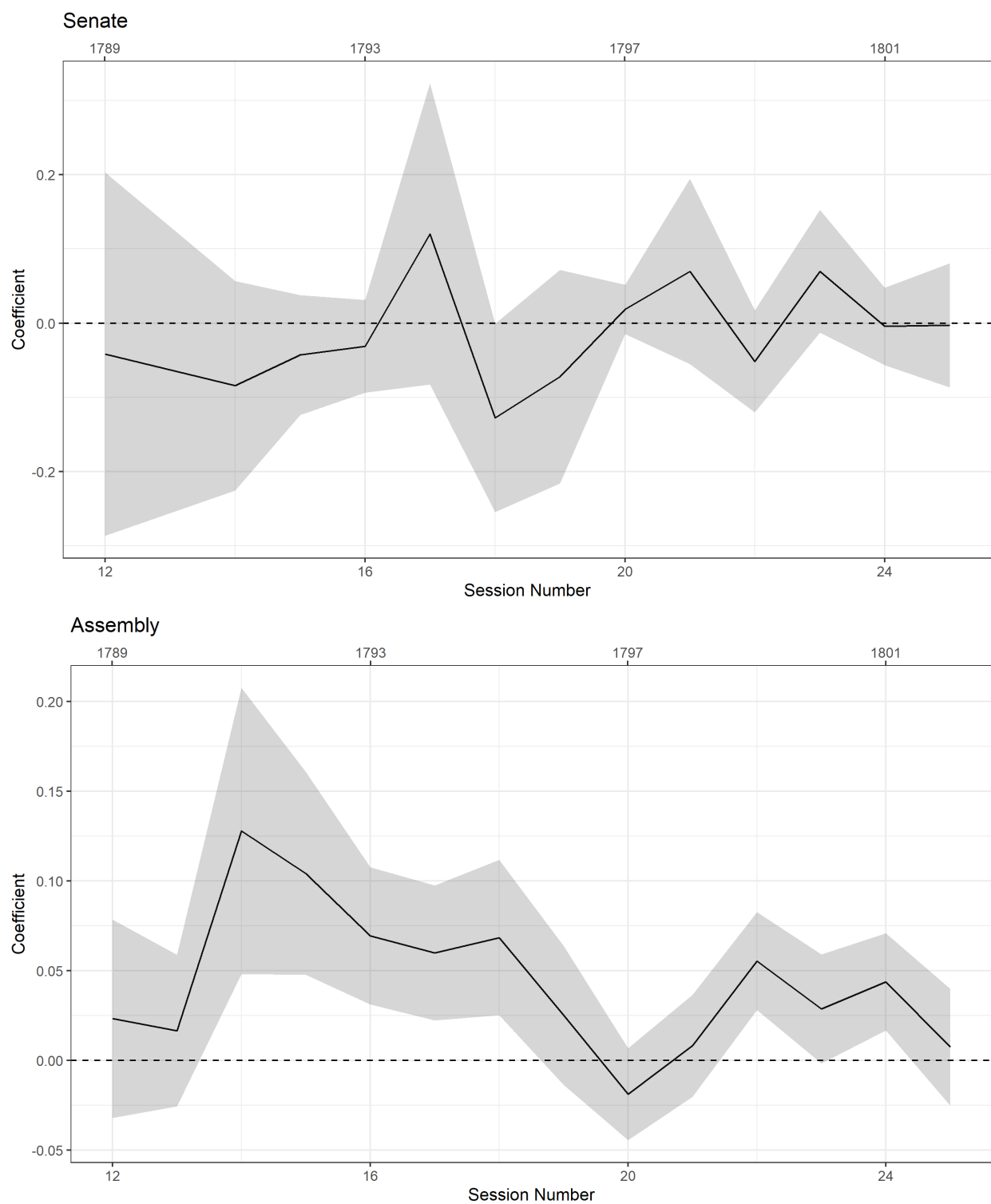


Figure 7.12: Jaccard similarity between candidate pairs, assembly and state senate

across all sessions of .22, the effect is relatively small, in particular towards the end of the time period. Further, the effect completely disappears after session 18 when I ignore the assembly when calculating the Jaccard similarity. Thus, the higher similarity within party is only due to assembly candidates from the same party having both been in the assembly before. Thus, overall it seems that while there may have been a period from session 14 to 18 when party was related to career similarity, this effect disappeared. Two very similar parties opposed one another in local elections, suggesting that party formation needs to be understood as the alignment of local oppositions among equals.

7.3.4 *Upward Mobility*

In chapter 3 I used data on occupation, wealth, and membership in elite institutions to demonstrate that the Federalists and Republicans looked very similar in terms of their social standing. Of course, it could be that what explains the difference between the two parties is not so much the status of their members during the 1790s, but their degree of upward mobility. Even if the Federalists and Republicans ended up in similar positions, they may have started from very different places. Studies of the biographies of U.S. Representatives suggest that this may indeed be the case. P. Goodman (1968), for example, found a larger difference between the two parties in father's occupation than the occupation of the members themselves. Because I did not have data on father's occupation or wealth, I was unable to study this question. Here I propose to use the data on office-holding to provide at least a tentative answer.

To do this, I use the Goodman scores estimated above. For each person in the sample, I calculate the range of his Goodman scores (the maximum score minus the minimum score). Only people with at least two offices are considered. Figure 7.13 shows box plots of these values, broken up by party and generation. Generation is defined by year of birth, with 1760 as the cutoff. The horizontal line in the box visualizes the median, the boundary of the box

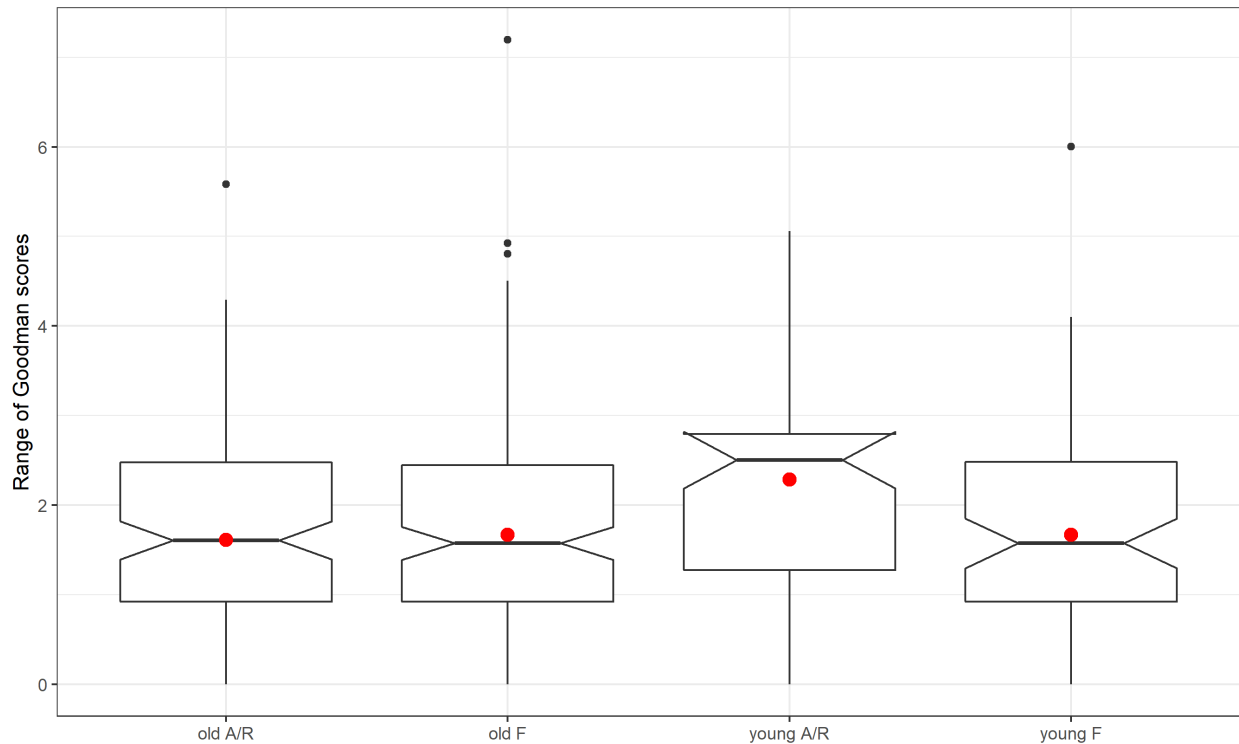


Figure 7.13: Range of Goodman scores by party and generation

the 25th and 75th percentiles, the red dot the mean. The notches construct a confidence interval around the median and can be used to compare groups, with non-overlapping notches indicating a significant difference in the medians.

The analysis reveals no differences between old Republicans and old Federalists, and even the young Federalists look very much like their old counterparts. The young Republicans, however, stand out. Their median range of Goodman scores is significantly higher than that for the other three groups. Looking at the distribution of the minimum and the maximum Goodman scores suggests that this is driven mostly by their highest offices, not their lowest ones (figure 7.14): While there are only small differences in the minimum Goodman scores, the young Republicans made it to the very top of the office hierarchy in a way the other three groups did not. This needs further investigation into the kinds of offices this involved, but it already suggests the importance of interacting party and time to really understand how office-holding was related to party affiliation.

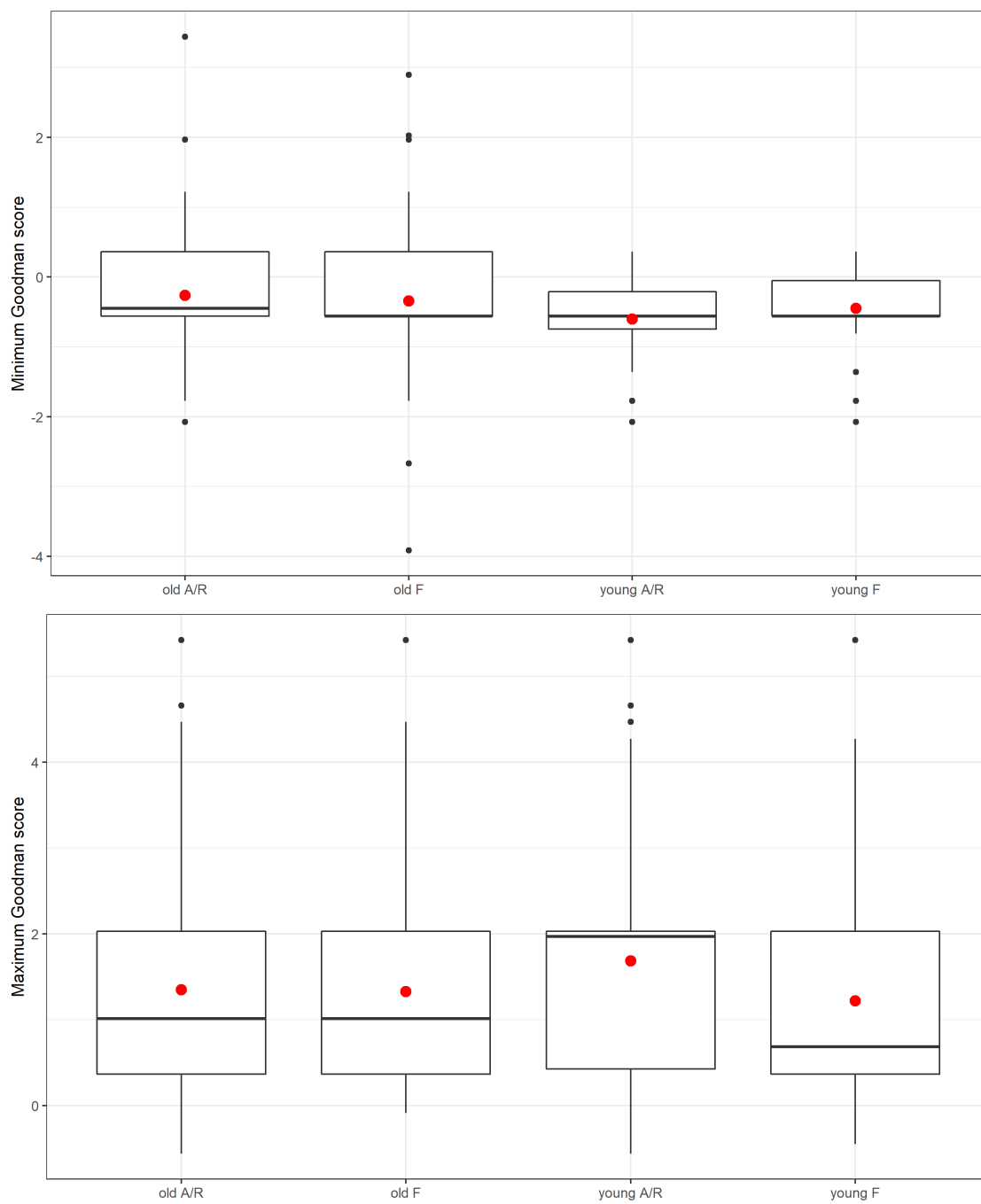


Figure 7.14: Minimum and maximum Goodman score by party and generation

Figure 7.14, top contains one other important finding. Although the four groups differ only slightly in their median minimum score, the distributions for the old generation look quite different from those for the young generation. The minimum scores for the young generation are much more concentrated such that fewer people could afford not to hold low-level offices. The days when elites could hold only high-level offices were gone.¹²

7.3.5 *Age*

In chapter 3 I found that the Republicans tended to be older than the Federalists. Here I examine age difference by office. For each office and party, I plot the average birth year of the office-holders at the time of their appointment/election (figure 7.15). Contrary to what one might think, the main Federalists are if anything younger than the Republicans. And while this difference decreases in the assembly, it increases in the senate. The Federalist candidates for the assembly had always been younger and it is not until 1797 that the Republicans begin to catch up. Importantly, this renewal of their ranks occurred at the same time as the Republicans began to regain strength at elections to the state legislature. In senate elections, in contrast, both parties initially focused on old elites. But the Federalists began to bring in younger candidates in the early 1790s while the Republicans did not. Thus, it seems that electoral success went hand in hand with a rejuvenation of party cadres.

7.3.6 *Party Composition of Offices Over Time*

In the previous analyses we began to see some interesting temporal differences. In the remainder of the chapter, I look at time more closely. I begin with an examination of how the partisan composition of different offices changed over time. Figure 7.16 plots the

12. One may suspect that this smaller range is due to the smaller size of these groups. And, indeed, there are fewer people in the young generation than there are in the old one. But the fact that there are no comparable differences when we look at the maximum scores suggests that this finding is not the result of sample size.

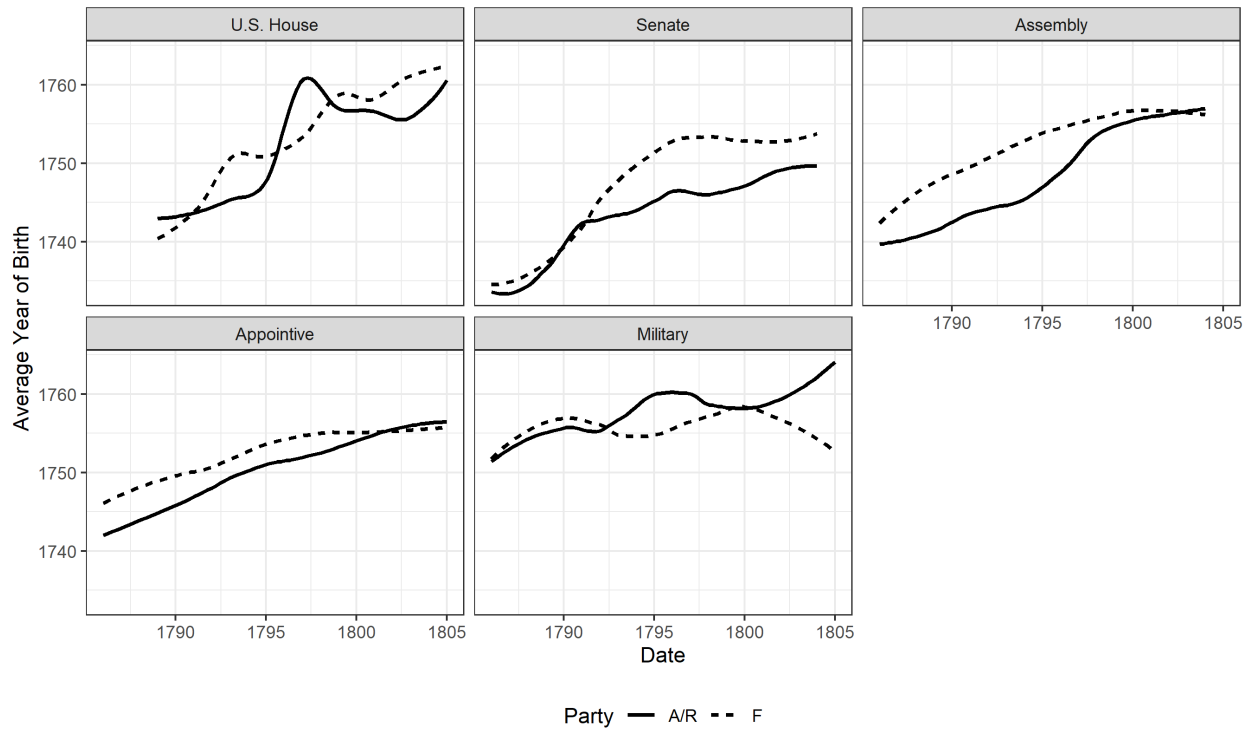


Figure 7.15: Average age by office and party (smoothed)

proportion of Anti-Federalists/Republicans in each office from 1777 to 1803. The numbers tell the following story.

In their studies of New York during the 1780s, Main (1974) and Countryman (1989) have argued that the political divisions that emerged in New York during and shortly after the revolutionary war had to do with the influx of new men into the state legislature and the threat this posed to the old elites who had dominated New York politics during the colonial era. Because they were increasingly pushed out of the state legislature, the old elites focused on the national level and began a movement for the federal constitution. The remnants of this dynamic are still reflected in the two parties of the 1790s. Of the members of the colonial assembly who were still active during the 1790s, only one third became Republicans, while almost two thirds of those who were appointed to the revolutionary Council of Safety, a body created in 1777 as an interim government, became Republicans. Similarly, the majority of those who served in the assembly and the state senate between 1777 and 1787, the time period

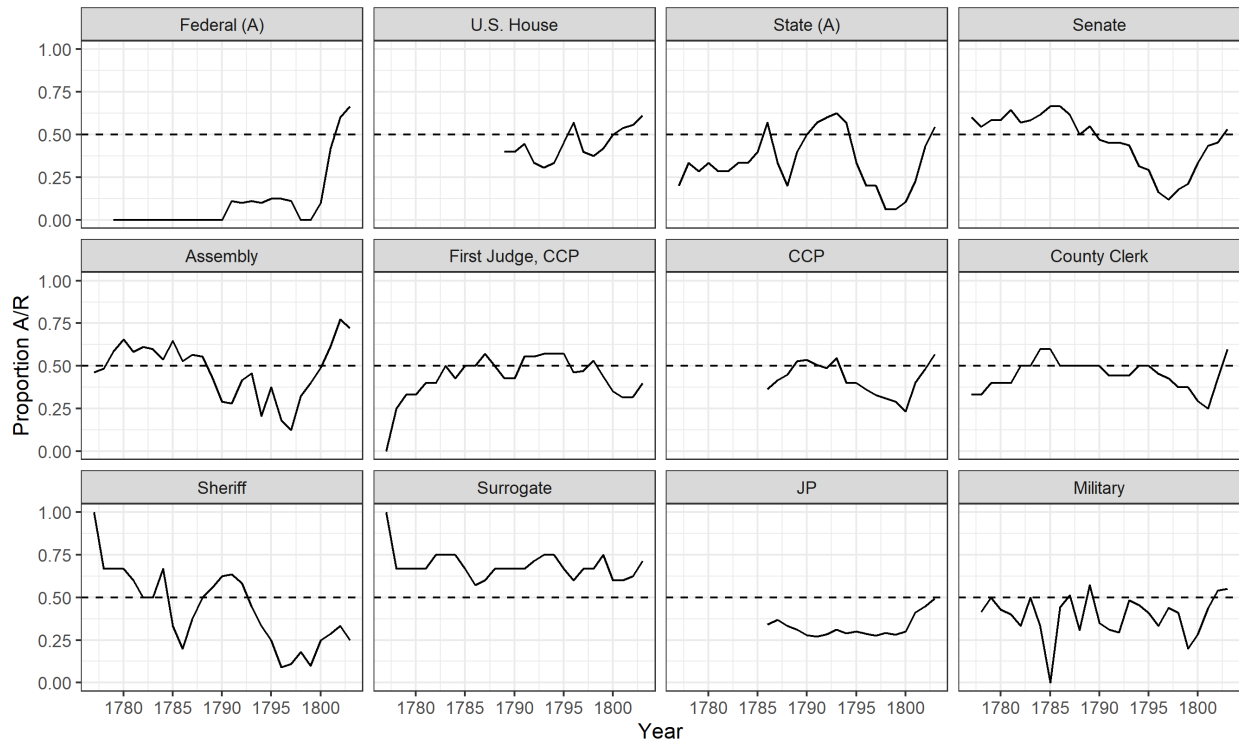


Figure 7.16: Proportion Republicans by office

covered by Main and Countryman, went on to become Republicans. The same is true for some of the county positions, especially sheriffs and surrogates (but not for first judges and county clerks). Further, three quarters of those who had served in the Continental Congress before the end of the war and who were later affiliated with one of the two parties during the 1790s became Federalists.¹³ These men experienced the weakness of the confederation and developed a commitment to a strong federal government, leading them into the Federalist party. These findings suggest that there were moments when particular political experiences put New York's office-holders on different paths, paths that led them either to the Federalist or the Republican party.

When the Federalists won that battle over the constitution, they took over the federal state. As a result, appointive positions at the national level showed a clear partisan pattern.

13. Interestingly, the share of Federalists drops to 58% when I also consider service in the Continental Congresses *after* 1783.

Until 1800 federal appointments went almost exclusively to people who affiliated with the Federalist party. The U.S. House offered a way for Republicans to make it to the national level, but even here New York's electors tended to prefer Federalists. Political elites who did not get a piece of the federal pie, like Robert R. Livingston (see chapter 5), joined the Republican alliance which controlled access to state patronage. And, indeed, appointive positions at the state and county level now went primarily to Republicans.

But the Federalists soon realized that in order to keep dominating at the federal level, they had to organize in the individual states. Because in New York they lacked access to patronage, they began to mobilize for elective positions. And they were very successful. In part this was because the ratification of the constitution had created a general positive sentiment for Federalism. But it also had to do with the fact that they focused their energies heavily on the newly established northern and western counties along the frontier (see chapter 4). By the mid-1790s, the Federalists controlled almost every office in the state.

Starting in 1798, the Republicans began to make inroads in elections for the assembly and the state senate and also the House of Representatives, and around 1800 they were able to take over the state legislature and with it the Council of Appointment. With the Council came state patronage. For most offices, the majority of positions now went to Republicans (exceptions are the first judge, an office with no term limits, the sheriff and the JP). Even the majority of federal offices now went to Republicans.

These analyses at the office level are useful in trying to understand where the strength of the two parties lay at different points in time. But they lose sight of the actual career histories of individuals. This is what I will look at next.

7.3.7 Career Histories

To study the career histories of the members of both parties, I use sequence index plots. Because the goal is to visualize each career, I can only use a very small number of states.

I therefore collapse the offices into six categories: federal, state appointive, state elective, county, military, and revolutionary government (which includes Provincial and Continental Congresses). Figure 7.17 shows two sequence index plots, one for Federalists and one for Republicans. In both plots the sequences are arranged by the first office in the sequence. In figure 7.18 I show the same data, but now I arrange the sequences by the last office. The first set of plots gives us a sense of entry into politics; the second set gives us a sense of exit.

Again, at least at first sight the careers of both parties look similar. Both have a small group of individuals who served in the revolutionary government in the 1770s, and both receive a large number of military appointments in 1778 and 1786 (and perhaps also in 1793). Even the rates at which people enter the political system appear similar.

But this way of looking at the data also allows us to see things we could not see before. For example, we now see that many of the Republicans who entered politics during the second half of the 1790s did so through appointive offices at the county level. At a time when both the state legislature and the Council of Appointment were controlled by the Federalists, Republicans were still able to gain access to positions at the county level. Although the Council had already started to become partisan, it still provided a way for Republicans to enter politics. It was from here that the Republican party recruited many of their candidates for the state legislature around 1800.¹⁴ Other candidates were recruited from among those who had served in the state legislature during and shortly after the war. To win the election of 1800, Republicans drew heavily on the people who had risen to power during the revolution. We can investigate this further by taking a closer look at the careers of all those who ran for the state legislature (assembly or senate) in 1800 (session 24). This is shown in figure 7.19. It appears that Republicans drew more heavily from among those who had served

14. Of course, these data do not allow us to determine the direction of causality. It could be that they were appointed to county level offices because they were Republicans, or it could be that they became Republicans because they only had access to county level offices and felt that their careers were stalled. More work, and other sources of data, are required to settle these kinds of questions, but the analyses presented here show us what to look for.

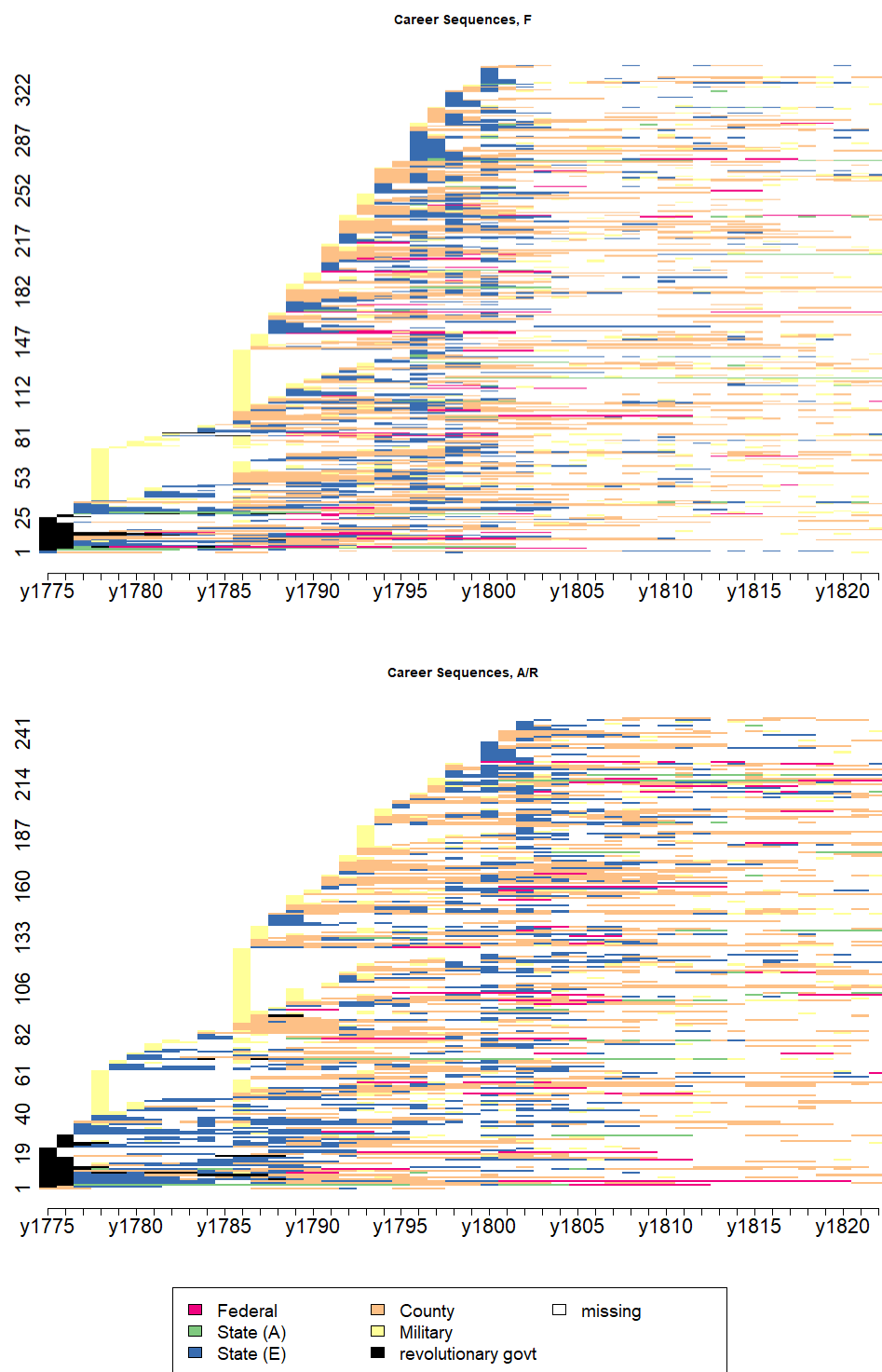


Figure 7.17: Sequence index plots for Federalists (top) and Republicans (bottom) arranged by entry position

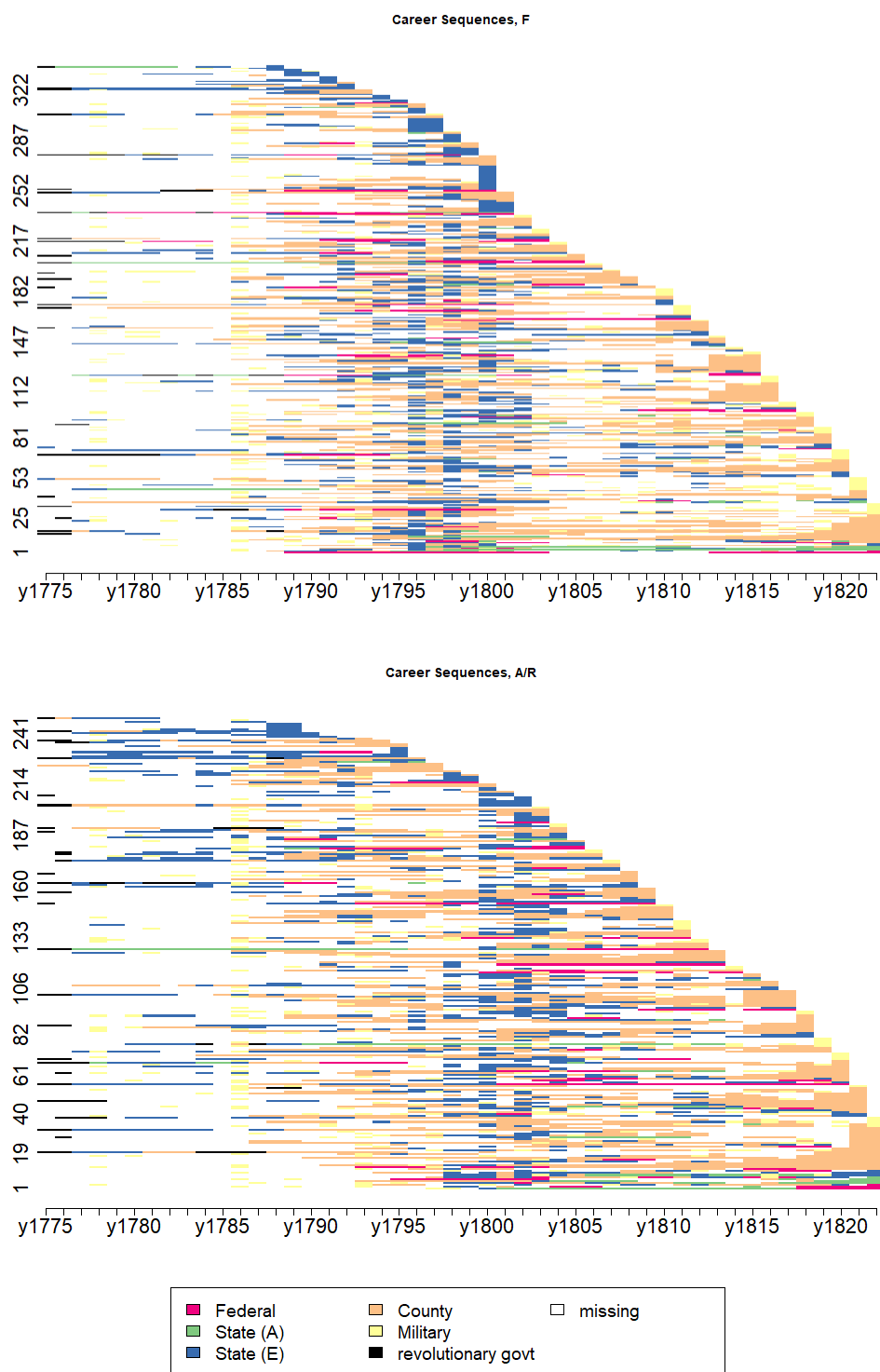


Figure 7.18: Sequence index plots for Federalists (top) and Republicans (bottom) arranged by exit position

in the state legislature during the 1780s, and generally had careers that began earlier than those of the Federalists. Many of the Federalist candidates, on the other hand, entered the system through appointive positions as soon as the Federalists took control of the Council in the early 1790s (but almost none entered in 1793, the one year the Republicans dominated the Council). These important differences notwithstanding, there is also a large degree of similarity between the two parties (confirming what we saw in section 7.3.3). This suggests, yet again, that differences can only be found when we look closely at temporal and regional variation.

We also note a sizable number of people with positions in the legislature around 1800 who had no prior political experience. This suggests that the conflict that emerged at the end of the 1790s and that led to the transition of power from the Federalists to the Republicans drew in new people, perhaps because both parties understood that they had to reinvent themselves in order to win the election. In the case of the Republicans, many of those people later ended up in state and federal appointive positions and thus were able to turn their early electoral success into successful careers.

Turning to figure 7.18, the first thing we notice is the sharp drop for Federalists starting in the late 1790s and being strongest in 1801. For many, their careers came to an end in the state legislature when the Republicans took over. But perhaps even more surprising than the disappearance of some Federalists in that year is the large number whose careers survive the 1800 election. More than half of the Federalists have careers that extend into the 1800s. The majority of them disappear for a while, as indicated by the gap between around 1802 and 1809, but then return, mostly at the county level, but occasionally also in state elective and appointive positions. This is an important finding. Much has been made of the appearance of a new generation of young Federalists in the early 1800s (Fischer 1965), but many of the old Federalists who had been politically active during the 1780s and 1790s continued their careers after 1800.

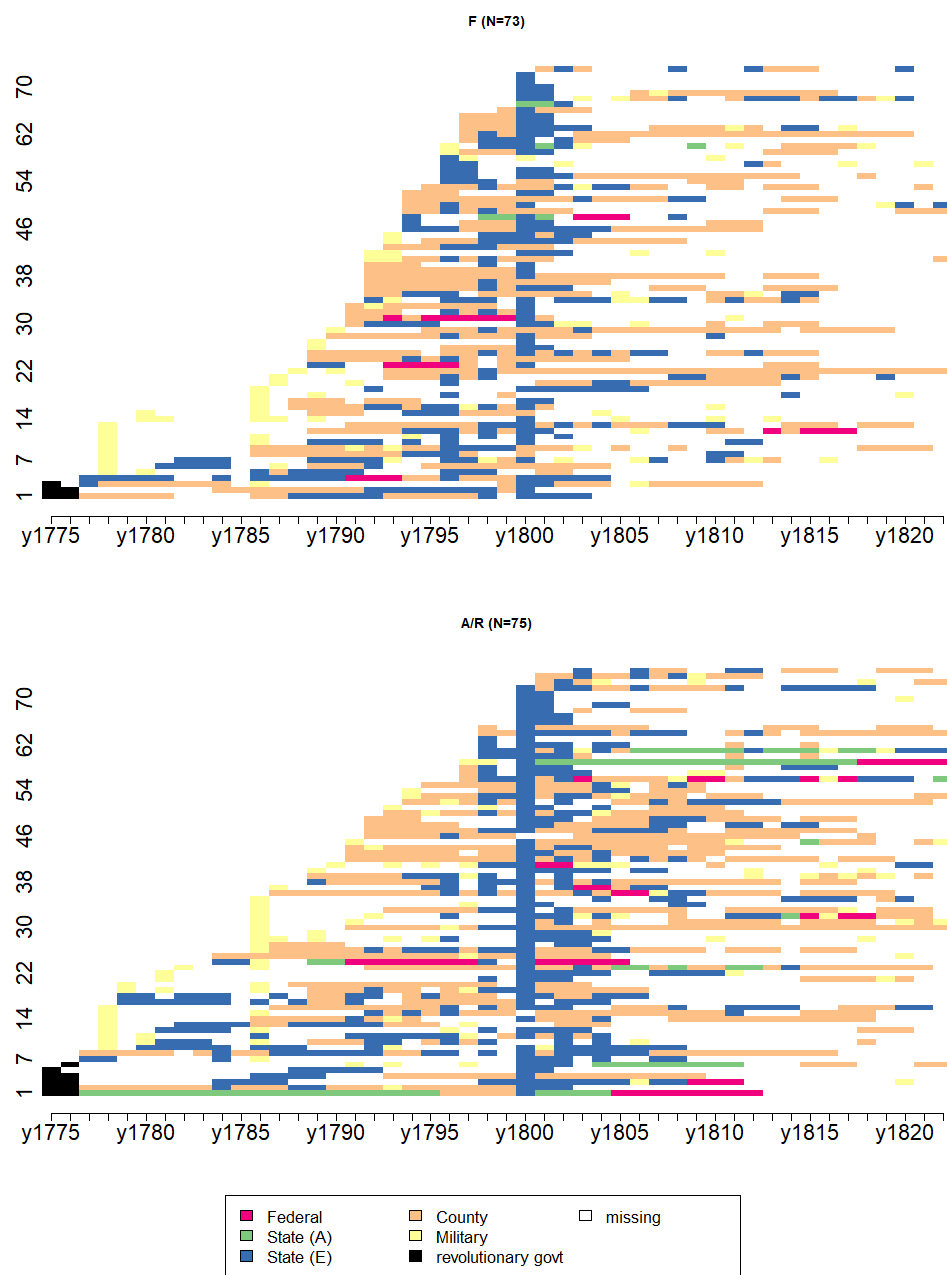


Figure 7.19: Sequence index plots for Federalists (top) and Republicans (bottom) who ran for the state legislature in 1800

There is also a small group of Federalists whose careers survive in appointive positions. It seems that as the Federalists were being pushed out of the system, the Council of Appointment, which was still controlled by the Federalists, moved its people into appointive positions that allowed them to stay in public office, at least for a while. In fact, of those whose careers ended with an election or appointment between 1799 and 1801, 48 were Federalists and only 12 were Republicans. Of those 48 Federalists, 24 received an appointment by the Federalist Council of Appointment just before it was taken over by the Republicans. A closer look, however, suggests that with a few exceptions, the offices that were given out were not lifetime appointments but those with term limits, such as sheriff, JP, or a position on the county court. They also included eight commissioners of taxes and two commissions for internal improvements. While the Federalists clearly made use of their appointment power, there is not much evidence to suggest that they systematically placed their members in offices where they could not be removed.

7.4 Conclusion

Several findings emerge from the analyses presented in this chapter. First, very early on the political careers of New Yorkers were surprising orderly. Second, I find two parties that look surprisingly similar in terms of the offices they held and that seem to have competed for offices at all levels of government. Taken together, these two findings give us reason to think that the consolidation of the party system in New York happened far earlier than has previously been thought.

Third, when we zoom in close enough, we are beginning to see important differences between the two parties. Especially office-holding during and shortly after the war seems to have effected which party people affiliated with. We saw this with the Continental Congress and the Committee of Safety, but also with service in the state legislature during the 1780s. Clearly, this requires more work, but these initial findings suggest that certain political

experiences placed elites on paths that led them to different political sides.

Fourth, the three levels of government were highly integrated through flows of individuals. The majority of federal officials had prior political experience at the state and even county level, and many also returned to state and county positions. In other words, the people at the national level are the same people who were active at the state and local level. This has important implications for how we think about the process of party formation. Neither the top-down nor the bottom-up story seem sufficient. Instead, we need to understand people's simultaneous embeddedness in multiple networks of government.

Fifth, New York had two competitive parties. Even when the Federalists completely dominated the state legislature during the 1790s, the Republicans did not disappear. They still held offices in the state and in particular at the county level, which allowed them, like a government in waiting, to quickly return at the end of the 1790s. Neither party was completely excluded from offices, either at the state or the federal level. In other words, both parties could always hope to gain power through competition in elections. This, one may argue, had implications for democratic state building. In a recent book about the first wave of democratization in Europe, Ziblatt (2017) argues that conservative political parties played a crucial role in shaping countries' paths towards democracy. When conservative elites organized their own mass party and were therefore tied to the electoral system, as was the case in England, democratization proceeded smoothly. When conservatives were not organized in strong political parties, as was the case in Germany, democratization was disrupted by powerful institutions outside the formal political arena such as the military, the church, or business interests. In other words, where elites were able to succeed, or at least compete seriously, under democratic institutions through parties, they were more likely to tolerate democracy. A similar argument can be made about New York. Here, the old elites were able to take leadership of and give direction to the revolution and secure their position in the first state constitution. Because the two parties that formed after the revolution

emerged largely as divisions *within* the elite, elites were tied to the political system through those parties and had less interest in undermining it. None of them were systematically excluded in a way that would force them to reject the political system. They had room to move politically. They were not locked in—or rather locked out—but could continue to do politics instead of resorting to violence (and therefore ending politics). In contrast, in cases where elites were systematically excluded from offices, the result was destabilizing, as the case of the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania shows (Gould 1996).

CHAPTER 8

PARTY SWITCHING

8.1 Introduction

In chapter 5 we encountered several cases in which people cut their social ties in order to switch political parties. Among them was the famous case of the Livingston family. But they were not the only ones who changed sides. In fact, 73 out of the 763 political elites in my sample (10%) affiliated with both parties throughout their careers. I refer to these individuals as switchers. They are the subject of this final chapter.¹

Arguments about why people switch can generally be divided into two kinds, those that emphasize ideological dissonance and those that emphasize personal ambition (King and Benjamin 1984). Some may have switched because they acted based on principles that were incompatible with the stance taken by their own party on certain issues such as the Jay Treaty. Others may have switched in order to solidify or strengthen their political position. For some this may have been a response to broader shifts in public opinion. We would not be surprised, for instance, to see people switch from the Anti-Federalists to the Federalists shortly after 1788, or from the Federalist to the Republicans after the election of 1800. For others it was a way to isolate and weaken their opponents. And yet others may have felt that their position in the political field did not allow them to advance and saw better career opportunities with the opposition (for discussions of party switching, see Aldrich and Bianco 1992; Nokken and Poole 2004; O'Brien and Shomer 2013).

This chapter draws on data discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.4. After discussing a few examples, I will compare party switchers to those who affiliated with only one of the two

1. This number is based on party affiliation data until 1801 and does not include party switching after that date. There would be more switchers if we followed these elites into the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Compare this number to studies of party switchers in Congress. Nokken and Poole (2004), for example, identify only one switcher in the U.S. Senate and three in the U.S. House between the Third and the Fifteenth Congress. (They missed John Williams from New York, however.)

parties in terms of their socio-demographics and in terms of the offices they held. The central finding that emerges from this analysis is that switchers were socially and politically powerful elites. I will then explore when and where switching took place, demonstrating that frequently people switched in both directions in the same place and around the same time. Finally, I will investigate the relationship between switching and office-holding. A rigorous test of what drove switching is not feasible with my data, but we will see some evidence suggesting that switching was related to competition for office.

8.2 Examples

Let me briefly mention the stories of four individuals who switched parties. In all four cases, switching seems to have been related to office-seeking in one way or another. In the first case, it was disappointment over not having received an appointment in the federal government that led to switching. In chapter 5 we saw that, after having been ardent Federalists during the ratification debates, the Livingston family, led by Robert R. Livingston, switched to the Republicans in the early 1790s. According to Hammond (1844, 107), “*the family* one evening had a meeting for the purpose of deliberating on the subject, and that the result of their deliberations was such, that the next morning every member of it took a position in the ranks of the republican party.” Why? Hammond quotes “a neighbor and contemporary” of Robert R. Livingston (but also one of his political opponents) who explains that “[t]he *ostensible* cause was, his opposition to the views of Mr. Hamilton, as contained in his reports as secretary of the treasury, particularly those in relation to the funding of the national debt, and in favor of a national bank. The *real* cause was supposed to be disappointment in not being appointed chief justice of the United States” (Hammond 1844, 107). Other members of the family suffered the same fate. Writing to Morgan Lewis in 1791, Livingston relayed his frustration that his brother did not receive an appointment “merely because he was my brother. It will not be thought strange then that I too shd. be able to distinguish between

my political enemies & my private friends” (cited in Kaminski 1993, 195). It appears that the switch was at least in part motivated by frustration and jealousy resulting from stalled careers and more generally the feeling of being pushed out of the highest ranks of New York’s elite. Looking to their old peers, the Livingstons found themselves on a downward trajectory.²

In the second case, the person did not receive the nomination he was seeking. In 1777, Pierre Van Cortlandt, the head of the Van Cortlandt family in Westchester County, ran as lieutenant governor on George Clinton’s ticket. For Clinton this was a way to divide the old families. For Van Cortlandt, it was a way to advance to a position that, according to A. F. Young (1967, 73), would not have been available to him had he remained with the old families. In 1788 Van Cortlandt briefly sided with the Federalists “because Hamilton held out the possibility of support the following year in the gubernatorial election.” But “[a]fter 1789 when Federalists endorsed Van Cortlandt only for the second spot, he drifted back to Clinton. He and his sons would become Republicans” (A. F. Young 1967, 74). Like Livingston, Van Cortlandt followed opportunities for lucrative positions in the state government.

In the third case, switching seems to have been related to strengthening one’s position in elections. Some have argued that John Williams’ switch to the Federalists was motivated primarily by the issue of the Jay Treaty (A. F. Young 1967, 50). The treaty included the withdrawal of British troops from the forts in the Great Lakes region. Because five of the seven forts on American soil were in northern and western New York, this issue was important to elites in the frontier region. The British had refused to give up these forts after the peace treaty of 1783 and used them to incite Native American tribes that were at war with the American settlers (A. F. Young 1967, 267–70). Thus, the forts were considered a

2. Another, and less famous example: In 1797 Samuel Jones, who had switched from the Republicans to the Federalists in the mid-1790s, was appointed comptroller of the state. Ambrose Spencer, a Federalist who was eyeing the same office, got so upset by the appointment that he switched to the Republicans (Brooke 2010, 225).

threat to the security of the state, which was a thorn in the side of those trying to profit from land speculation and development. The importance of the Jay Treaty notwithstanding, Williams' switch also had implications for his position in local elections. In fact, it appears that by switching to the Federalist party, Williams was able to weaken his opponents in his congressional district. In the election for the U.S. House in 1794, when Williams still ran as a Republican, he won with a small majority of 1297 to 1079 votes against his Federalist opponent Ebenezer Russell. Two years later, after having switched sides, Williams was able to enlist the support of the Federalist leaders in the area. Stephen Van Rensselaer hoped that Williams would "take the lead of the Northern interest" (cited in A. F. Young 1967, 563) and Philip Schuyler sought to clear the way for Williams by trying to convince James Gordon, another Federalist candidate, to drop out of the race. Gordon refused, but Williams now won with a sizable majority. While Williams managed to keep all of his votes from 1794, Gordon now only won half of the votes Ebenezer Russell was able to garner in the previous election. A closer look at the number of votes in each town shows that some towns flipped and now supported Williams, but most just did not give the votes they had given to Russell to Gordon. As a result, Williams was able to strengthen his already strong position in the district and to win comfortably with 1318 to 575 votes.

In the last case, a member of the Council of Appointment switched sides and helped his new party purge office-holders from his old party. In 1810, the assembly had a Federalist majority. But because all the state senators from the southern and the middle district were Republicans, the Federalists had to elect two of their opponents to the Council. Because the governor at the time, who had the casting vote on the Council, was a Republican, the Federalists would have been outnumbered. But Robert Williams, who had been elected to the senate as a Republican in 1807, switched sides shortly after his election to the Council. Aided by Williams, the council removed many Republicans from office, including the surrogate of Dutchess County, who was replaced with Robert Williams' son-in-law.

What these examples show is that sometimes switching was related to ambitious political actors trying to improve their position in contests for office, be they elective or appointive. When they felt that their careers were stalled by remaining where they were, they switched sides.

8.3 Who Are the Switchers?

Who are the switchers? On the one hand, we may argue that switchers will be lesser elites. A common view in the historiography of the state is that party formation in New York began as a conflict among the elite families, who formed the nuclei to which other individuals gradually attached themselves. This two-cores view of party formation suggests that powerful elites committed to one side or the other relatively early, while the little people initially remained undecided and only slowly tied themselves to one of the parties. On the other hand, we may argue that if switching is related to people trying to build successful political careers, we might find switching to be common in the careers of those who make it to the very top. Further, it may have been the case that elites who held positions at the state and even federal level had less ties to their local communities, making switching easier. This, again, would imply that switchers were more powerful as switching became easier the higher up one climbed the office ladder. To answer this question, I here return to the socio-demographic data analyzed in chapter 3 and the office data analyzed in chapter 7 to conduct a systematic comparison between the two parties and those who switched between them.

Table 8.1 contains the same information as table 3.1 from chapter 3. As far as occupation is concerned, switchers are more likely to be landowners and lawyers than both Federalists and Republicans. The large proportion of landowners may be surprising given that land tends to anchor people locally, thus making switching more difficult. On the other hand, landowners are often powerful local actors who, in some cases, are able to simply move their networks of political support with them. That was the case with the Livingstons, who were

able to deliver the votes of their tenants as they switched to the Republican party. Such elites do not need to fear the electoral repercussions that often come from party switching (Grose and Yoshinaka 2003), because their voters follow them no matter where they go.

Switchers also appear as more elite when it comes to wealth, owning, on average, more than twice as much real property as Republicans. When it comes to the median switcher, the difference is much smaller, indicating that there are some extremely rich individuals among those who switched. But even in terms of median wealth switchers are still wealthier than those who did not switch. Slave ownership, membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, and college education all confirm the view that switchers are social elites. Finally, while switchers make up only around 10% in the sample, they make up 25% of those who appear in the main component of the kinship network (see chapter 5).

Switchers also appear as powerful elites when we look at office-holding (table 8.2). They are slightly more likely to hold federal appointive positions and twice as likely to have been elected to the U.S. House compared to the other two parties. They are also more likely to have held an appointive office at the state level and to have been elected to the state senate. In terms of their service in the assembly, they do not differ from the other partisans. Finally, at the county level, switchers are more likely to have served on the Court of Common Pleas, as county clerk, sheriff, and coroner, and slightly less likely to have been JP.³

These findings demonstrate that switchers were not the little people who were slow to decide which side to go with. Instead, switchers were central political actors.

8.4 Switching in Time and Space

Now that we know who the switchers were, we can take a closer look at when and where switching took place. To do this, I obtain the year and county of every switch that occurred between 1788 and 1815. With the exception of a few individuals for whom the year of their

3. There are no differences in terms of military offices (results not shown).

	A/R (N=251)	F (N=342)	S (N=77)
A: Occupation			
Landowner	0.06	0.06	0.13
Merchant	0.20	0.20	0.23
Store keeper	0.03	0.05	0.03
Lawyer	0.14	0.18	0.29
Other professional	0.04	0.08	0.06
Capitalist	0.09	0.08	0.10
Farmer	0.12	0.08	0.05
Mechanic	0.07	0.05	0.03
Tavern keeper	0.03	0.04	0.00
Missing	0.42	0.38	0.35
B: Wealth			
Mean real property (all)	\$5,764	\$7,168	\$12,327
Median real property (all)	\$4,700	\$4,055	\$5,587
Mean personal property (all)	\$912	\$863	\$1,750
Median personal property (all)	\$516	\$593	\$845
Mean real property (primary only)	\$3,647	\$4,293	\$6,221
Median real property (primary only)	\$2,250	\$2,609	\$4,029
Mean personal property (primary only)	\$667	\$674	\$1,302
Median personal property (primary only)	\$335	\$431	\$595
C: Slave ownership			
Mean number of slaves	1.30	1.25	1.57
Proportion with at least one slave	0.34	0.37	0.43
D: Age			
Mean date of birth	1751	1753	1751
Median date of birth	1749	1755	1752
E: Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati			
Proportion with membership	0.08	0.09	0.13
Proportion with membership, incl. honorary	0.09	0.11	0.19
F: College			
Proportion with college education	0.09	0.12	0.13

Table 8.1: Social characteristics by party

Note: “Mechanics” was a term used for manual laborers such as shipwrights, carpenters, cartmen, butchers. “Switchers” are people who were affiliated with both parties throughout their life.

	A/R and F	Switcher
A: Federal		
Federal appointive	3.7	5.2
U.S. Senate	2.0	1.3
U.S. House	9.6	19.5
B: State		
State appointive	9.1	18.2
Council of Appointment	11.3	20.8
Senate	21.1	33.8
Assembly	89.7	88.3
C: County		
First Judge, CCP	8.8	13.0
Judge, CCP	26.8	42.9
Assistant Justice, CCP	26.1	35.1
Justice of the Peace	48.2	37.7
County Clerk	4.2	7.8
Sheriff	7.8	11.7
Surrogate	4.4	3.9
Coroner	9.1	13.0

Table 8.2: Percentage of people within each party who held each office at any point in their career

Note: The table shows the percentage of elites within each party who ever held the position. CCP stands for Court of Common Pleas.

switch was mentioned in the historical literature, all information on party affiliation used here comes from the *A New Nation Votes* database (American Antiquarian Society 2007). This database contains electoral returns for various elections at the state and federal level. For some of these elections it also contains information on the party each candidate affiliated with, which was obtained from the original ballots and party tickets. Of course, these data do not provide annual measures of party affiliation for every elite, making it impossible to establish the exact timing of each switch. But they can still give us a rough estimate of when someone went from one party to another.

Let's say that someone was affiliated with party *A* in year t_1 and with party *B* in year t_2 . In that case I record a switch as $A \rightarrow B$. There are a total of 147 occasions when someone switches from the Anti-Federalists/Republicans to the Federalists and 134 where someone switches the other way.⁴ As the time of the switch I use the year in which the person ran for the *new* party, t_2 . For example, if someone ran as a Federalist in the assembly election of 1788 and as a Republican in the state senate election in 1796, I code the switch as F \rightarrow A/R with a switching date of 1796. Similarly, I assign the switch to the county in which the person ran *after* the switch. Only assembly elections took place at the county level, however. For all other elections I use the person's primary county, defined as the county in which he held most of his offices throughout his career. Having identified the direction of each switch as well as the year and the location in which the switch occurred, I can now examine the temporal and spatial distribution of party switching.

Figure 8.1 shows the number of switches per year from 1788 to 1815. As one would expect, shortly after 1788 switching from the Anti-Federalists to the Federalists is more frequent than switching in the other direction. In the mid-1790s, people seem to switch both ways. The relatively large numbers of switchers in 1792 and 1798 are in part due to the movement of the Livingstons and the ripple effect this had on other elites in the region. Starting in

4. The unit of analysis are switches and one person can contribute multiple switches if he goes back and forth between the two parties.

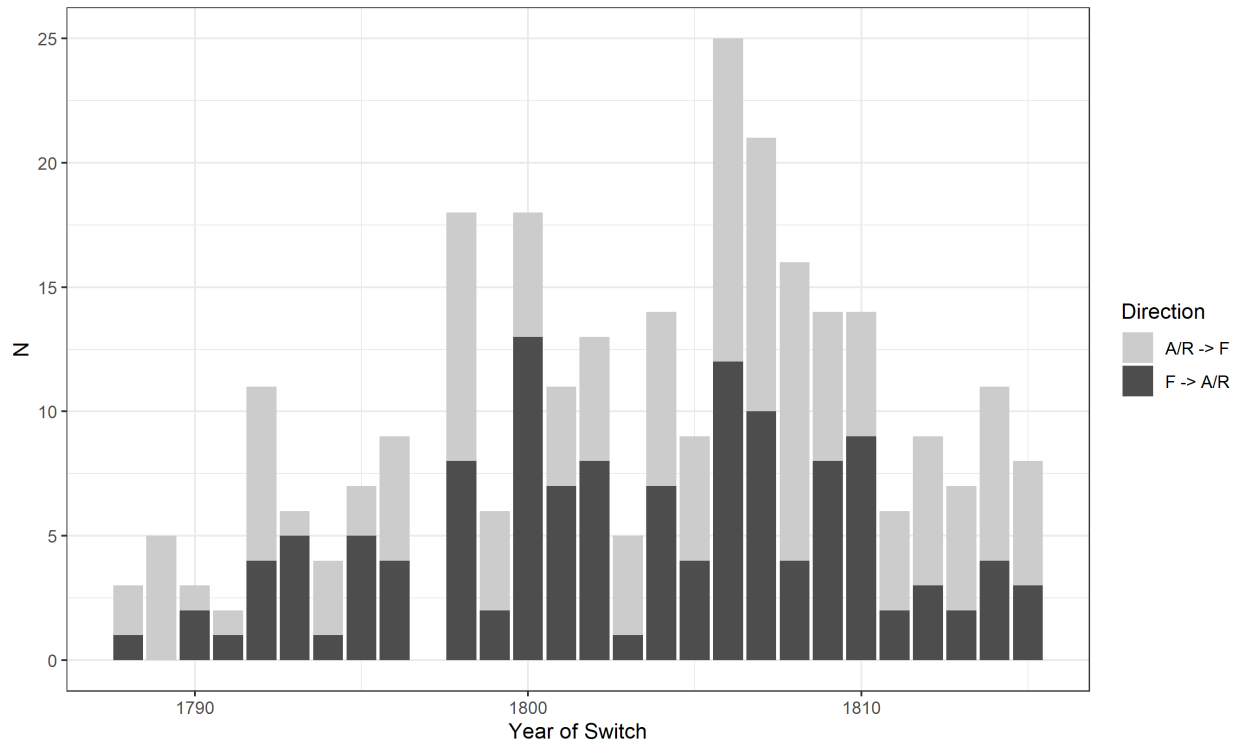


Figure 8.1: Number of switches per year

1800, we see a large number of people switch to the Republicans. This is not surprising given the increasing popular support the Republican party was able to garner. Interestingly, there is another period of frequent switching that begins in 1806. This is the time of the resurgence of the Federalist party in the state (Lampi 2013). It is also a time of high intra-party factionalism among the Republicans who split into Clintonians and Lewisites and formed new alliances that sometimes included Federalists. Some old Republicans, it appears, now even ran on Federalist tickets. Thus, in addition to promoting factionalism, one-party dominance can also lead to party switching. The weakness of the Federalist party after 1800 drove many people to the Republicans, causing it to get crowded on that side of the aisle. For some this meant getting stuck. A person who was 10th in line if he sided with the Republicans but second in line if he sided with the Federalists had a strong incentive to switch sides in order to keep moving.

Figure 8.2 adds additional information on the birth year of those who switched and plots it

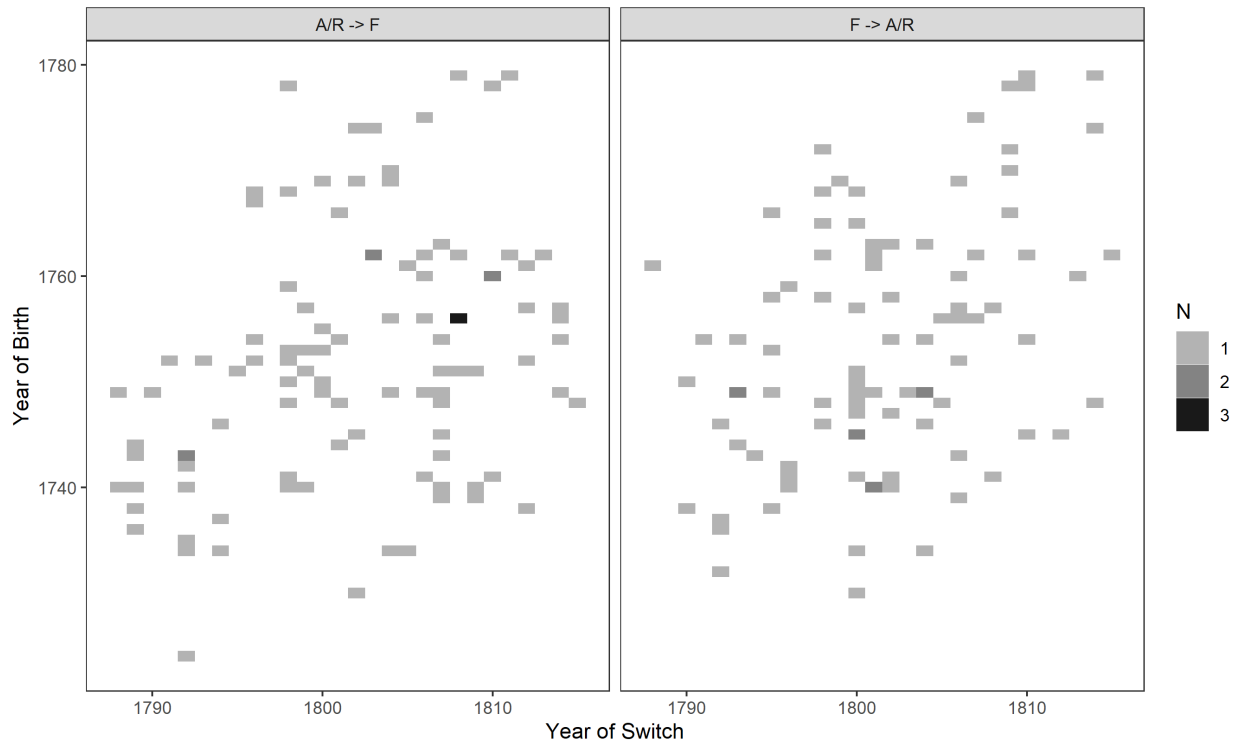


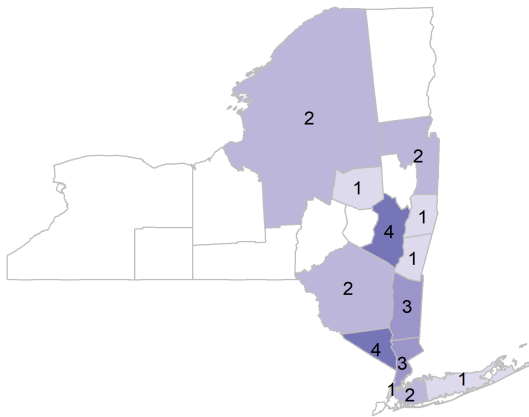
Figure 8.2: Year of birth by year of switch

against the year in which the switch took place. This way of visualizing the data allows us to examine if there were period, cohort, and/or age effects associated with switching. The graph on the left depicts switches from the Anti-Federalists/Republicans to the Federalists, the graph on the right depicts switches from the Federalists to the Anti-Federalists/Republicans. Although the data is spotty, we see clear period effects. People tended to switch to the Federalists around 1790, just before 1800 and again in 1807; they tended to switch to the Republicans mostly in and shortly after 1800. We also see some evidence of a cohort effect. Until the mid-1790s, switchers were almost all born before 1760. Starting around 1796, the year the assembly and senate seats were reapportioned, we see younger switchers appear on both sides (although it seems that this younger generation tended to switch to the Federalists first and only later also to the Republicans). Finally, the positive relationship between year of birth and year of switch indicates an age effect. The later a person was born, the later he switched.

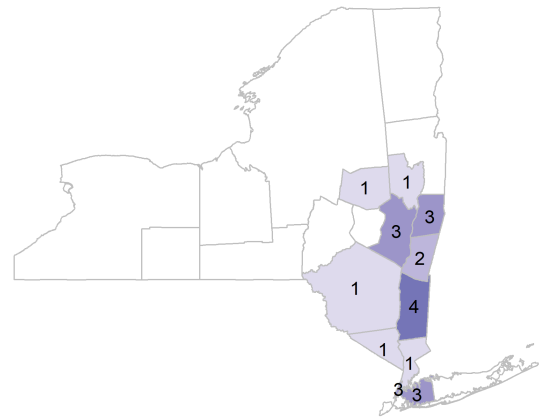
While we see some differences between switching to the Federalists and switching to the Republicans, overall, there is a high degree of similarity, indicating that people switched both ways around the same time. Was this because in some regions elites switched to one side while in other regions they went in the opposite direction? Or did people switch both ways in the same location? To answer these questions, I add information on the county in which each switch took place.

Figure 8.3 shows the number of switches in each county, broken up by the direction of the switch ($A/R \rightarrow F$ on the left, $F \rightarrow A/R$ on the right) and by time period (1788-1796, 1797-1803, 1804-1815). Figure 8.4 shows the same data but standardizes the number of switches by the number of seats each county had in the assembly during the respective time period. This way we can address the fact that larger counties with more seats are also more likely to have switches, simply due to their size. During the first time period, the northern part of the state tends to switch to the Federalists, which makes sense given that these areas opposed the ratification of the constitution in 1788. But in most counties people switched in both directions around the same time. This has an important implication. If people went both ways, then switching cannot be attributed to changes in voter preferences. If voters had started to increasingly support one party rather than the other, we would expect to see switches to the party that was on the rise, but not the one that was losing ground. Instead, what we see is a more complicated sorting process. In Columbia County, for example, the upper manor Livingstons switched to the Republicans around 1792 and back to the Federalists in 1798. Many of the office-holders in the county who were not affiliated with the Livingstons went in the opposite direction. Benjamin Birdsall, for instance, runs as a Republican in 1792, as a Federalist in 1794, and again as a Republican in 1801. John C. Hogeboom runs as a Federalist in 1796 and then as a Republican in 1799, 1800 and 1801. Elisha Jenkins becomes a Republican in 1798 and so does Ambrose Spencer. Thomas Jenkins follows in 1800.

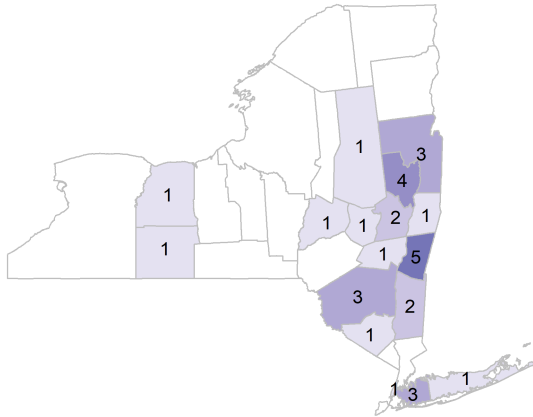
1788-1796 | A/R -> F



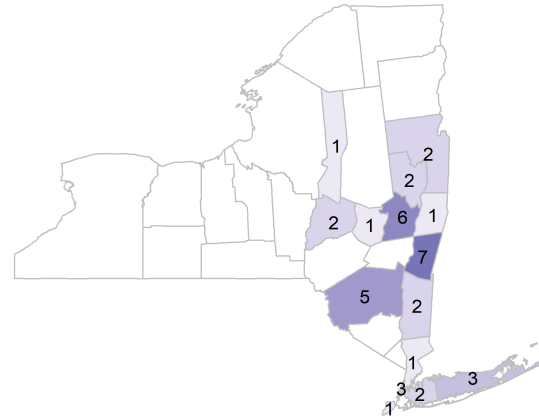
1788-1796 | F -> A/R



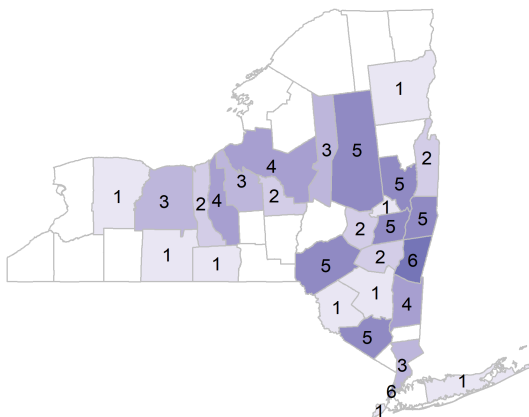
1797-1803 | A/R -> F



1797-1803 | F -> A/R



1804-1815 | A/R -> F



1804-1815 | F -> A/R

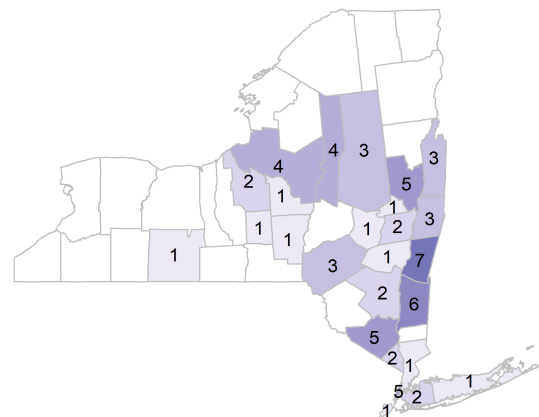
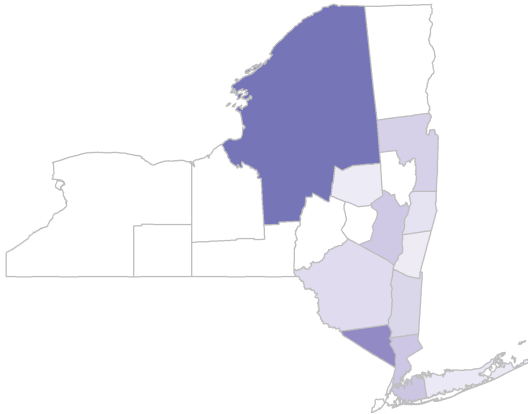
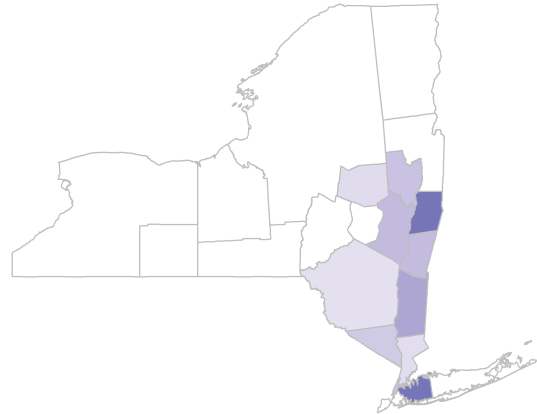


Figure 8.3: Number of switches per county by time period

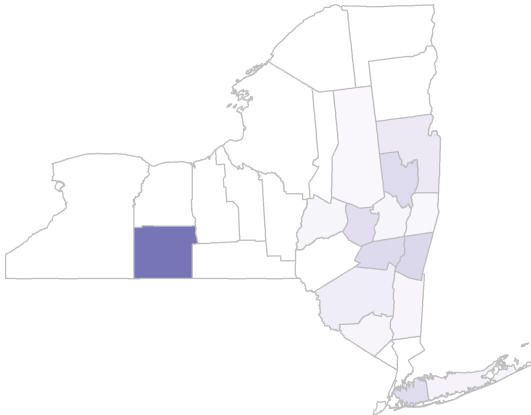
1788-1796 | A/R -> F



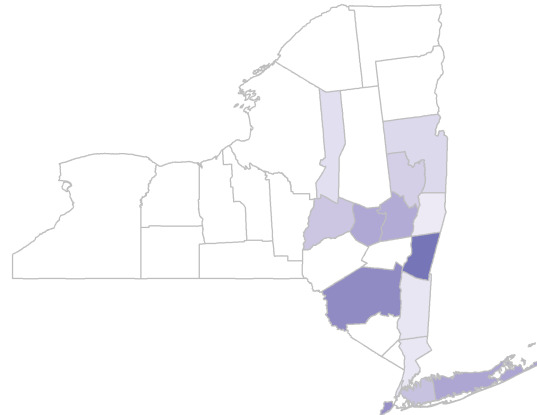
1788-1796 | F -> A/R



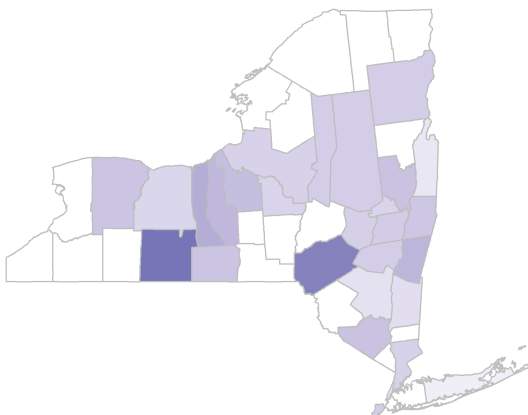
1797-1803 | A/R -> F



1797-1803 | F -> A/R



1804-1815 | A/R -> F



1804-1815 | F -> A/R

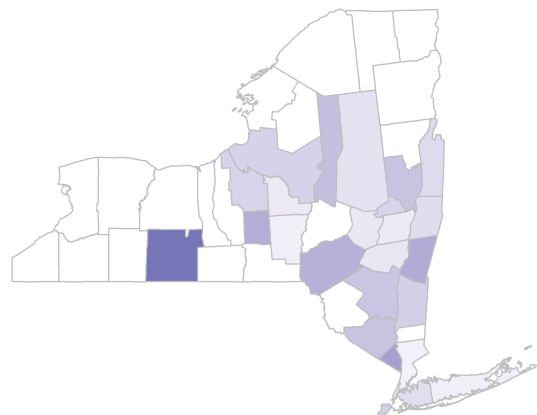


Figure 8.4: Standardized number of switches per county by time period

8.5 Switching and Offices

The examples mentioned above suggested that switching may have been related to office-seeking. Here I take a more systematic look at this issue. I begin with elections. As a first step, I look at the chance of getting elected for each party. Do we see that switchers had a higher chance to succeed? For the three elective offices of state assembly, state senate, and U.S. House, I obtain all candidates who ran and then estimate the proportion of those who got elected.⁵ The results are shown in table 8.3. From this analysis it appears that switchers were just as likely to get elected as Federalists or Republicans. Of course, this does not necessarily imply that switching was unrelated to office-seeking. First, what mattered may have been a person's anticipated success rather than his actual success. Second, we simply do not know the counterfactual in this case. It could very well be that by switching people were able to increase their chance of success and that they would have fared worse had they not switched. Without a proper control group we simply cannot know.

Office	A/R	F	S	none
1788 - 1801				
Assembly	0.54	0.49	0.56	0.12
Senate	0.30	0.53	0.45	0
U.S. House	0.38	0.44	0.34	0
1788 - 1815				
Assembly	0.55	0.45	0.55	0.16
Senate	0.55	0.39	0.44	0.06
U.S. House	0.46	0.33	0.38	0.17

Table 8.3: Proportion of successful races by party

To take a closer look at what happened in elections around the time of a switch, I take only those individuals who switched and calculate the proportion of successful races during the five years prior to the year in which the switch occurred, in the year in which the switch

5. The analysis is restricted to elections where I have data for at least one person who ran but was *not* elected, thus excluding races for which I only know the people who were successful.

occurred, and during the five years after the switch occurred. I find that someone who makes a switch has a chance of getting elected in the five years prior to the switch of 58%, a chance of getting elected in the year of the switch of 41%, and a chance of getting elected in the five years after the switch of 51%.⁶ This is quite surprising as it suggests that people had a higher chance of success *before* they switched. This could be due to measurement error. Because I used the date associated with the election in which the person ran for the new party (instead of, say, the midpoint between the last election for the old party and the first election for the new party), it could be that the five years prior to the switch actually contain elections that had occurred at or after the switch. Still, this would only explain these patterns if we were to assume that party switching increases someone's chances of success only temporarily. Otherwise it is not clear why the value for the five years after the switch is also relatively low.

What about appointments? Were switchers rewarded with an appointment right after they changed sides? To try to answer this question, I look at whether the switcher received an appointment in the seven-year time window around the switch. For each of these years, $t-3$ to $t+3$, I then calculate the proportion of switchers who received an appointment in that year. I find that although the likelihood of receiving an appointment increases slightly the closer we get to the switch, the signal is very weak. Restricting the analysis to appointments at the state level and to the Court of Common Pleas, the values for the seven years are $t-3 = .13$, $t-2 = .09$, $t-1 = .14$, $t = .16$, $t+1 = .14$, $t+2 = .13$, and $t+3 = .13$. The data are simply not precise enough to successfully carry out such an analysis.

One thing we can do instead is look at how switchers were treated by the Council of Appointment under different parties. We have seen that Federalist councils were more likely to give appointments to Federalists and Republican councils were more likely to give appointments to Republicans. But what about switchers? To answer this question, I estimate two

6. If I restrict the analysis to 1788 to 1801 instead of 1788 to 1815, the values are 64%, 48%, and 54%, respectively.

sets of logistic regressions, one comparing switchers to Federalists (using a binary dependent variable with 1 = switcher and 0 = Federalist) and one comparing switchers to Republicans (using a binary dependent variable with 1 = switcher and 0 = Republican).

If I include the number of appointments received by Federalist councils as a predictor in the regression comparing switchers to Federalists, the effect is small and insignificant. When, instead, I use the number of appointments received by Republican councils, I find that each additional appointment increases the odds of being a switcher (instead of a Federalist) by 7%.⁷ (The effect is significant at the .01-level.) Thus, Federalist councils treat switchers like Federalists, while Republican councils prefer switchers over Federalists. The same pattern holds when I compare switchers to Republicans. The number of appointments received by Republican councils does not differentiate between switchers and Republicans, while each additional appointment by a Federalist council increases the odds of being a switcher (instead of a Republican) by 35%.⁸ (The effect is significant at the .01-level.) Thus, what we see is that switchers tend to behave like the dominant party, which provides some evidence that switching was related to ambitious elites trying to obtain appointments in the state.

8.6 Switching and Legislative Voting

We might also wonder if party switching was related to legislative behavior. In chapter 4, I established that the first dimension in the W-NOMINATE space tends to capture the difference between the two parties. Where do switchers fall along that dimension and how does that compare to the Federalists and Republicans? Figure 8.5 plots the distribution of the coordinates for dimension one from the W-NOMINATE models for each session, broken up by party. What we find is that, with a few exceptions (e.g., sessions 11 and 22), switchers

7. When I restrict the analysis to 1788 (session 12) to 1802 (session 25), the effect increases to 47%. The number of appointments by Federalist councils still has no significant effect.

8. When I restrict the analysis to 1788 (session 12) to 1802 (session 25), the effect increases to 43%. The number of appointments by Republican councils still has no significant effect.

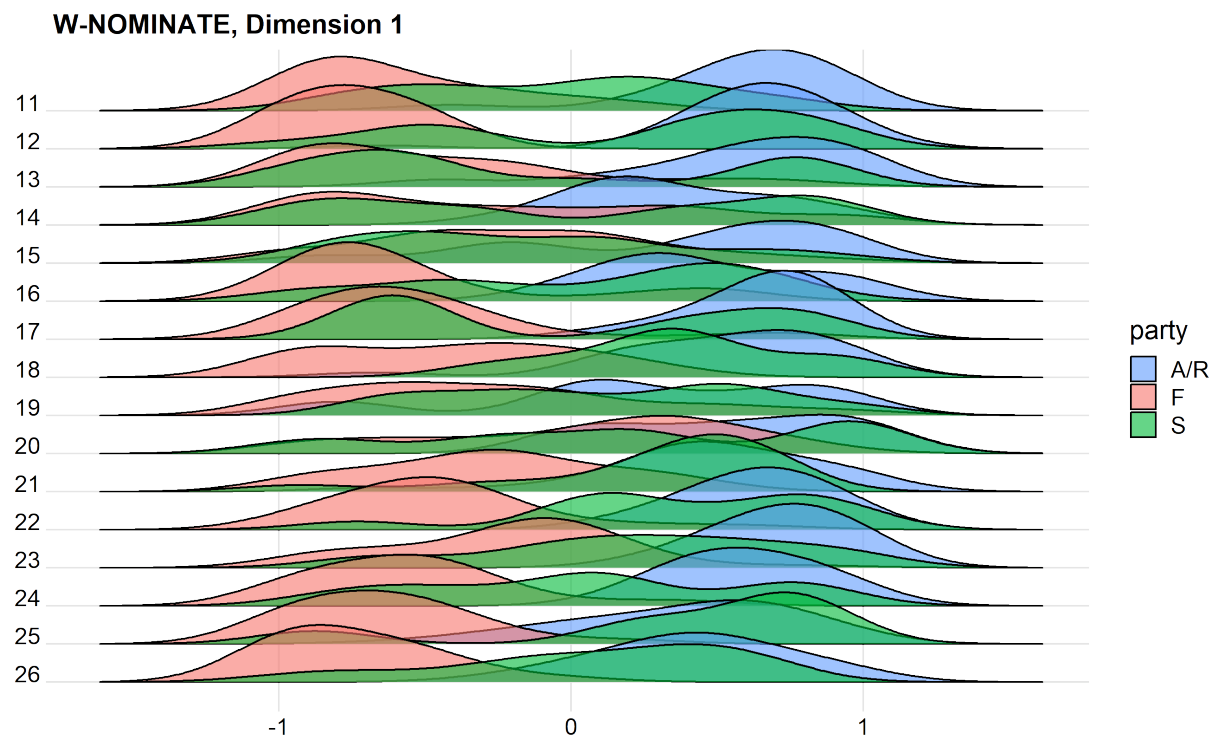


Figure 8.5: W-NOMINATE scores for first dimension by party

show a bimodal distribution and appear on both sides instead of in between the two parties. In other words, switchers are not centrists; they take sides. We also see that starting in session 21 switchers vote with the Republican party, and in session 25 they even seem to be more Republican than the Republicans.

In addition to their position in the voting space, we would also like to know whether switching led to changes in legislative behavior (see Nokken and Poole 2004 for such an analysis for switching in the U.S. Congress). This would give us a sense of whether switching was driven by processes inside the legislature or outside the legislature. In other words, was a switch *preceded* by a change in voting behavior such that people began to vote more like the other party before changing sides? Or did their voting behavior change *after* they switched? Or did people run for different parties during elections but, once elected, their voting behavior remained unchanged? In principle, my data should allow me to answer these questions. In practice, however, things are more complicated. Because of high levels

of turnover, only a few switchers stay in the assembly long enough for us to observe changes in voting behavior. In addition, as I said before, it is difficult to establish the exact timing of each switch.

Still, I conduct an analysis in which I calculate the average distance of each switcher to the assemblymen in the Republican party and the average distance to the assemblymen in the Federalist party. The results are shown in figure 8.6. The vertical lines in the graphs indicate the timing of the switches as discussed above. Solid lines show switches from the Anti-Federalist/Republican party to the Federalist party; dashed lines show switches from the Federalist party to the Anti-Federalist/Republican party. Note that switching is based on all elections a person participated in, not just those for the assembly. This means that if someone ran as a Federalist for the assembly and then as a Republican for the U.S. House, this would show up as a switch in the year in which he ran for the House. Each graph shows a switcher, identified by his ID in my dataset (e.g., AJ0181 for Jonathan Akin).

Some cases show that switching was followed by changes in voting behavior. CS0101, for example, is initially more similar to the Republican party. After switching to the Federalists, there is a period in which he is just as far from the Federalist party as he is from the Republican party, before his voting patterns become more similar to those of the Federalists. The same is true for DJ0286. LB0006 switches in the opposite direction and his switch leads him to move closer to the Republicans. In other cases, however, legislators' voting patterns do not seem to change much. Look at BJ0672 or RN0022, for example. And in yet other cases, there are so few observations for an assemblyman or the timing of the switch is so far away from those observations that it is difficult to see what is going on. As a result, the findings unfortunately remain inconclusive. Detailed analyses of the relationship between party switching and legislative voting are simply not feasible with these data.

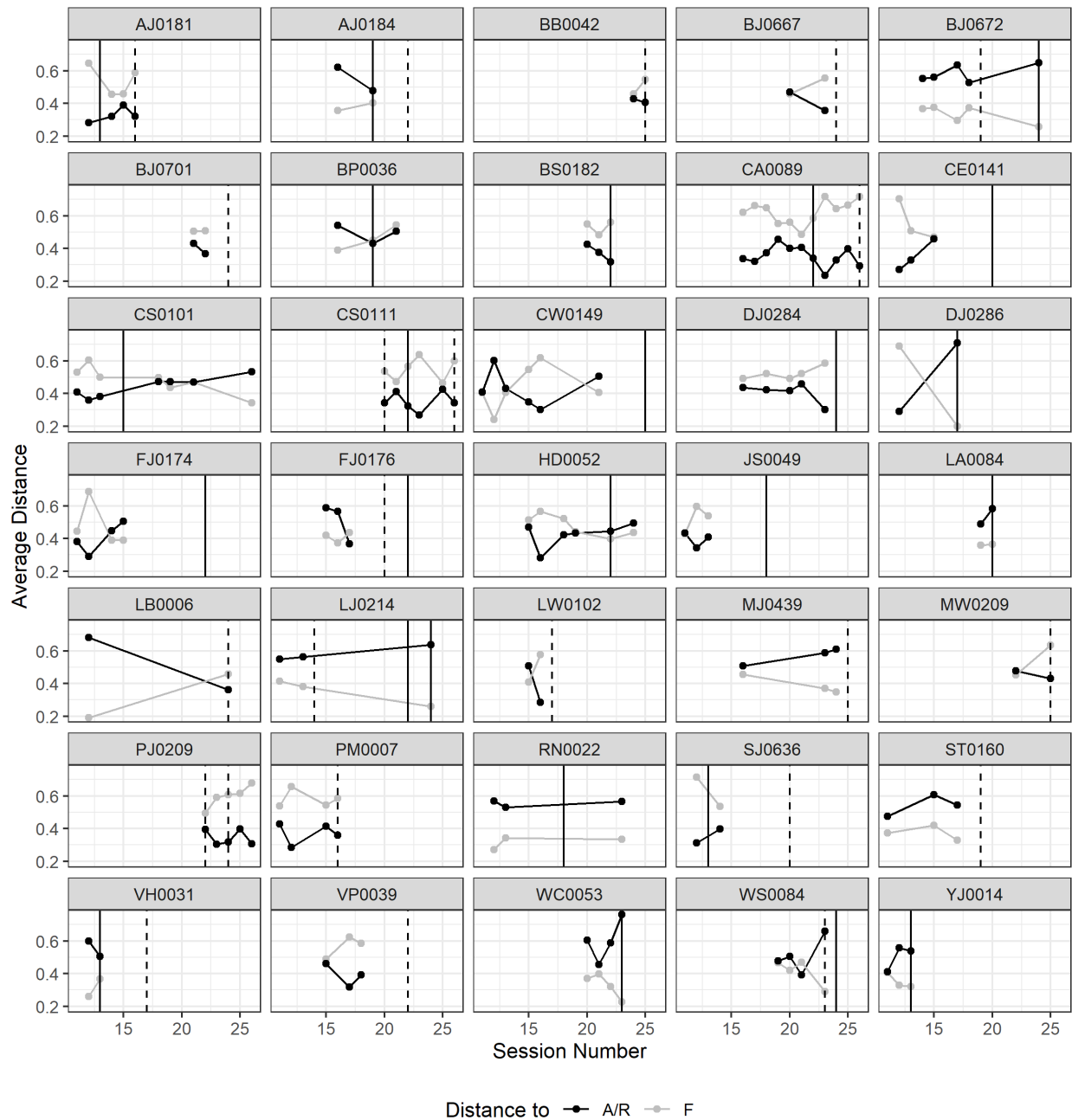


Figure 8.6: Average distance of switchers to members from the two parties

Note: Solid vertical lines indicate timing of a switch from Anti-Federalist/Republican to Federalist; dashed vertical lines indicate timing of a switch from Federalist to Anti-Federalist/Republican.

8.7 Conclusion

A common view of party formation in New York holds that there were two cores of high-level elites—Philip Schuyler, Alexander Hamilton, and Stephen Van Rensselaer on the Federalist side and George Clinton on the Republican side—and that all other office-holders and office-seekers gradually attached themselves to these cores. This image suggests that the positions of high-level elites were relatively determined, and that it was lower-level office-holders who were initially undecided, maybe experimenting with both parties for a while, before finally choosing a side. The findings presented in this chapter do not support this view. Instead, those who switched parties were powerful elites. It was the social and political heavy weights whose positions in the emerging party system were underdetermined, allowing them room to move—room they used to advance their careers.

Some elites were clearly associated with one side right from the start. But for others the situation was less clear. As they tried to understand the new political world they found themselves in after the Constitutional Convention, many of them initially tried to remain independent of the emerging parties or moved between them. Sometimes, moves in the political game locked people in, as was the case with Aaron Burr. In 1789 Burr worked with Hamilton and Schuyler to support the Federalist candidate for the gubernatorial election in an attempt to oust George Clinton. But Clinton won and in order to strengthen his position wooed Burr with an appointment as attorney general. This drove a wedge between Hamilton and Burr. In 1791 Burr, with the support of the Clintonians, ran against Philip Schuyler in the congressional election and won. After humiliating Schuyler in this way, there was no going back for Burr. He was now a Republican.⁹ Thus, just as chips in the game of *Plinko*, political elites moved over the board of the political game as they were trying to build successful careers, changing directions as they encountered political events, bouncing

9. After 1800, when the Republicans started to break into multiple factions, Burr sided with the Federalists again.

back and forth, until they were finally locked in on one side or the other.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In September, 1787, the Constitutional Convention concluded its work. A national constitution had been drafted and was now sent for review to the individual states, sparking months of intensive debates about whether and under what conditions to ratify the document. This question divided the nation into those who supported the constitution, the Federalists, and those who rejected it, the Anti-Federalists. Whether we call the Federalists and Anti-Federalists political parties depends, of course, on our definition of a political party. They provided voters with two alternative visions for how to set up the new government and tried to systematically mobilize support at a national scale. But because party organization was still limited and largely based on informal networks of communication among elites, most scholars do not consider the political groups of 1787/8 political parties. After the constitution had been ratified, two new political groups began to take shape, the Federalists and the Republicans. In some states, this involved a radical break from the Federalists/Anti-Federalists; other states saw much continuity between the political groups of the late 1780s and those of the 1790s. Throughout the 1790s the Federalists and Republicans became increasingly cohesive and organized, and by the election of 1800 they were so well developed that most scholars feel comfortable applying the label of political parties. The political developments that led to the formation of these two parties were the subject of this dissertation.

Why did political parties form after the ratification of the constitution? The answer to this question must be sought in the institutions set up by the U.S. constitution. By concentrating political authority at the federal level (or at least allowing for the possibility of such concentration), the constitution ensured that much was to be gained from controlling the federal government. In addition, by making both the presidency and the legislature elective, the constitution ensured that the struggle for control of the state would involve the systematic mobilization of voters. The specific electoral rules that were put in place, with

first-past-the-post voting for both presidential and congressional elections, turned control of the state into an indivisible good, which, in turn, sparked competition among elites. Increased competition led to efforts to form alliances, producing a bifurcation of the elite. As these alliances of elites competed with one another, they further increased their efforts to mobilize voters and coordinate their activities. All these factors, together with the large size of the electoral districts and the coupling of different levels of government (e.g., in many states presidential electors and U.S. Senators were chosen by the state legislature), required coordination across localities. Political elites on both sides found themselves in positions where they felt they had no choice but to further organize in order not to be pushed out of the political game. They did not want to build parties, but control over the state required them to do exactly that.

The main goal of this dissertation, however, was not to explain why parties formed or to explain the timing of party formation. Instead, the goal was to understand the structure of the first party system. By that I do not mean the number of parties. The question why the American political system has a tendency to produce two rather than multiple parties has been debated for quite some time (Duverger 1963). Of greater interest to me was to explain why some people ended up on the side of the Federalists while other people ended up on the side of the Republicans. To be able to collect the data necessary to study this question, I focused on a single state: the theoretically important case of New York. Here I will briefly summarize what we have learned from the analyses of the New York party system in the previous chapters.

One plausible hypothesis was that the two parties in New York were the result of the politicization of existing social cleavages such as between different economic or social (including regional) groups. I examined this question in chapter 3. To do this, I studied the characteristics of more than 750 political elites who identified with one of the two parties, focusing on occupation, wealth, age, and membership in elite institutions such as colleges

and the Society of the Cincinnati. I found that both parties looked very much alike in terms of the sociodemographic characteristics of their members and did not pit one social group against another. The hypothesis that the Federalists and Republicans of New York could be understood as the politicization of pre-existing social master categories like class or region had to be rejected.¹ The two parties resulted from a split among the elite that did not map in any obvious way onto social differences (such as between monied and landed elites). Both parties subsequently drew diverse sets of lesser elites into their ranks, a process that likewise did not result in any clear social differences between them. To be sure, Federalists were somewhat more likely to attract lawyers and other professionals, while Republicans counted more farmers among their ranks, but the similarities between them outweighed those differences. This finding is all the more remarkable given that in the years between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention New York politics was shaped by a largely vertical division between old elites and a group of new men who had entered politics during the revolution (Main 1974; Countryman 1989).

Under these conditions it is not surprising that the ideological divisions that emerged around the two parties were relatively abstract and evolved around questions such as France versus England or democracy versus aristocracy. These issues could be almost entirely decoupled from the social fabric New York's elites were embedded in.

It is doubtful that collecting more individual-level data (such as data on religion or ethnicity) would change this conclusion. But changing the scale of analysis might. It is possible that underneath the state level picture presented in this work hide important local cleavages. Perhaps by zooming in on the county or even town level, and by taking important temporal changes into account, we can begin to see divisions between different social groups—

1. The absence of a strong regional division is particularly important. Too high a correlation between region and party, at least if the regions involved are contiguous, is likely to lead to fracture or civil war, as the case of the American civil war shows. Party systems therefore need to make sure that regional issues neither be too closely aligned with party, nor more important than those issues that divide the parties so that the party system appears irrelevant.

divisions that were then inverted across space and over time to produce an aggregate picture that shows two similar parties. Existing county studies (Brooke 2010) lend some plausibility to this hypothesis. Future work will need to investigate this further, knowing, however, that by zooming in on the local level the data will become very thin.

Given that social categories were unable to explain the structure of the party system in New York, I turned to elite social networks. A large body of work in sociology has established that often political action, instead of being a function of elites' membership in a social group, is driven by the concrete social relationships they are embedded in (Bearman 1993; Padgett and Ansell 1993; Gould 1995). In chapter 5 I therefore reconstructed the multiple social networks elites were part of—focusing on family, professional, and educational networks—to see if they mapped onto the emerging parties and if we could theorize parties as the politicization of these existing social networks. I found that social networks were clearly important in pushing and pulling people around in the political space. And they served as scaffolding that was used for political organization. But they also fell short in three ways: First, they were partly endogenous to politics. Some relationships formed independent of politics and could then be used for political purposes, but many were created with politics in mind. Second, the social networks I studied did not reach far enough and only contained the core of the political elite, suggesting that many other New Yorkers were tied into the party system in different ways. And third, they did not neatly map onto parties. Elite political action appeared underdetermined by those social relations. Elites had room to move, and in some cases could even break the social relationships they were embedded in.

I examined this in more detail in chapter 8, where I showed that those who switched parties were powerful social and political elites, that switching was particularly prevalent around transitions of power from one party to another, and that switching often occurred in both directions at the same time and in the same county, suggesting that it was not a response to shifting voter preferences but rather evidence of a more complicated sorting

process that involved key political actors.

Thus, it appears that elites were neither locked in by their membership in social groups, nor were they tied down by their social relationships. This opened up opportunities for skilled political actors to form new and complex webs of alliances. Again, it is possible to expect a missing data issue here. Perhaps I did not collect enough social network data, or the wrong data. For example, what now looks like the breaking of a tie might actually be an unobserved social tie trumping the observed one. Given the data we have at the moment, we cannot rule out this hypothesis. Yet, I found an alternative hypothesis more convincing: that parties were the result of a political process that, although shaped in important ways by existing relationships, is not fully reducible to pre-existing social relations (see Walder 2006; Zhang 2021). And, so, the rest of the dissertation was an attempt to try and understand these endogenous political dynamics.

I first examined this process through an analysis of roll call voting in the state assembly (chapter 4). This analysis showed that parties in the sense of voting blocs formed at three moments in time and appeared most clearly around procedural issues that had to do with the rules of the game. More specifically, procedural issues that were related to control over public office such as setting electoral rules or debating regulations for the appointment of state officials. Substantive issues and appeals to group membership were things that elites could use in their attempt to mobilize voters, but they were not what gave rise to parties. Instead, what I found were two groups that were bereft of any clear substantive policy positions. I saw a formal struggle for power between two emerging groups that looked very similar, rather than a substantive struggle between different policy platforms anchored in different social or economic interests. Why substantive issues played such a minor role, especially given that they were much more salient during the 1780s, remains a task for future work.

The final attempt to understand the structure of the New York party system was to

take a look at office-holding. If parties are groups of men seeking to control the state by capturing public office, then a close look at the careers of political elites promised reveal important dynamics. In chapter 6 I studied the Council of Appointment, a body that had the authority to hand out all appointive positions in the state. The Council turned out to be a key political institution with far reaching consequences. It concentrated almost all state patronage in a small group of individuals, and because it was chosen by the state legislature, it tied the appointment power to electoral success. From this analysis, the two parties emerged as patronage parties that were very much concerned with controlling the Council's powers. Appointments became strongly partisan, in particular at times when power transitioned from one party to the other.

In chapter 7 I took a broader look at office-holding. I first established that movement through offices was relatively orderly, with career paths that developed surprisingly early. Given the stability of the office hierarchy and people's moves through it, it becomes plausible why the contest between the Federalists and the Republicans in New York was so focused on procedures that had to do with who would control access to these offices. Everyone agreed what to fight over and that politics was about exactly that kind of competition. The violent uprisings against the government that Reed (2019, 2020) observed in other parts of North America played only a minor role in New York. Competition was taken from the battlefield and relegated to the field of politics, thus stabilizing the political system.

A second important finding related to office-holding was that the different levels of government—the local, the state, and the national—were well connected through people's careers. By moving through these different levels, New Yorkers were able to facilitate coordination and spread ideas.

Finally I used the data on office-holding to look for differences between the two parties. The idea was that different political careers would reflect different political experiences, which in turn would help us see some important differences between the Federalists and the

Republicans. While I was able to discover some such differences, especially with regards to office-holding during the confederation period, I found very few general patterns. Again, both parties looked remarkably similar not only in the kinds of offices their members held, but even in the way they chained these offices together into careers. What this tells us is that very early on New York had two parties that were able to compete at all levels of government, for all offices in the state, and in all regions of the state.

In sum, I found two parties (1) whose members looked remarkably similar in terms of their sociodemographics, (2) whose members were not locked in but free to break old alliances and form new ones, (3) that competed for public office at all levels of government, and (4) that appeared strongest around procedural issues related to control over offices. This is exactly what we would expect to see in a well-developed party system with two competitive parties. How modern the political world of New York after the Constitutional Convention looks is remarkable. These findings make clear that New York was the harbinger of broader political changes that occurred during the nineteenth century and that brought about the first modern mass parties in history. The modern party system, in turn, brought about a new type of political actor: the professional politician. As a result, it is no surprise that the famous party builder of the Jacksonian era, Martin Van Buren, grew up in the world of New York politics I studied in this dissertation.

Let me end with a few final lessons we can take from this work. First, studying party development in New York has highlighted the limits of a top-down view of party formation. Most scholars seem to assume that parties first appeared at the national level and then trickled downwards, that they began as sets of coordinated elites in Congress (and the cabinet) and slowly extend their organizational structures to the local level. But we saw that the two parties in New York were not simply an extension of national coordination efforts. New York's party system, while not completely independent from the national one, followed its own dynamics and the process of party formation is one that involved the knitting

together of pre-existing state structures. This finding is in line with a vast literature on civil wars that has pointed to the local dynamics underlying large-scale conflict (Bearman 1993; Walder 2006; Kalyvas 2003, 2006; Zhang 2021). In the eyes of these scholars, large political formations are the result of interactions between small conflicts at the local level and divisions among national elites. Such a view is exactly what is required to understand party formation in America, too. To understand the national parties that took shape during the 1790s, we must understand how county level oppositions were aggregated into state party structures and how these state party structures were further aligned into national ones. Even more, we must study the interactions between different levels of government. As parties began to take shape at the national level, this had important implications for the various state structures. For example, as the Federalist party, guided by Hamilton, became more and more associated with the mercantile and industrial interests of the north, southern Federalists like Madison were pushed to the other side, resulting in a split among those who had supported the federal constitution, which in turn altered the way those elites would confront their local constituents. It is these types of dynamics that result from the interaction among multiple networks of government that are at the heart of the process of party formation.²

Second, a *modern* electoral party involves professionals as well as amateurs. It is the combination of multiple intersecting careers and political logics. That means it has to organize careers for a sufficient number of people and cannot count on the independent wealthy alone (Weber 1958). This becomes clear when we begin to study not only the most famous national elites, but the large number of lesser elites that were drawn into the two parties as cadre, who mobilized voters in their localities, ran for elective office or tried to obtain an appointment, and joined voting blocs in the state legislature. In future work I will use the office data to try and identify different types of political actors and trace the emergence of new political logics.

2. It is worth noting here that often it was the same people who served both at the state and the national level.

Third, a modern party system changes the meaning of actions taken in the political realm, both in terms of individual career moves and in terms of collective actions. Receiving a nomination or an appointment is no longer only relevant for one's personal ambitions. It is now meaningful with respect to the party as a whole. And so is voting in the legislature on procedural issues that determine not only one's own fate, but that of the whole party.

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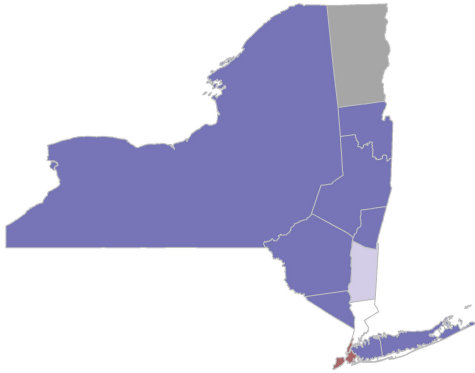
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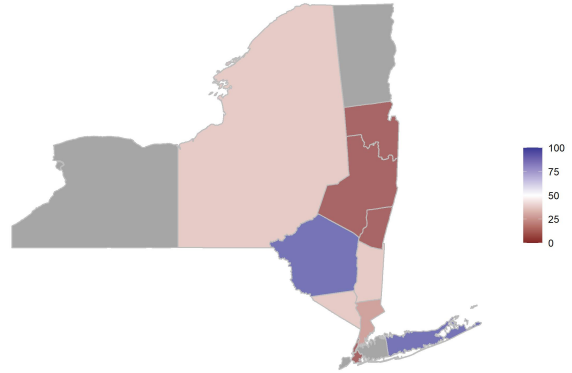
APPENDIX A

ELECTORAL MAPS ASSEMBLY

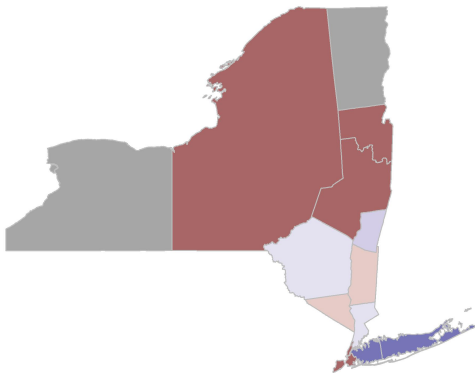
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 12 (1788)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 13 (1789)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 14 (1790)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 15 (1791)

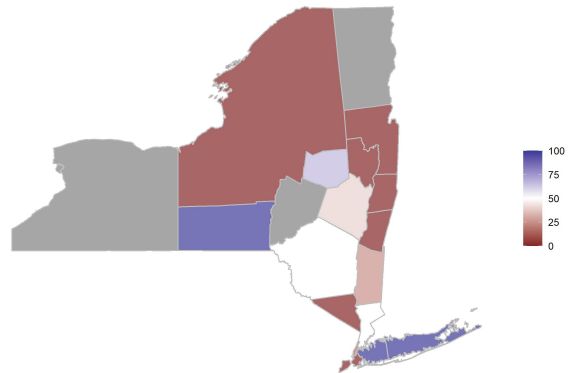
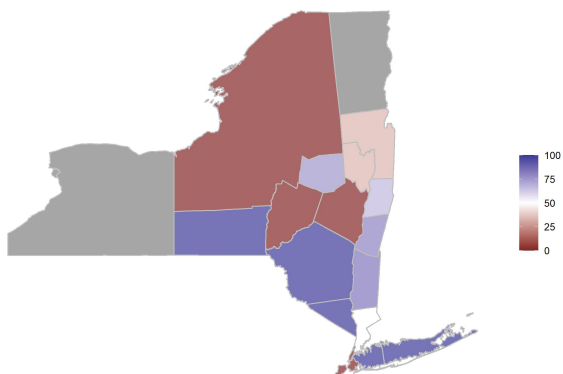
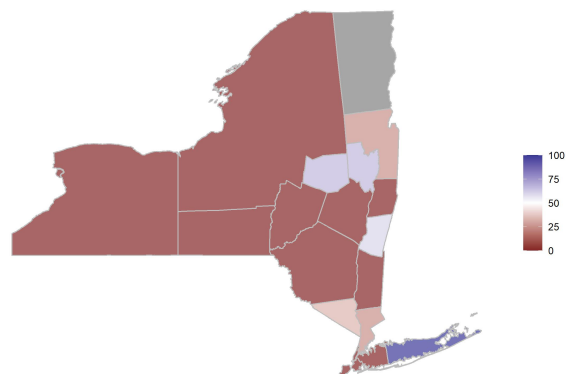


Figure A.1: Party strength by county, assembly elections, 1788-1802

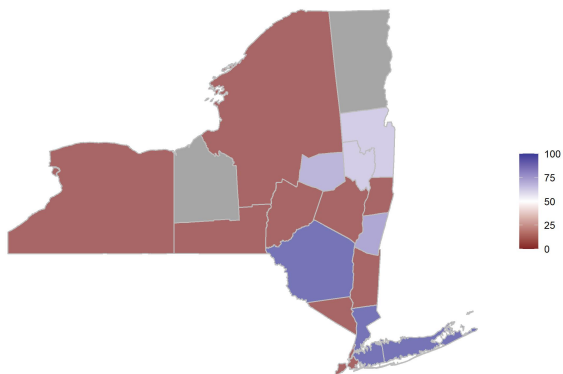
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 16 (1792)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 17 (1793)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 18 (1794)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 19 (1795)

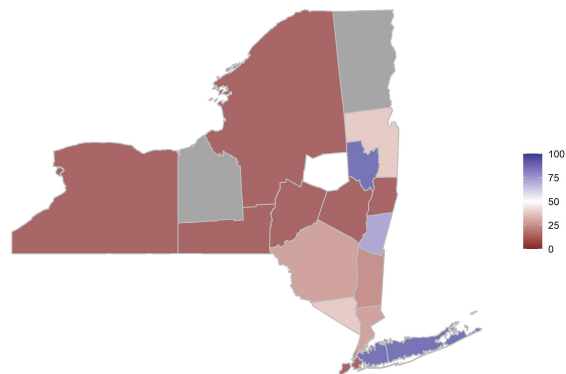
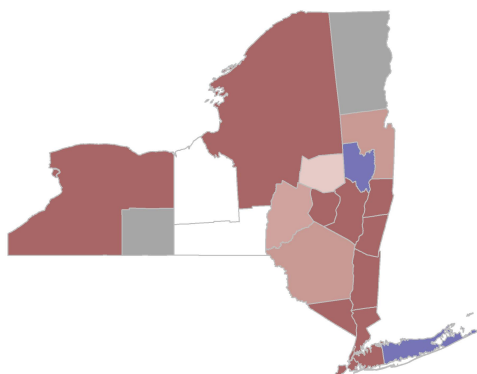
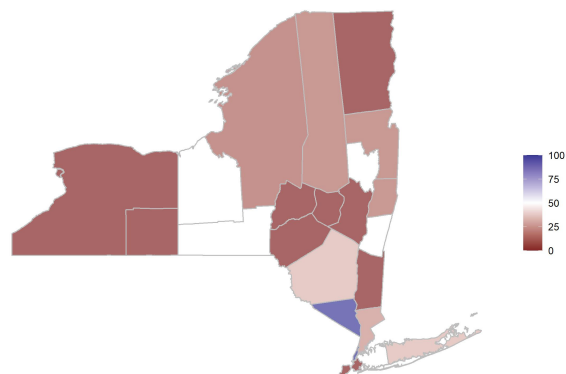


Figure A.1: Party strength by county, assembly elections, 1788-1802 (cont.)

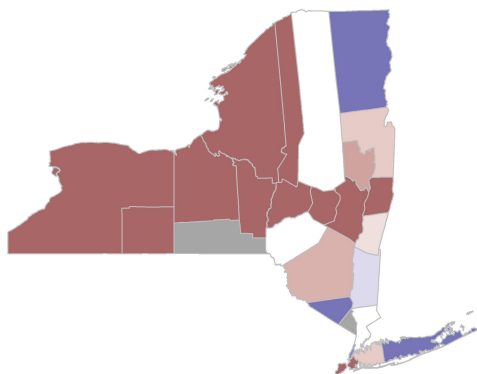
Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 20 (1796)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 21 (1797)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 22 (1798)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 23 (1799)

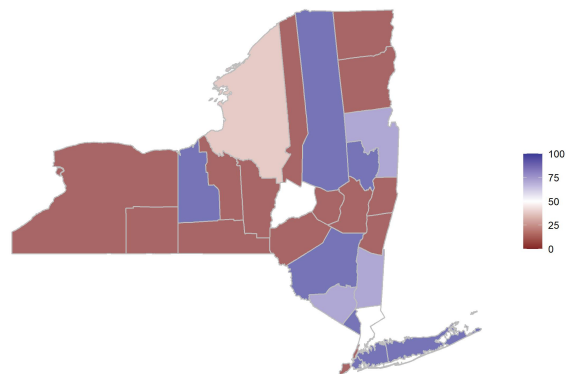
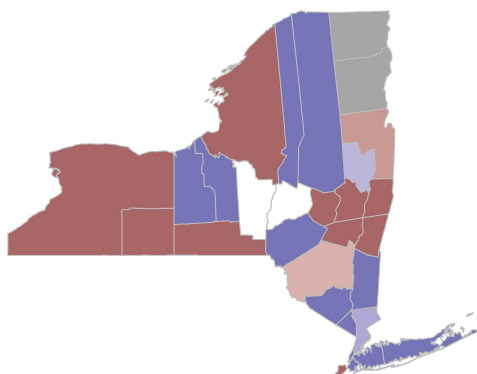
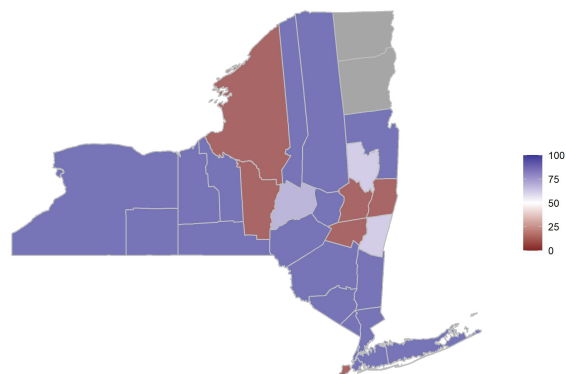


Figure A.1: Party strength by county, assembly elections, 1788-1802 (cont.)

Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 24 (1800)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 25 (1801)



Share of Seats for Republicans
Assembly Elections, session 26 (1802)

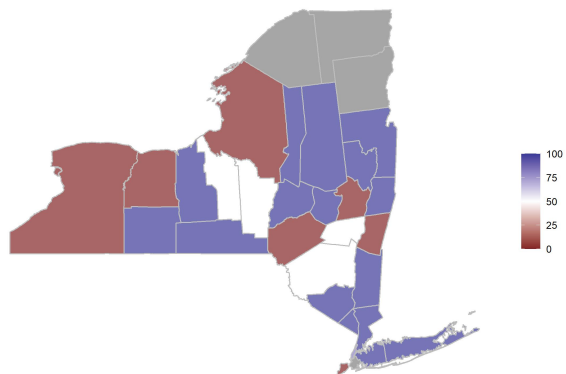
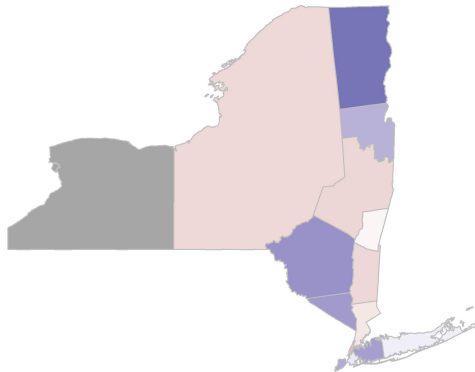


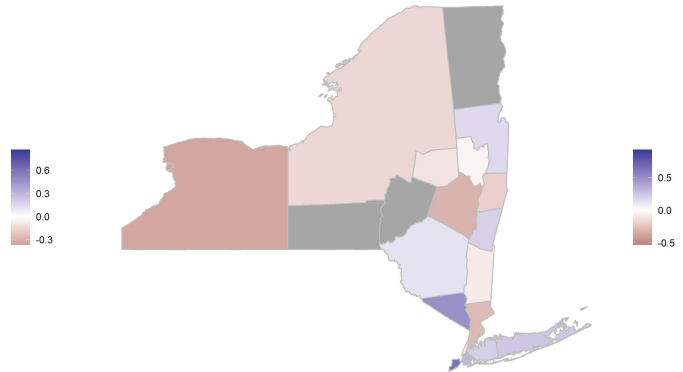
Figure A.1: Party strength by county, assembly elections, 1788-1802 (cont.)

APPENDIX B
ELECTORAL MAPS GOVERNOR

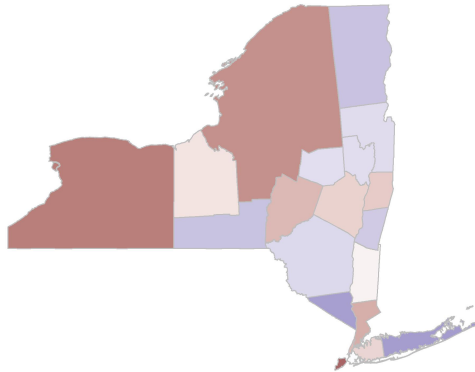
Difference in the Proportion of Votes Received
between Republicans (blue) and Federalists (red)
Gubernatorial Elections, 1789



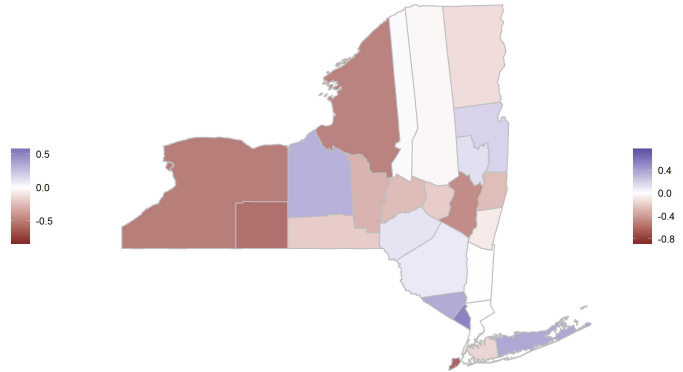
Difference in the Proportion of Votes Received
between Republicans (blue) and Federalists (red)
Gubernatorial Elections, 1792



Difference in the Proportion of Votes Received
between Republicans (blue) and Federalists (red)
Gubernatorial Elections, 1795



Difference in the Proportion of Votes Received
between Republicans (blue) and Federalists (red)
Gubernatorial Elections, 1798



Difference in the Proportion of Votes Received
between Republicans (blue) and Federalists (red)
Gubernatorial Elections, 1801

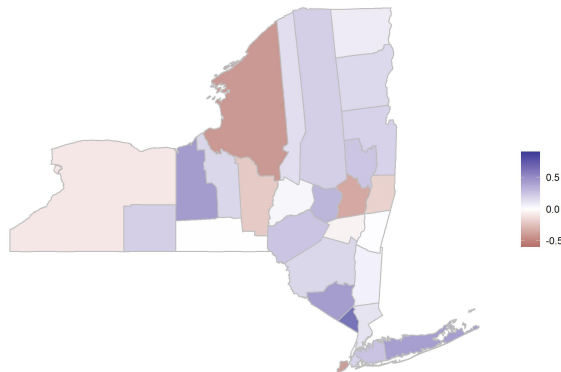


Figure B.1: Party strength by county, gubernatorial elections, 1789-1801

APPENDIX C

W-NOMINATE COORDINATE PLOTS

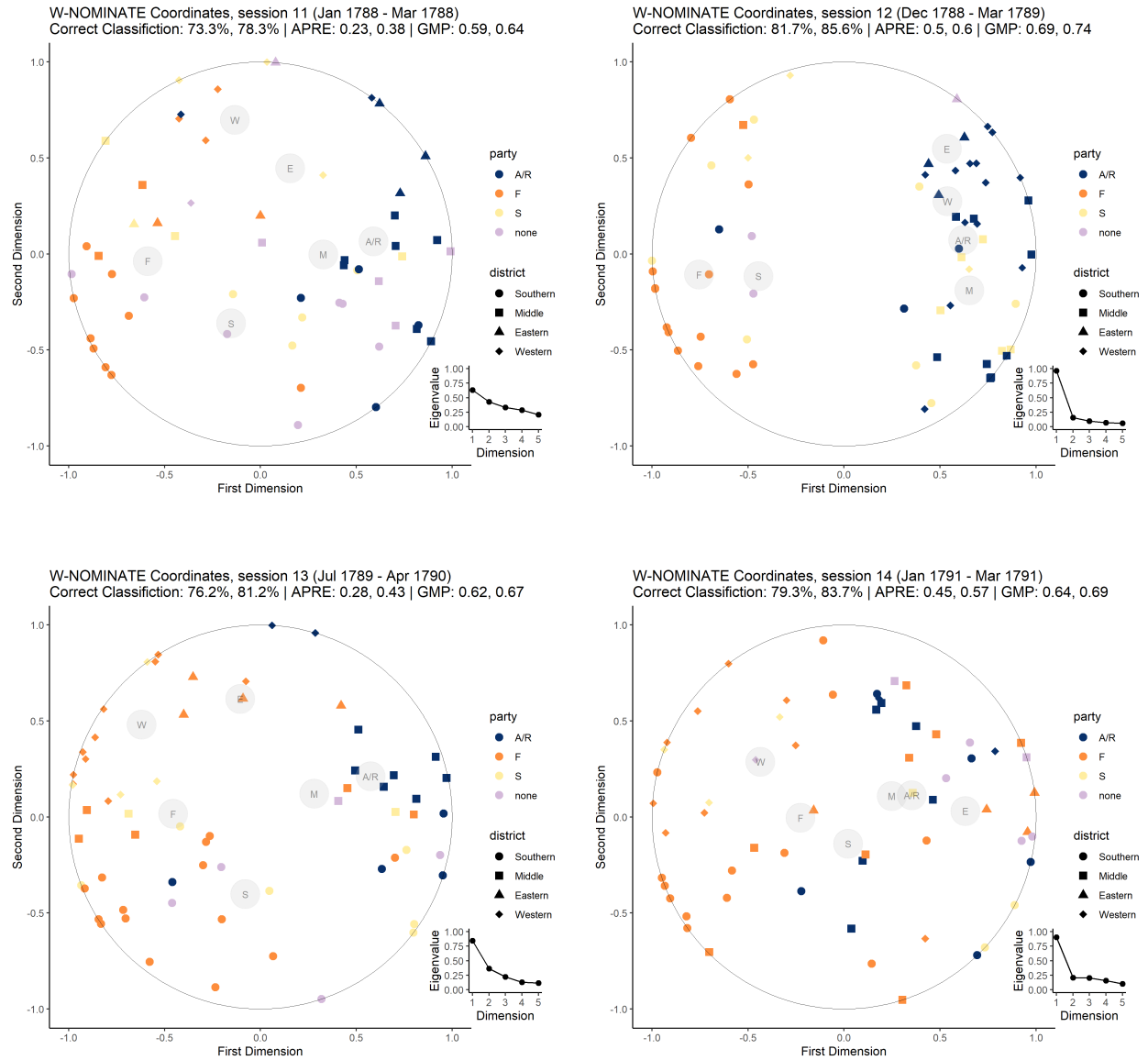


Figure C.1: W-NOMINATE coordinate plots, sessions 11-26

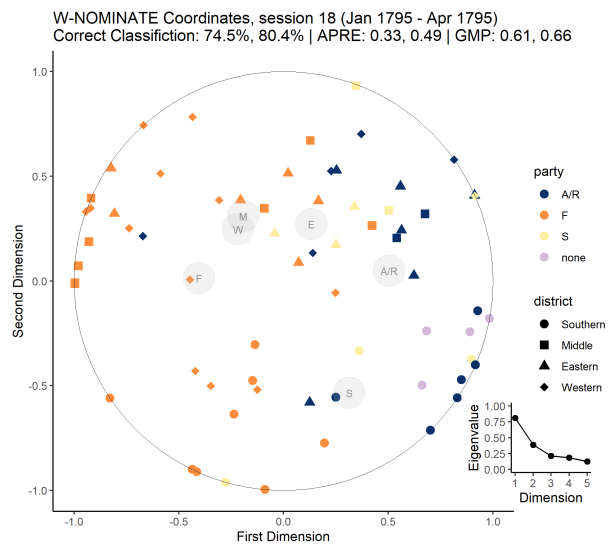
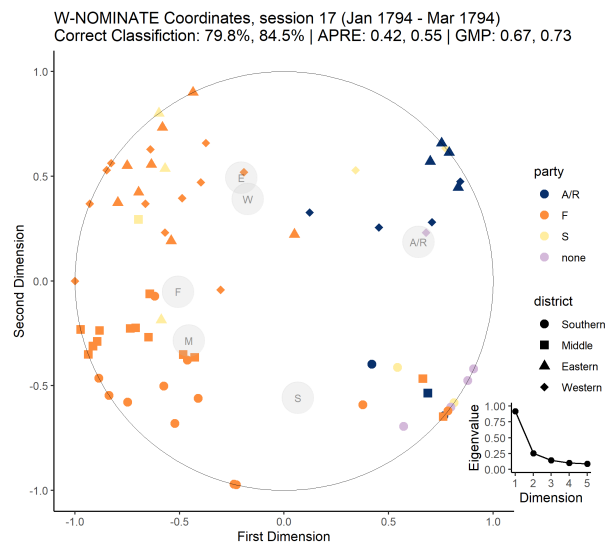
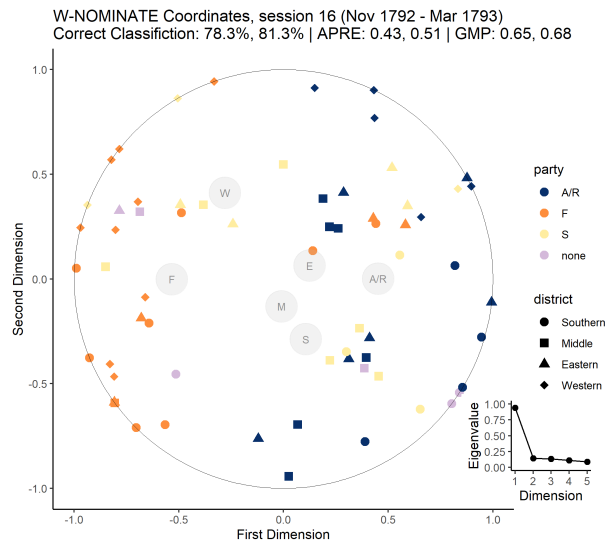
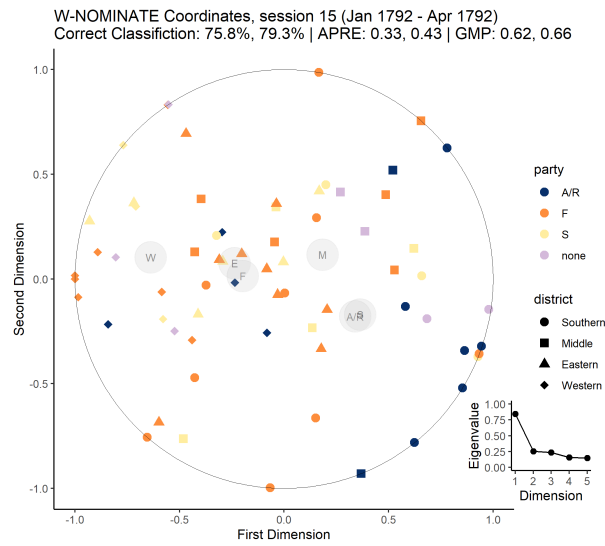


Figure C.1: W-NOMINATE coordinate plots, sessions 11-26 (cont.)

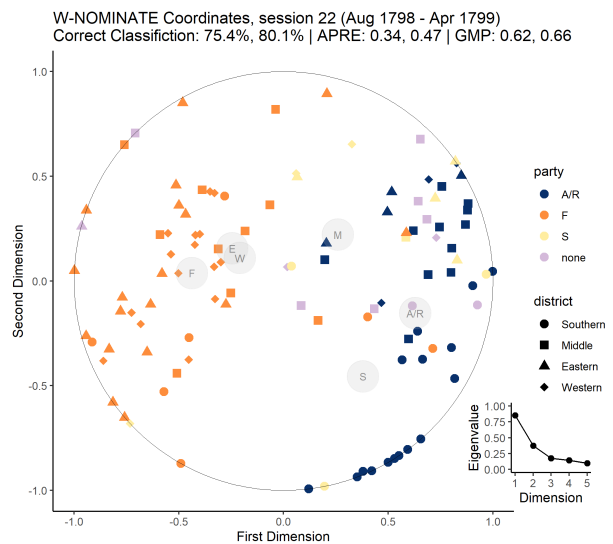
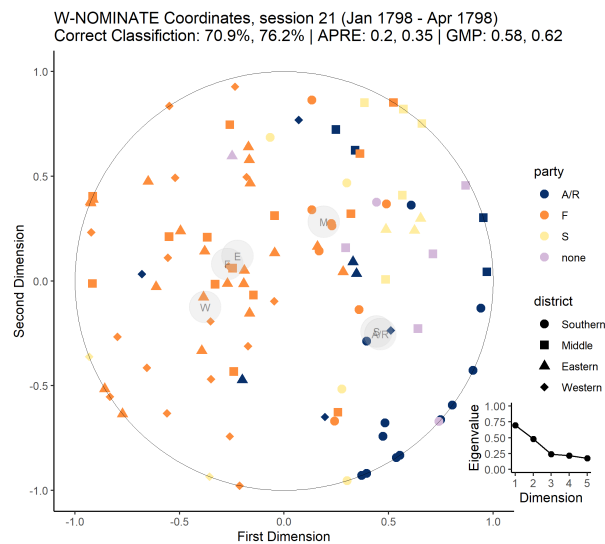
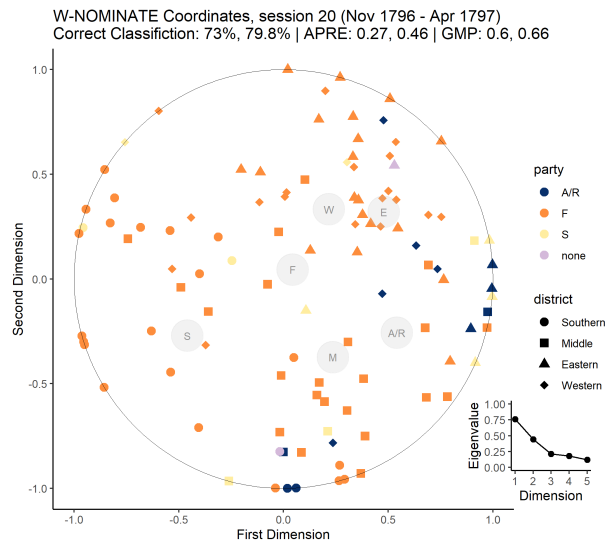
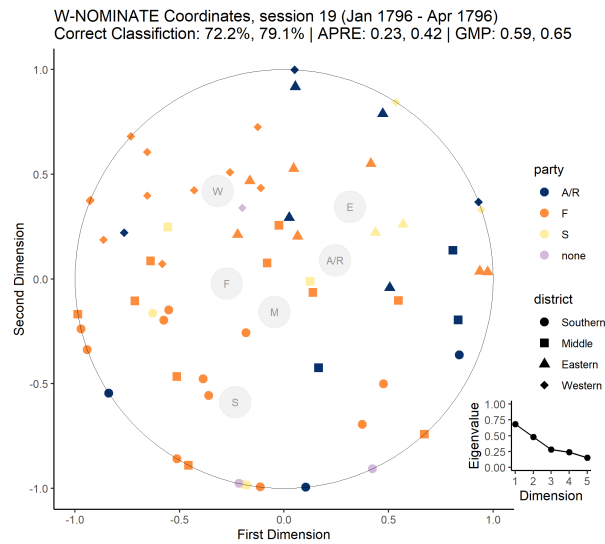


Figure C.1: W-NOMINATE coordinate plots, sessions 11-26 (cont.)

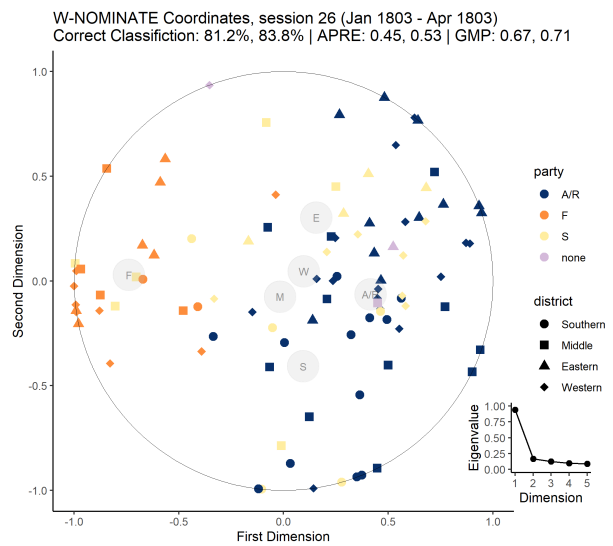
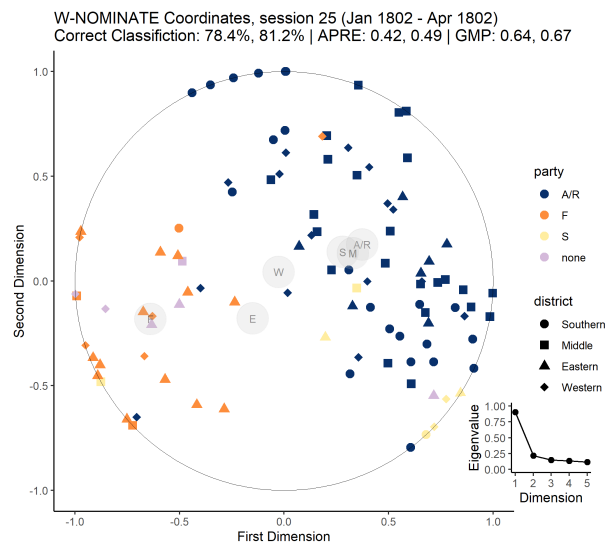
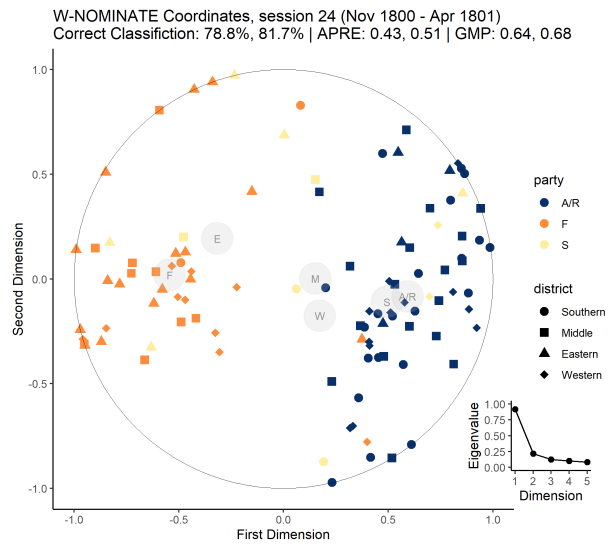
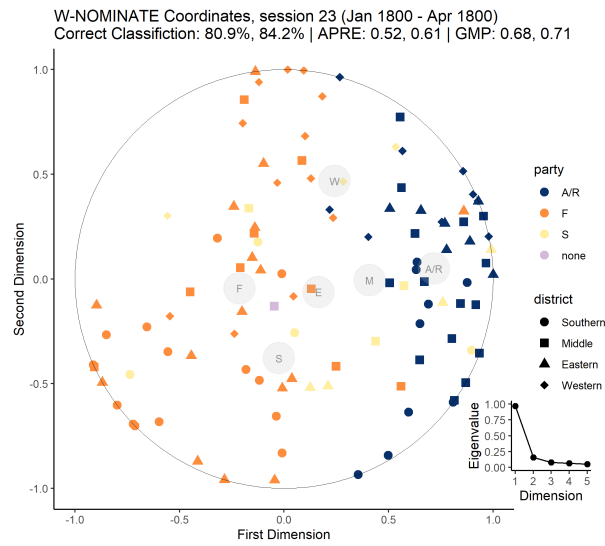


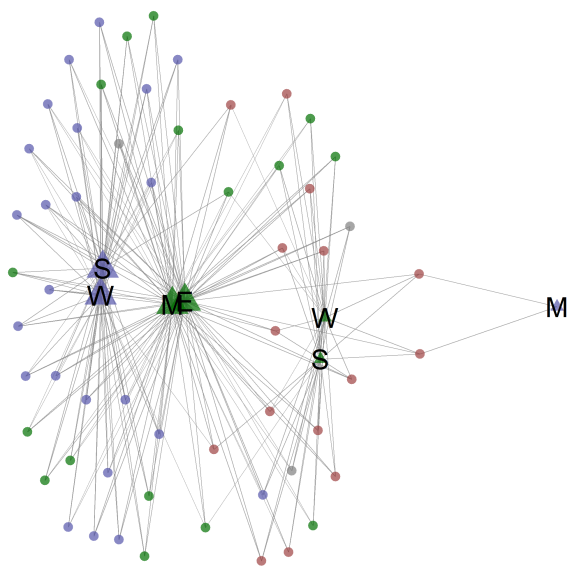
Figure C.1: W-NOMINATE coordinate plots, sessions 11-26 (cont.)

APPENDIX D

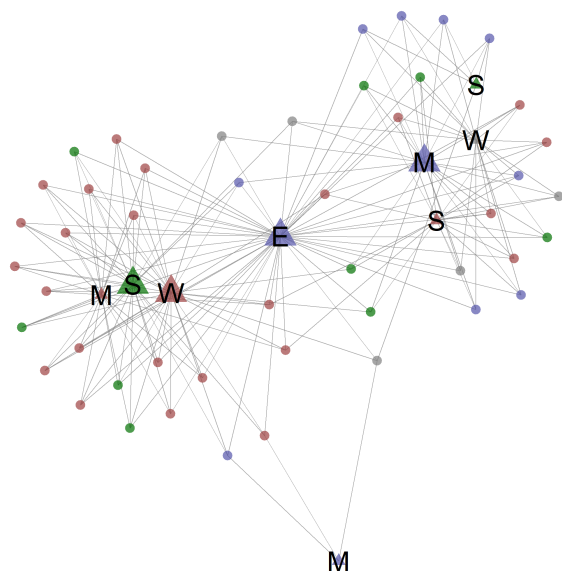
ELECTION NETWORKS FOR THE COUNCIL OF APPOINTMENT

The figures below show two-mode networks between the senators who received votes (triangles) and the assemblymen who voted (circles). Successful candidates are enlarged. Letters stand for the district of the candidate. Node colors represent party (blue = Anti-Federalist/Republican, red = Federalist, green = switcher, gray = none).

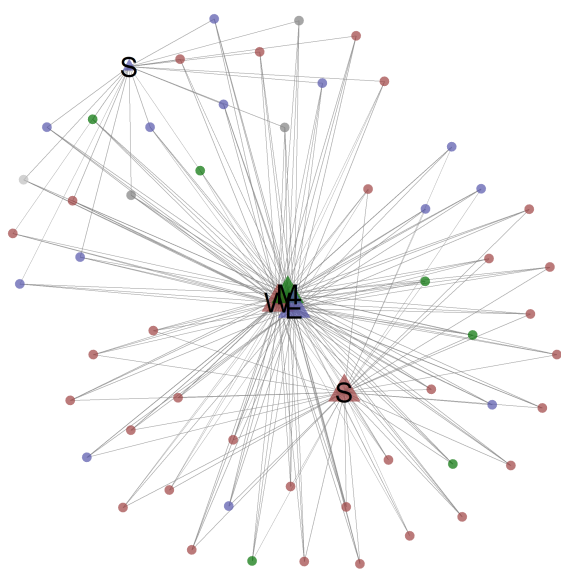
In a highly partisan situation, we would expect to see two disconnected components, such that both parties vote for four senators from their own party and no senator from the opposition.



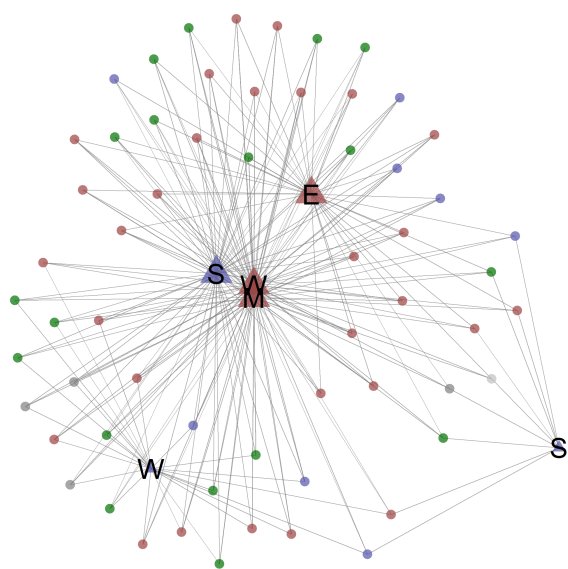
(a) Session 12



(b) Session 13

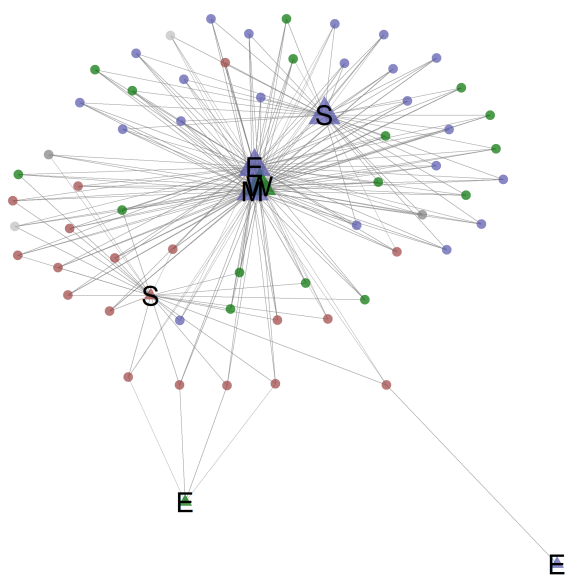


(c) Session 14

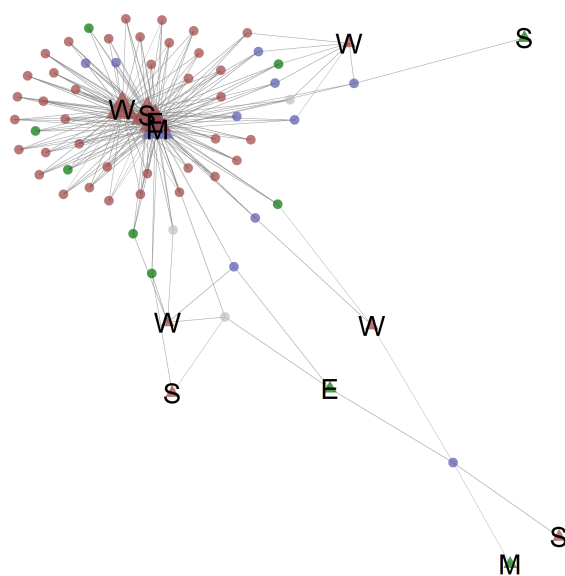


(d) Session 15

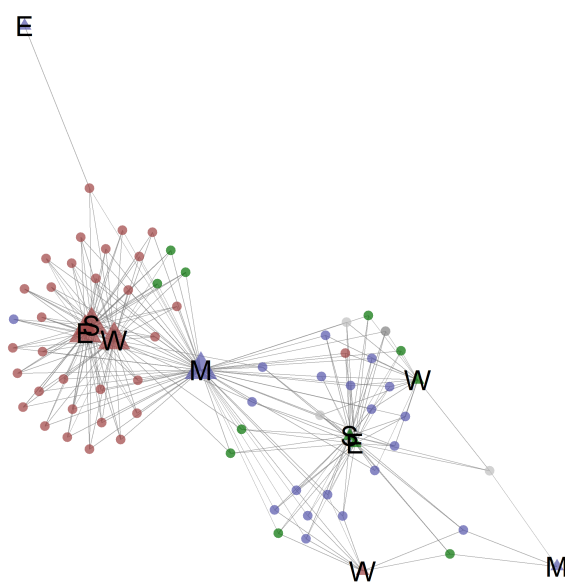
Figure D.1: Election networks



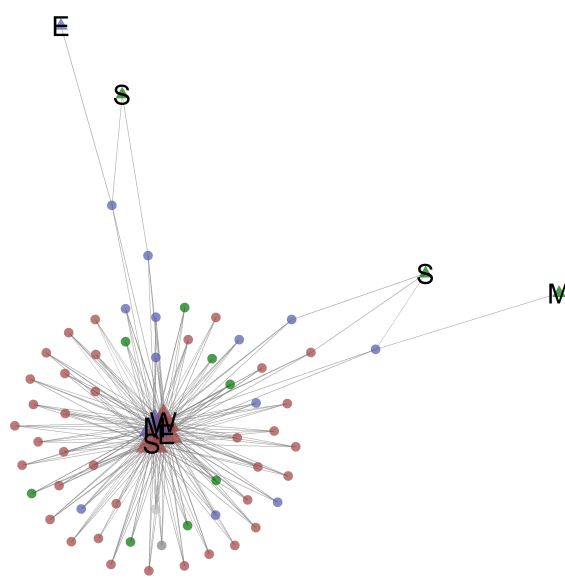
(e) Session 16



(f) Session 17

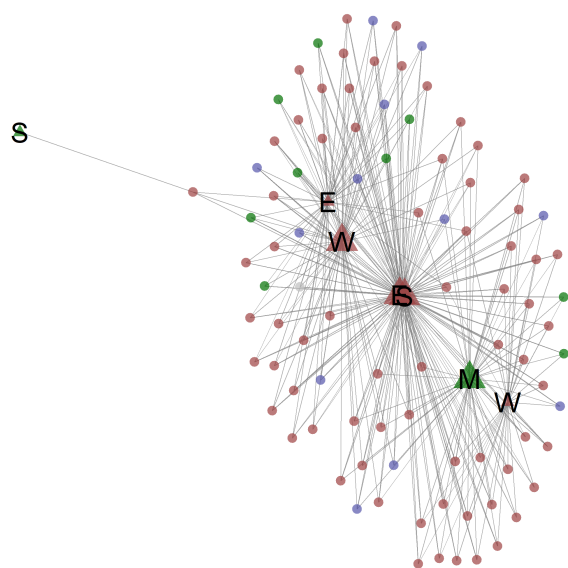


(g) Session 18

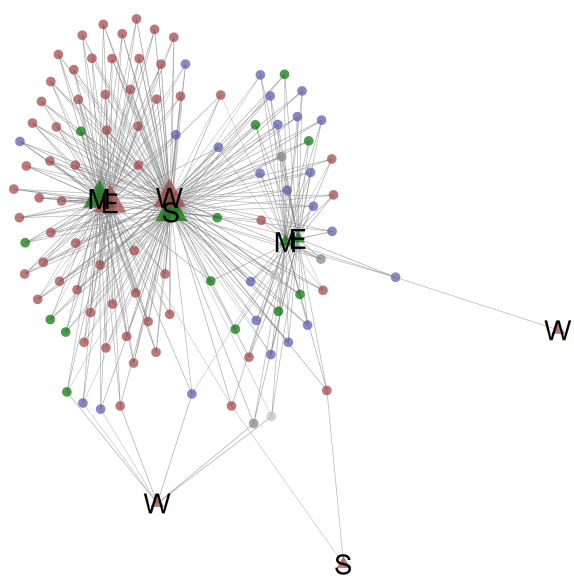


(h) Session 19

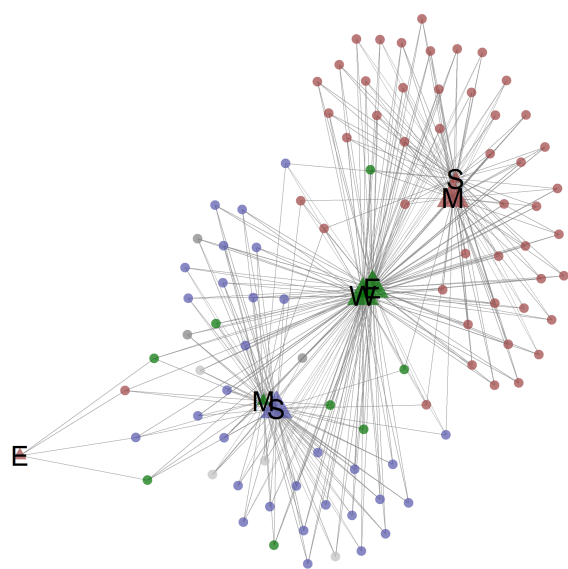
Figure D.1: Election networks (cont.)



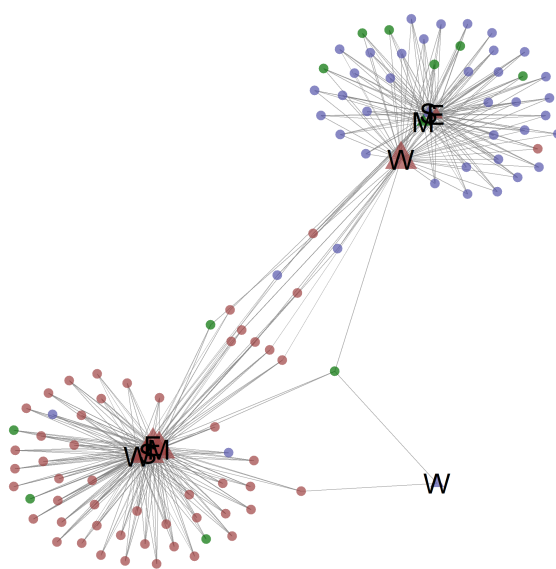
(i) Session 20



(j) Session 21

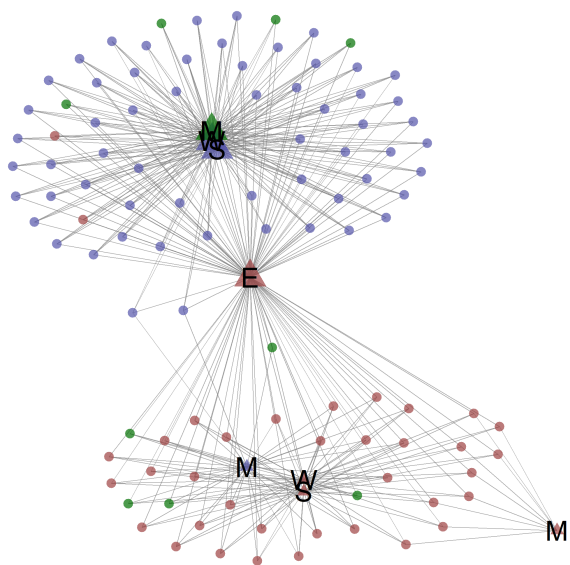


(k) Session 22

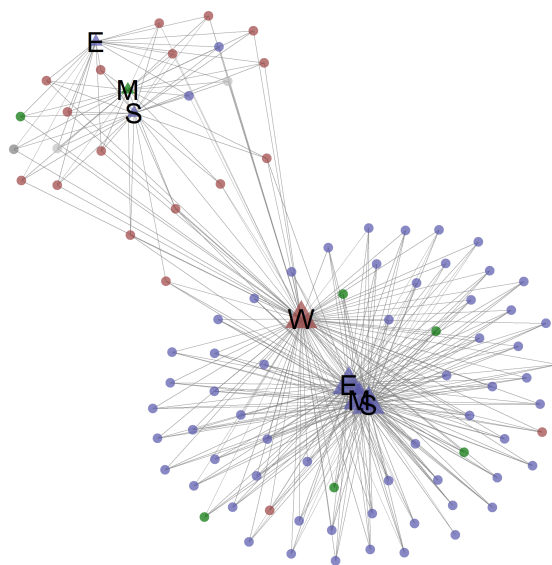


(l) Session 23

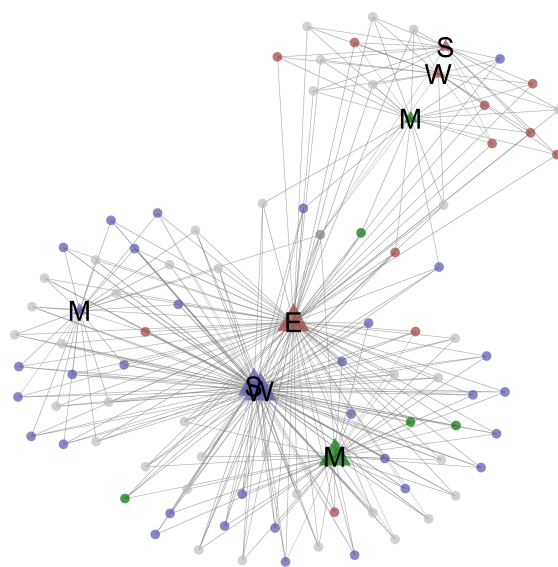
Figure D.1: Election networks (cont.)



(m) Session 24



(n) Session 25



(o) Session 26

Figure D.1: Election networks (cont.)

APPENDIX E

HEATMAPS

For readers who prefer to print the dissertation in black and white, this appendix replicates figures 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.8, and 7.9 from chapter 7. Instead of using red for positive values and blue for negative values, here I use only one color to represent the magnitude of the value. Positive values are indicated by a “+” in the cell; cells without a “+” show negative values.

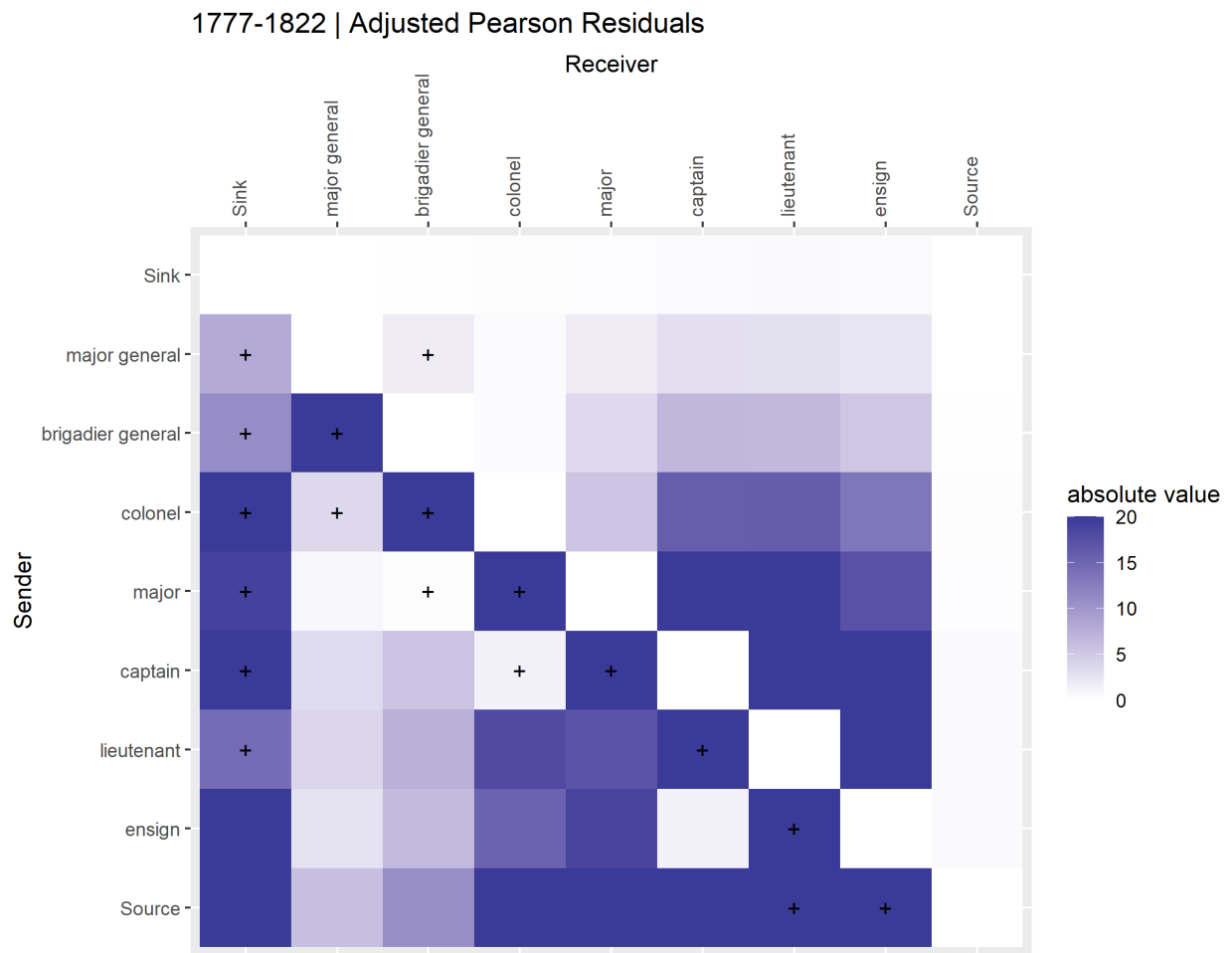


Figure E.1: Adjusted Pearson residuals for field military offices, 1777-1822 (corresponds to figure 7.2)

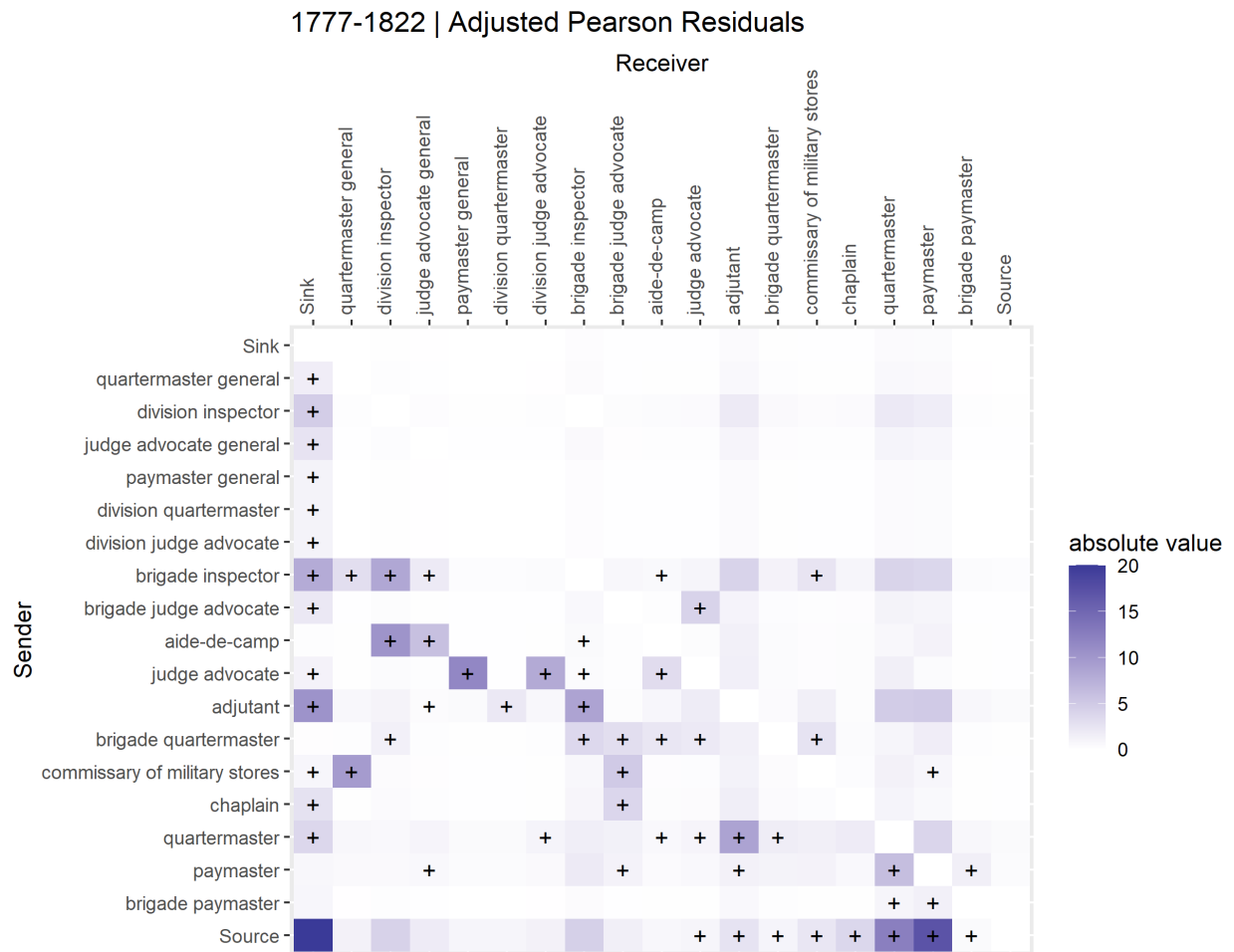


Figure E.2: Adjusted Pearson residuals for staff military offices, 1777-1822 (corresponds to figure 7.3)

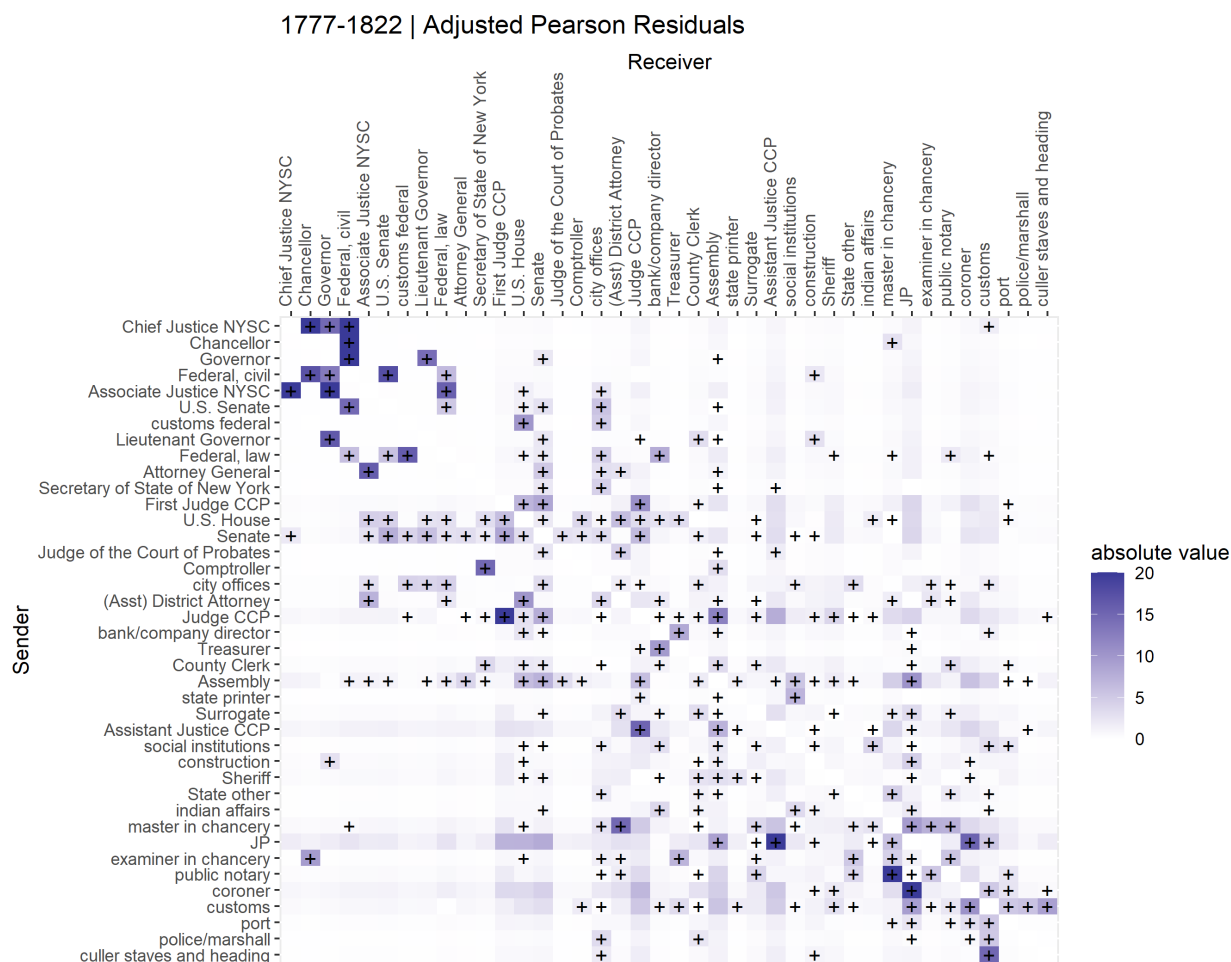


Figure E.3: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1777-1822 (corresponds to figure 7.4)

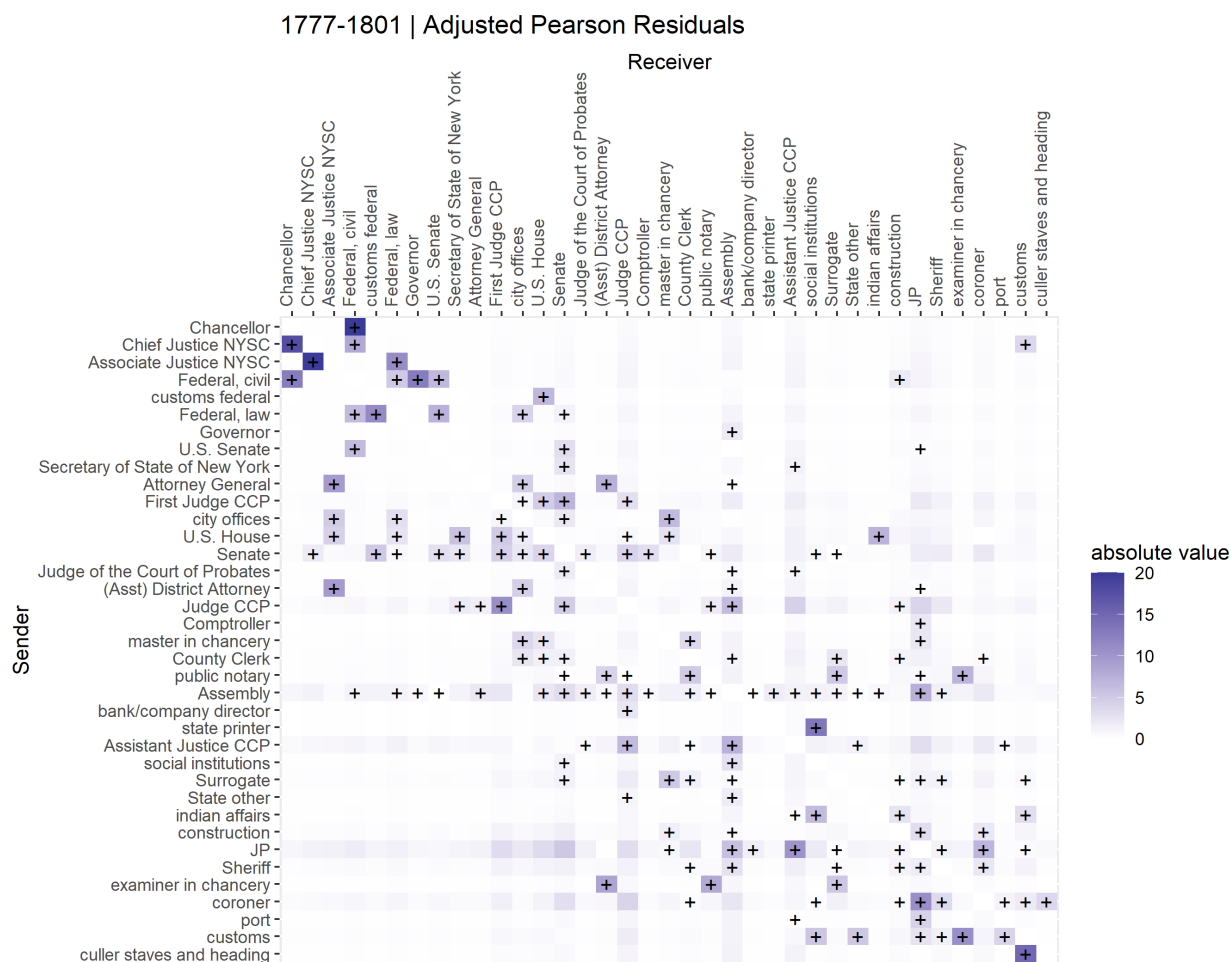


Figure E.4: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1777-1801 (corresponds to figure 7.8)

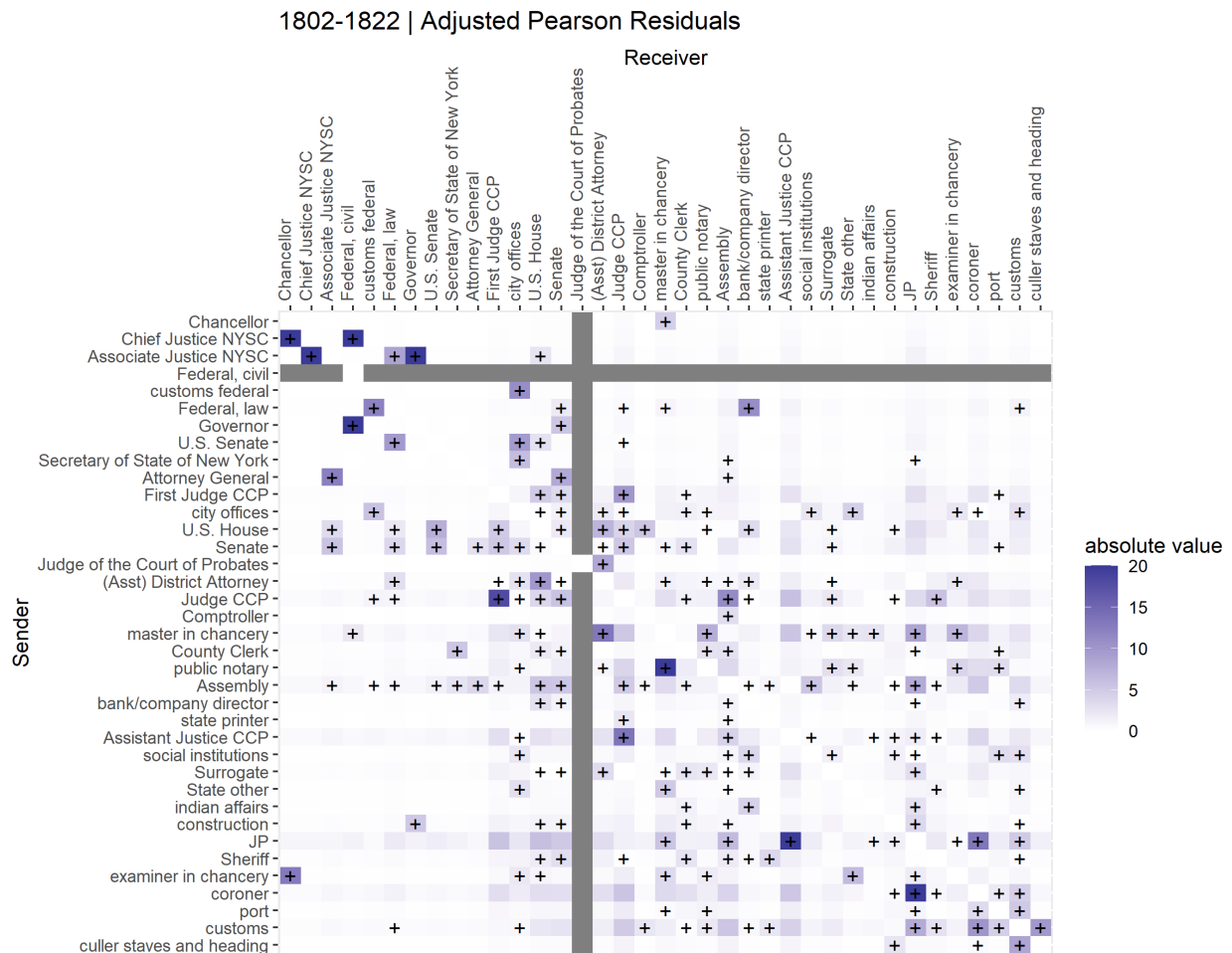


Figure E.5: Adjusted Pearson residuals for civil offices, 1802-1822 (corresponds to figure 7.9)