Does a Hispanic Political Region of South Texas Exist? An Electoral Analysis of U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952 to 2008 in the State of Texas

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Abstract

Recent population growth of Hispanics in the United States has pushed Hispanics above blacks as the largest minority population. As a result, politicians have expanded their campaign strategies to attract this growing electorate. Unfortunately, literature concerning the voting patterns of Hispanics is limited by the use of survey data that is hampered by group identification problems and survey errors. These results have often attached common political beliefs to an otherwise ethnically and geographically diverse Hispanic population. While no universally accepted delineation of a South Texas Region exists, South Texas differs from the rest of Texas historically, culturally, socially, and economically. As this paper indicates, a regional scale analysis of South Texas identifies that the largely Hispanic South Texas Region displays differing voting patterns compared to other Texas counties outside of the region when analyzing presidential elections from 1952 to 2008. In areas with higher proportions of Hispanics, Democratic support was higher and voter turnout was lower than in counties with higher proportions of whites. Therefore, indicating that South Texas can also be identified as a distinct political region.

Keywords: Electoral Geography, Hispanics, Texas, Quantitative Analysis.

The most identifiable cultural constructs of South Texas are attributed to the influence of Hispanics throughout the area. While no universally accepted delineation of a South Texas Hispanic Region exists, numerous studies have identified the counties in close proximity to the Mexico border greatly differ from the rest of Texas historically, culturally, socially, and economically (Meinig 1969; Nostrand 1970; 1980; 1992; Jordan et al. 1984; Arreola 2002). Yet, few studies have attempted to spatially differentiate South Texas as a distinct electoral region compared to the rest of state. Some studies indicate that within the U.S. and within individual states, history, culture, and economics contribute to the identification of electoral regions (Archer 1988; Archer &

Shelley 1986; Archer et al. 1985; Archer 1985; Archer and Taylor 1981; Watrell 2001). Therefore, by identifying South Texas as a distinct Hispanic region, comparisons of political behavior by residents of the region with the rest of the State of Texas should present the basis for achieving a sound geographic understanding of voting behavior among South Texas voters.

Defining a Current South Texas Hispanic Cultural Region

Geographers are interested in the spatial interactions between places. By finding similarities and differences between spatial units, geographers have often defined areas in terms of regions. This practice has been common place in the study of geography over the past fifty years. Where regions do not adhere closely to political borders, resulting regional constructs have and continue to be met with controversy. Changing histories, peoples, ideologies, physical climates, and economics, to name a few, all play into what makes one region unique in comparison to another. In the context of this paper, my assertion is that a cultural and political region in South Texas exists based on a number of factors including history, people, economics, and especially politics.

The historical underpinning of South Texas is deeply rooted in the region's geographic situation between a Spanish speaking Mexico to the South and an Anglo population to the North. As Texas progressed from a Spanish colony to a Mexican state to an independent nation to the twenty-eighth state in the United States, the unifying constant in South Texas has been the presence of a large Hispanic population base. Historically, Tejanos (Texans of historic Mexican decent) made up the bulk of Hispanic populations throughout South Texas. As immigration increased from Central America, mainly Mexico, during the twentieth century South Texas is now a mixture of primarily Tejano and Mexican populations. The result of this mixture has created a unique cultural setting in Southern Texas.

Combining both cultural and environment attributes a number of geographers have attempted to identify a definitive Hispanic region in South Texas (Meinig 1969; Nostrand 1970; 1980; 1992; Jordan et al. 1984; Arreola 2002). The most recent study by Daniel Arreola (2002) provided a sound definition of the region by identifying distinct social identities through a shared history, as well as through language, food, music, and architecture. The South Texas region selected for this study combines much of this earlier research (see Figure 1).

Starting from west moving to east, the harsh physical environment west of Val Verde County acted as a natural barrier for communication. Therefore, early development of the region was focused along the Rio Grande River from Val Verde County east to Cameron County along the Gulf of Mexico. Later development followed the waters of the Nueces and San Antonio Rivers to the north. Bexar County marks the northern most county in the region. While containing the largest urban center, San Antonio, and the largest white population of all the counties in South Texas, Bexar County was historically and con-

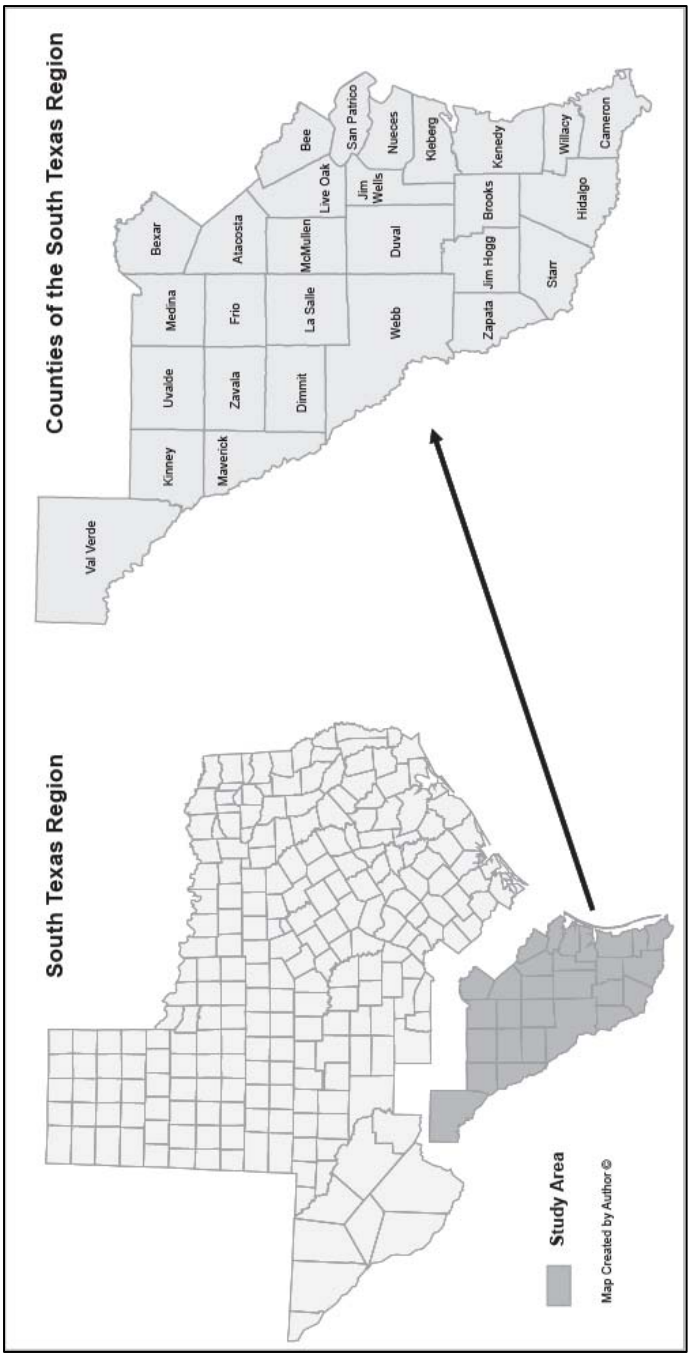

Figure 1. South Texas region.

tinues to be vital to the economic, social, and political development of this region as a whole. Daniel Arreola explains, San Antonio is, ". . . a principal north-south route that linked the prairies and plains of north-central Texas and their extension to the Great Lakes with the central plateau of Mexico via the Rio Grande embayment" (1987, 20). This spatial link has placed Bexar County as a social and economic gateway for the South Texas Region to the rest of the state.

Based on the 2000 Census, Figure 2 shows the South Texas Region contains a greater percentage of Hispanics than compared to the rest of the state. While the U.S. Census does not consider Hispanic as a racial category, it has, since 1980, provided respondents the opportunity to categorize themselves as Hispanic. In turn, respondents are then asked to identify their country of origin. Those claiming no country of origin, such as Tejanos or Hispanos, typically choose "Other Spanish" (Choldin 1986). In this region, all counties have total populations greater than fifty percent Hispanic. The smallest Hispanic population proportion is found in Kinney County (50.5%), with the largest Hispanic population proportion found in Starr County (97%). In terms of ethnic origin, Figure 2 also indicates that all counties in the South Texas Region, with the exception of Duval, have a majority population of Hispanics of Mexican background (U.S. Census 2006). Based on the 2000 Census, a greater part of Duval County Hispanics claim to be "Other Spanish," most likely regarding themselves as Tejano.

Figure 3 shows the percentage change in Hispanic population for Texas counties from 1980 to 2000. In comparison to the rest of the state, only four counties in the study region (Val Verde, Zapata, Kleberg, and Atascosa) had increases in Hispanic population greater than nine percent, while four counties (Kinney, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, and McMullen) saw percentage decreases in their Hispanic populations. For the region as a whole, Hispanic populations grew, on average, between 1980 and 2000 by five percent, compared with seven and a half percent for the rest of Texas. Figure 4 depicts total population growth for the State of Texas. As can be seen, the highest percentage growth occurred around the Dallas area, east central Texas, the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio, and along the Rio Grande Valley in the South Texas Region.

The socio-economic characteristics of many Hispanics in the United States mirror those of most minority groups. In general, Hispanic populations tend to be younger, poorer, and less educated than their white counterparts. In addition, Hispanic populations are more likely to have been born outside the United States and to have the largest percentages of persons either awaiting U.S. citizenship or serving as guest workers. Examination of a variety of socio-economic variables from 2000 U.S. Census illustrates that South Texas Hispanics are generally younger, poorer, and less educated than other Texans.

As with other Hispanic populations in the United States, South Texas Hispanics on average have lower educational attainment rates compared to white populations. Table 1 compares educational attainment between the two sub-

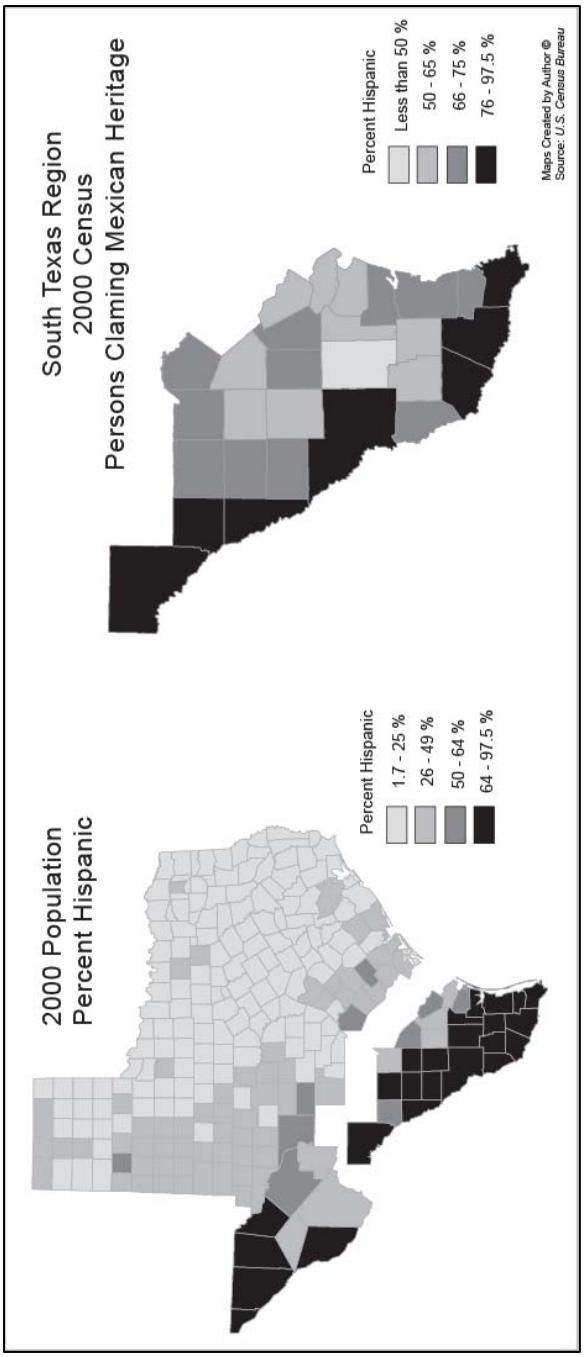

Figure 2. Texas Hispanic populations and South Texas Mexican populations, 2000 Census.

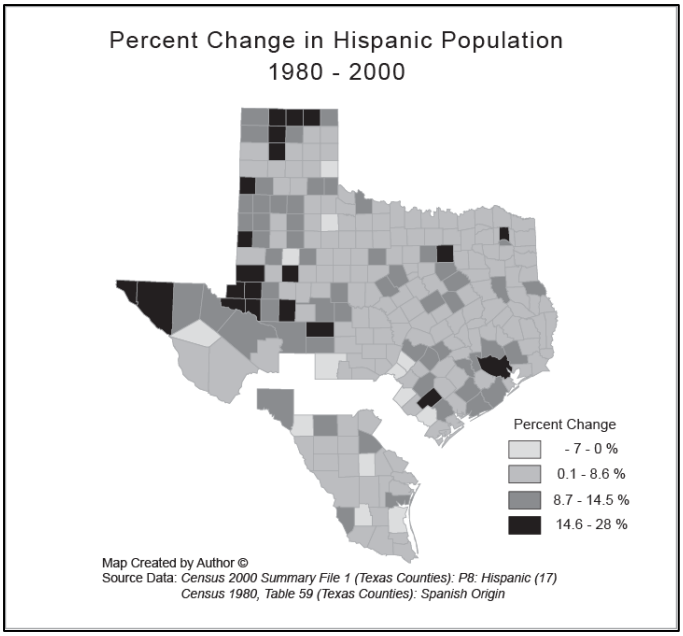

Figure 3. Percent change in Hispanic population for Texas counties, 1980 – 2000.

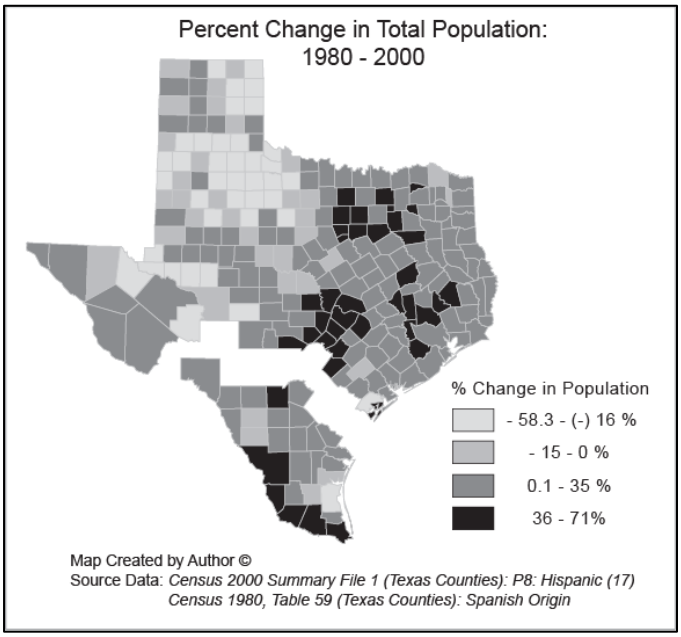

Figure 4. Percent change in total population for Texas Counties 1980 – 2000.

Table 1. Mean educational attainment for Whites and Hispanics 25 years and older.

	9th Grade Education Only		High School Diploma Only		Bachelors Degree Only	
	+White Population	*Hispanic Population	+White Population	*Hispanic Population	+White Population	*Hispanic Population
Entire State	10.8%	37.7%	31.3%	24.2%	11.8%	3.3%
South Texas Region	22.9%	33.1%	26.0%	24.7%	9.1%	4.4%
Rest of Texas	9.4%	38.3%	31.8%	24.2%	12.1%	3.1%

+Source: *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (Texas Counties): P148A*
*Source: *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (Texas Counties): P148H*

regions and the entire state for both Hispanic and white populations of Texas by calculating the county-level mean for populations twenty-five and older. These tables indicate the South Texas Region has lower education levels for both groups, but overall, Hispanic education levels are far behind whites in all areas of Texas. Yet, comparing Hispanics, those in the South Texas Region outperform other Hispanics throughout the state.

Lower education rates generally equate to lower economic levels. This holds true in South Texas. The average per capita income throughout the South Texas region was $12,375, compared to $16,458 for the rest of Texas. While many factors contribute to this wage difference, important explanatory factors include low education rates, migration, and a large supply of agriculturally related employment (Arreola, 2002). Also impacting income levels are the concentration of Hispanics in large urban settings. Large cities such as San Antonio, Brownsville, and McAllen attract large clusters of poor legal and undocumented immigrants looking for refuge with family and friends. Therefore, nearly sixty-seven percent of South Texas' population lives in urban areas, compared to forty-two percent outside of the region. Over twelve percent of South Texas' population was born outside of the United States and of that, nearly eight percent are still awaiting citizenship. Those awaiting citizenship can be granted visas for a number of reasons or given work permits to be in the United States (2000 Census, Urban and Foreign Born). Much of the agriculture of the Rio Grande Valley is supported by legal or undocumented Hispanic labor. In comparison, the foreign born population of the counties outside of the region is six and a half percent, with a little over four percent of that population comprised of non-citizens.

While the above analysis clearly illustrates a distinct cultural, social, and economically Hispanic South Texas Region, few attempts have been made at identifying a noticeable South Texas political region. The remaining discussions in this paper will focus on the politically diverse spatial patterns present in Texas.

South Texas Political History

Disenfranchised from most political activities, many Hispanic's political rights in Texas from the 1880s to the 1960s fell somewhere between whites and blacks, though most faced similar obstacles as blacks. Despite the fact that Hispanics greatly outnumbered whites in the region, wealthy landowning Anglos ran South Texas politics in ways similar to the strong- handed "Machine" systems of the Northeast. Since before the Civil War, Texas legislators found common ground with other pro-slavery Democrats in the Deep South. When slavery was banned, Texas Democrats devised a number of ways to disfranchise Mexican voters and abolish black participation. In 1902 Texas passed a poll tax as a qualification for voting. The tax ranged from $1.50 to $1.75, depending whether a county wanted to levy an optional $0.25. One dollar of the tax supported public schools, $0.50 went to the state's general revenue, and the optional $0.25 went to county funds Benton (1972) writes, "The primary purpose of requiring the poll tax as a precondition for the privilege of voting was the desire to disfranchise the black, Mexican, and poor white supporters of the Populist party" (60).

In 1918 a further law was passed that eliminated interpreters at the voting polls and stated, ". . . that no naturalized citizen could receive assistance from the election judge unless they had been citizens for twenty-one years" (Montejano 1987, 143). Political machines in South Texas would typically buy Mexican votes with whiskey, money, clothes, and dances. The voters would then be corralled and marched to polls at the appropriate time (Taylor 1930). Of note, Lyndon Johnson participated in such as activities as a young campaign organizer for Maury Maverick in the 1930s (Caro 1982).

While mistrust of Hispanics toward whites in Texas continued, the overall political flavor of the state began to slowly change. Still a strong Democratic state after World War II, the party initiated a slow shift between "liberal" Democrats and "conservative" Democrats in 1948. V.O. Key noted the 1948 Democratic Convention in Dallas split the party into either camp. Liberals outnumbered conservatives leading the nomination of Lyndon Johnson to the Senate as well as the solidifying support of Harry Truman for President. Those "Dixiecrats" opposing Johnson's and Truman's nominations were subsequently ejected from the convention and replaced with electors favoring liberal policies. The divide between liberal and conservative Democrats and later Republicans and Democrats first took a rural divide and eventually concluded in a racial divide, yet support for Democrats continued strong in the South Texas Region (Key 1949).

Even though Hispanics' views toward Democrats were clouded from past treatment, the election of new liberal Democrats to positions of significant power, like Lyndon Johnson, were seen as positives for Hispanic voters (Campbell 2003). Johnson, having grown up in the Hill Country north of San Antonio, had long known the importance of the Hispanic vote. As a candidate for a special Senate election in 1941, Johnson pandered to Hispanic voters in

San Antonio and in many of the counties in Southern Texas (Caro 1982). Though he lost the 1941 election, his subsequent victories and liberal policies appealed to many Hispanic voters in the region. Likewise, South Texas Hispanics gained further strength in 1961, when Henry Gonzalez was elected as the first Hispanic from Texas to the U.S. House of Representatives. Hispanics were further empowered by the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as the nullification of the poll tax in Texas in 1966 (Benton 1972).

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 banned the use of literacy tests as a precursor to vote across the nation. While it gave Hispanics further leeway in political participation, it did not address the language barrier faced by many Hispanics nationwide. Eliminating this problem, an amendment to the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1975 which required the distribution of election information in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. This provided a significant boost to Hispanic voters by increasing their role in the political process.

The shift in the Democratic Party that began in the 1940s came to a head in the 1970s. The biggest surprise came in 1961 with the election of a Republican, John Tower, to the U.S. Senate. Upset with the liberal policies enacted in the 1960s by mainly northern Democrats, Democrats throughout the South and in Texas began reevaluating their party alignment. Before this, the Texas Republican Party was one of patronage rather than a legitimate threat to the Democrats. John Tower ran his campaign promoting conservative values. Tower, standing five foot five, was a powerful speaker who often said, "I'm John Tower, but I don't" (Kingston et al. 1992, 325). After minimal gains in the 1963 State House elections for Republicans, the assassination of Kennedy in 1963 and the subsequent landslide of Johnson in 1964 slowed momentum for the Republican Party. Needless to say, conservative values for both parties began to dominate Texas politics. The 1966 reelection campaign for John Tower placed him against conservative Democrat Waggoner Carr. Liberals along with many Hispanics provided little support for Carr, giving Tower the win. Likewise the 1970 Democratic race for U.S. Senate placed popular former governor and current Senator Ralph Yarborough, a liberal that strongly supported Johnson's domestic agenda, against businessman and conservative Democrat Lloyd Bentsen. While no viable Republican candidate was available, conservative Democrats elected Bentsen fifty-four percent to forty-six. Yarborough's greatest support was found in many urban areas as well as in the South Texas Region (Lamis 1988).

V.O. Key defined critical elections as ones, ". . . in which voters are, at least from impressionistic evidence, unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of electoral involvement is relatively quite high, and in which the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate . . . perhaps the truly differentiating characteristic of this sort of election, the realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections

seems to persist form several succeeding elections" (1955, 4). In Texas, critical elections for a majority of offices occurred between 1961 and 1980, but began with the election of John Tower in the 1961. Former white Democrats, mainly upset with Civil Rights legislation, became attracted to conservative ideals leading to a switch of conservative Democrats to Republicans throughout much of the South and especially in Texas. Thus, a pattern emerged in the state with a Democratic South Texas and a mainly Republican rest of the state. This pattern continues today.

Methodology

This article will examine the voting behavior of the persons who reside in the earlier defined South Texas Region. While the region has been historically and culturally defined, a greater analysis of the voting behavior is needed. The remaining pages of the study will be devoted to examining the voting behavior of Texas counties for all presidential elections from 1952 to 2008. These elections were selected for the study because they are all elections common to all counties in Texas. The reasoning for starting in 1952 is based on historical evidence that Hispanics began to take control of their own political life outside the control of the Anglo political machines during this time period in Texas. Even though the poll tax and other legal barriers still existed, the empowerment of Hispanics began in the 1950s and continually grew each decade thereafter. It should be noted, that due to inconsistent voting data, tiny Loving County was eliminated from all aspects of this study.

Analysis for each office used data for party preference and voter turnout. All numbers for party preference, unless otherwise noted, were calculated as the percent Democratic vote. All election data came from the series *America Votes*, *The Political History of Texas*, and David Leip's *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections.* Total votes were tabulated and divided into total Democratic vote for each county. Voter turnout numbers were based on two sets of numbers. For any election taking place during a Census year, populations for all citizens eighteen and older were tabulated. Total votes were then divided by the voting age population to calculate voter turnout. For elections between Censuses, voting age populations were calculated using an Intercensal Constant-Rate Interpolated Estimate. This method uses figures from two decade counts to derive the rate of change and then uses a stand continuous-growth-rate model formula (Plane & Rogerson 1994, 133).

A T-mode factor analysis will used to identify electoral epochs and voting trends. The T-mode analysis will be run for all presidential elections from 1952 to 2004 for the entire state of Texas, the South Texas Region, and the counties outside of the South Texas Region for comparison purposes using percent Democratic vote for the variable of analysis. T-Mode factor analysis involves understanding correlations of elections over counties and time, which in turn will group elections together on the basis of similar geography and partisan support (Shelley & Archer 1989). The results should indicate if Hispanic

voting epochs and patterns differ from other parts of Texas or from the state as a whole.

Furthermore, to identify electoral regions among all the elections in Texas, an S-mode factor analysis will be conducted. S-mode factor analysis, also known as "space mode" factor analysis, involves relationships among observational units over time. Specifically, S-mode factor analysis ". . . groups areas under investigation into electoral regions by analyzing matrices of correlations among areas over elections. Each region consists of places with similar electoral trajectories over time" (Shelley et al. 1996, 282 – 283).

The use of a spatial autocorrelation correction procedure is important in the study of elections because electoral data often are spatially clustered. If a high enough level of spatial autocorrelation is detected, the use of a spatial lag model typically improves upon traditional Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) results. These results can then be used to understand the impacts of given variables on election patterns throughout the entire state of Texas, the South Texas Region, and the remaining counties of the state.

Due to the fact this data is highly influenced by spatial autocorrelation, spatial regression analysis will be completed. The spatial regression model used is called the Maximum Likelihood Spatial Lag Model. The Spatial Lag Model provides a spatial weight for the dependent variable that can be used to "clean up" the results of the OLS analysis. A spatial lag of a specified variable is computed by taking the weighted average of surrounding polygons. For example: a census with three neighboring tracts that had ten, fifteen, and twenty percent blacks would have a spatial lag of fifteen percent. This creates a row-standardized spatial weights matrix that represents the average rate of each neighboring tract. Specifically, a first order rook continuity spatial weight matrix was selected for this analysis. Rook contiguity selects weights for polygons only with common borders to define adjacency. Rook continuity accounts for all neighbors (Anselin 2005).

Spatial Lag will also be used to indicate the best predictor for Democratic voting for the entire state, the South Texas Region, and the counties outside the region. The dependent variable is the average percent Democratic vote from the date of realignment based on the particular office from the findings of the T -mode factor analysis. The independent variables include the 2000 Hispanic population from the U.S. Census, and the percent average voter turnout over the same time period. Results indicate whether Hispanic populations have an impact on Democratic support and if Hispanic populations indicate lower voter turnout. If Hispanics are prone to lower voter turnout and Democratic support, this should be best indicated by differences in voter behavior between the South Texas Region and the rest of the state. Furthermore, the multiple regression results should indicate if variations in voting behavior are present between the elections.

Finally, a brief description of the 2008 Presidential Election will be provided. Many Media outlets suggest that Hispanic influences dramatically in-

creased from 2004 to the present (Weichelt 2009). Due to the historic nature of this election, I feel this election would be best analyzed by itself therefore results for 2008 were not included in the either the T-mode or S-mode analysis. Such analysis will illustrate whether Hispanic voting patterns were dramatically different throughout various areas of Texas from previous elections or if they were similar. Likewise, a comparison of to the rest of the state will yield similar opportunities to compare and contrast.

Texas Presidential Elections: 1952 – 2004

Party Identification

Figure 5 shows the average percent Democratic vote for Presidential elections from 1952 to 2004. The patterns show a distinct Democratic stronghold in the Hispanic South Texas Region, as well as in other counties along the Mexican border, in major metropolitan areas such as Houston and Austin, and in a small area around Amarillo. In the South Texas Region, as indicated in Figure 5, Democratic support wanes further from the Mexican border. While this figure illustrates statewide patterns, a historical analysis of the election results will yields further answers explaining Texas Presidential election patterns.

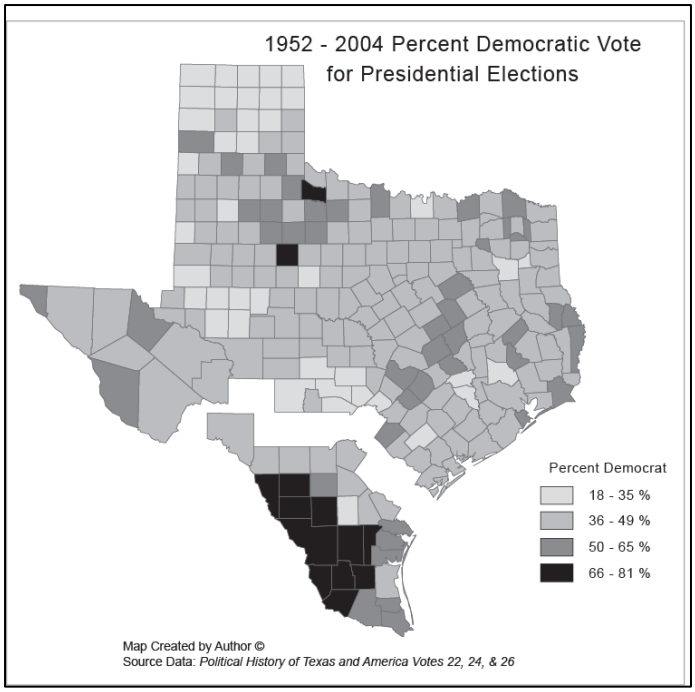

Figure 5. Average democratic vote for presidential elections 1952 – 2004

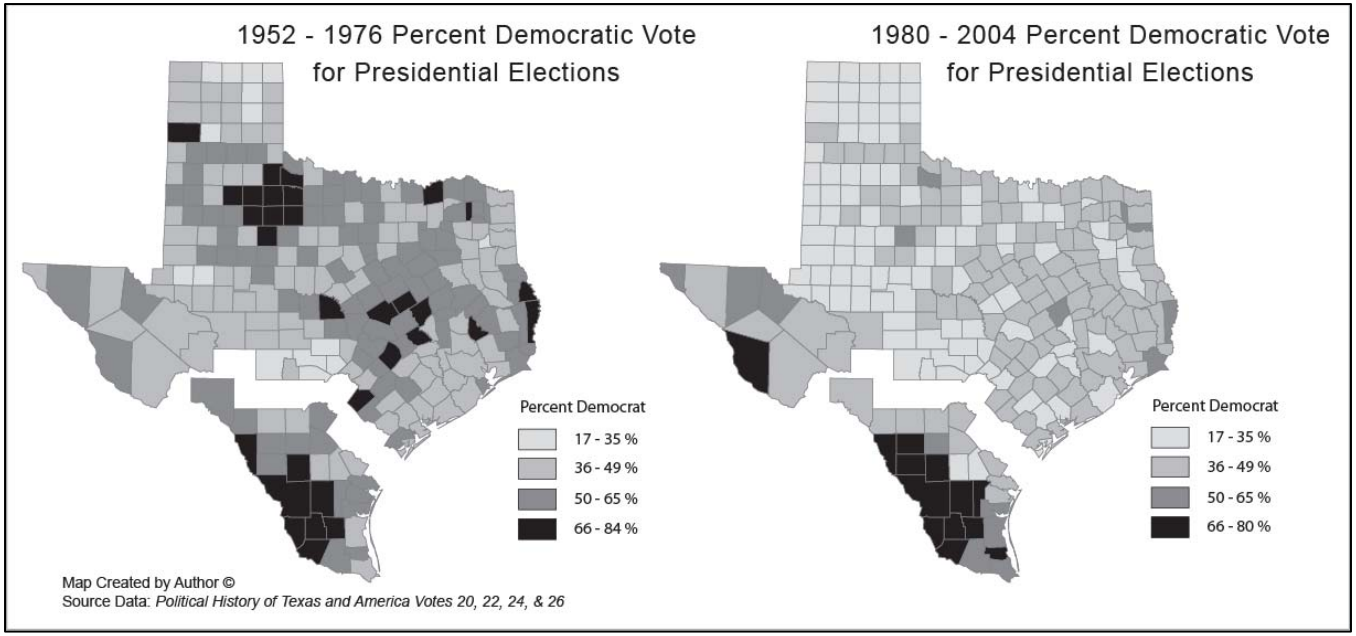

Figure 6. Presidential election results: 1952 – 1976 & 1980 – 2004.

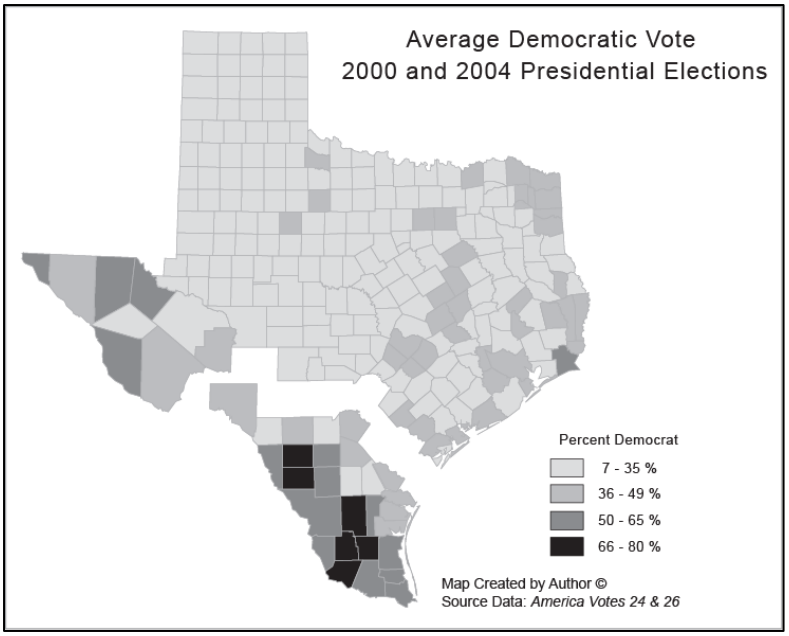

Figure 7. Average democratic vote for the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.

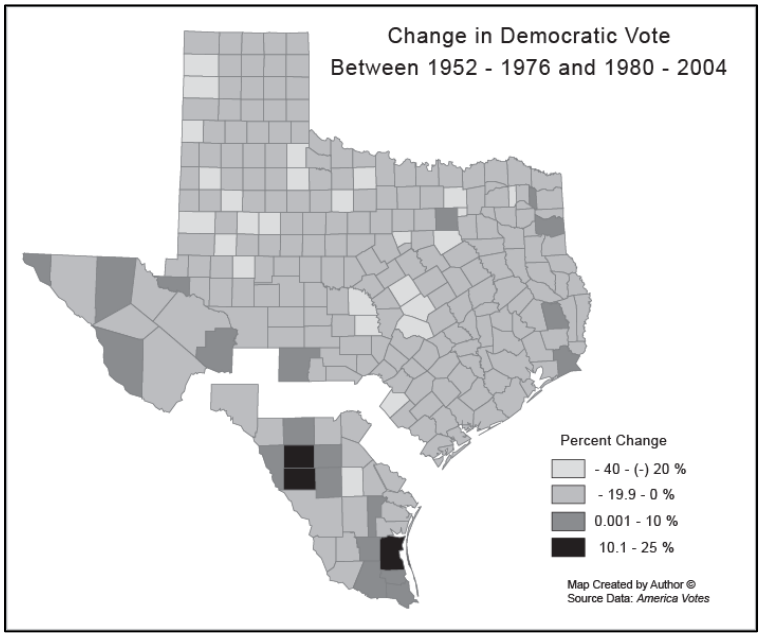

Figure 8. Percent change in average democratic vote: 1952 – 1976 & 1980 – 2004.

Spatial Patterns 1952 to 2004

As was stated earlier, Texas saw an overall shift in Democratic to Republican support throughout the decade of the 1970s. The following sets of the (Figures 6 – 8) demonstrate this shift. Figure 6 illustrates average Democratic vote for presidential elections between the two time periods, 1952 – 1976 and 1980 - 2004. The 1980 Presidential Election was a critical election in that it signified a permanent shift from Democratic support for the majority of Texas counties to the Republican Party. Before the 1980 election Republican support was concentrated in the rural and agricultural counties of the west central Texas and the northern Panhandle. From the 1980 election to the present, Democratic support has been concentrated in the Hispanic South Texas region. As explained earlier, Hispanic voters in South Texas found common ground with liberal Democrats in the 1960's and continued their support of Democrats to the present.

Differences in partisan support between South Texas and the rest of the state are even more apparent for the 2000 and 2004 elections (see Figure 7). South Texas is a bastion of Democratic support compared to the Republican dominated counties throughout the rest of the state. Yet support for Democrats does decrease further from the Mexican border and toward counties with lower Hispanic populations. One county in South Texas, McMullen, stands out as a strong supporter of Republicans, but the low population in the county inflates the percentages. McMullen only had a total of 564 votes cast in 2004 and 439 in 2000.

Figure 8 shows the percent change in average Democratic support between the two time periods. While a majority of Texas saw an extreme drop in Democratic support during the realignment in the 1970s, the South Texas Region illustrates some interesting patterns. As seen above, support for Democrats is extremely high in this region, yet a decrease in support did occur in some of the counties between the time periods. This decrease in the Democratic stronghold counties of Webb, Duval, Zapata, Starr, and Jim Hogg can be explained by their extremely high Democratic support before 1976 and a subtle decrease after 1980 as well as the general large increase of overall populations and white populations in cities like Laredo and McAllen. The largest decrease in Democratic support came in Webb County, where voting went from 74.3% Democratic in the first period to 63.4% Democratic in the second, a drop of 10.9%. Democratic support in Starr, Jim Hogg, and Duval Counties stayed above 70% Democratic between 1980 and 2000, with Starr County still at 80%.

T-Mode Factor Analysis Results

Table 2 shows the T-Mode results for presidential elections from 1952 to 2004 for the South Texas Region, the State of Texas, and the counties outside of the South Texas Region. For all Texas counties four factors were extracted, explaining ninety-four percent of the total variance. Starting chronologically,

Table 2. T-mode factor analysis results for presidential elections 1952 – 2004.

All Counties					Rest of Texas					South Texas Region		
Elections	1	2	3	4	Elections	1	2	3	4	Elections	1	2
1952	0.112	**0.985**	0.087	0.036	1952	0.137	**0.969**	0.080	0.038	1952	-0.040	**0.991**
1956	-0.145	**0.924**	-0.068	-0.064	1956	-0.176	**0.917**	-0.065	-0.080	1956	-0.129	**1.014**
1960	0.182	**0.561**	-0.423	0.142	1960	0.200	**0.598**	-0.390	0.159	1960	0.268	**0.782**
1964	-0.121	0.128	**-0.931**	-0.087	1964	-0.132	0.166	**-0.905**	-0.039	1964	0.283	**0.687**
1968	0.231	-0.042	**-0.841**	0.022	1968	0.078	-0.044	**-0.944**	-0.018	1968	0.434	**0.612**
1972	**0.593**	0.030	-0.442	0.042	1972	0.513	0.006	**-0.530**	-0.028	1972	**0.623**	0.367
1976	0.270	0.205	-0.311	**-0.525**	1976	0.072	0.244	-0.336	**-0.577**	1976	**0.661**	0.363
1980	**0.595**	0.111	-0.189	-0.371	1980	0.416	0.112	-0.275	**-0.445**	1980	**0.875**	0.158
1984	**0.825**	0.068	-0.074	-0.219	1984	**0.649**	0.102	-0.134	-0.357	1984	**0.971**	0.030
1988	**0.779**	0.072	-0.099	-0.266	1988	**0.594**	0.097	-0.170	-0.400	1988	**1.001**	-0.013
1992	**0.945**	0.072	0.049	-0.130	1992	**0.797**	0.102	0.021	-0.298	1992	**0.990**	-0.009
1996	**0.960**	0.034	-0.007	-0.015	1996	**0.880**	0.085	0.003	-0.138	1996	**0.998**	-0.019
2000	**1.025**	-0.014	0.023	0.102	2000	**1.001**	0.025	0.027	0.048	2000	**1.049**	-0.096
2004	**1.008**	-0.063	-0.033	0.229	2004	**1.017**	-0.061	-0.056	0.249	2004	**1.029**	-0.067

factor two identified a normal voting period for the 1952 to 1960 elections. The 1952 and 1956 elections have high loadings due to the overwhelming support of Eisenhower throughout Texas. Democratic support increased by 1960 with Johnson on the ballot as Vice President, yet Texas barely supported Kennedy in the election. The next two elections, loading as factor three, correspond to Texas voting highly Democratic for Johnson in 1964 and for Humphrey in 1968. In 1976, Carter was able to carry Texas with just over fifty percent of the total vote. The 1976 election loaded by itself as factor four. Factor one illustrates the shift for Texas from Democratic to Republican beginning in 1972. While the 1976 election stands on its own, upset over Nixon, voters deviated in 1976 and returned to the Republican Party with increasing support from 1980 to the present. Supported by Figure 6, after 1980 Election, voting patterns remained stable throughout the entire state.

If looking at the counties outside of the South Texas Region, the T-mode analysis identified results similar to those for the entire state. Four factors were extracted explaining ninety-three percent of the variance. The slight differences can be attributed to the omission of the area of strong Democratic support from the South Texas Region. For these outside counties the switch from Democratic support to Republican support began occurring in the 1970s as well. While the 1976 and 1980 elections provided a deviation of voting patterns, after 1984 patterns remained similar with high Republican support in these outside counties.

Within the South Texas Region, only two interpretable factors were extracted, but they explained over ninety-three percent of the total variance. Two voting epochs are apparent from the analysis. This region has typically always had high Democratic support, but the overall statewide switch to the Republican Party in the 1970s disrupted normal voting patterns in this region. Therefore, the second factor corresponds to the current voting period beginning in the 1970s and continuing today for the South Texas Region. Yet, overall the Democratic cleavage for presidential elections between the South Texas Region and much of the rest of the state is made apparent by the T-mode analysis.

S-Mode Factor Analysis Results

The S-mode factor analysis yielded two factors that accounted for over eighty-nine percent of the total variation for the Democratic presidential vote for Texas counties from 1952 – 2004. Unlike T-mode factor analysis, S-mode factor analysis utilizes an orthogonal varimax rotation. The variance for each factor for each county can be obtained by squaring the county's factor loading on the given factor (Archer & Taylor 1981). The county with the highest factor loading can be considered to be the most representative county for that given factor. When the counties with similar factor loadings are mapped, they indicate voting regions. Figure 9 is the map of the highest factor loadings for each county. All counties with factor loadings greater than 0.60 for a given factor were mapped. If counties had factor loadings for each factor greater

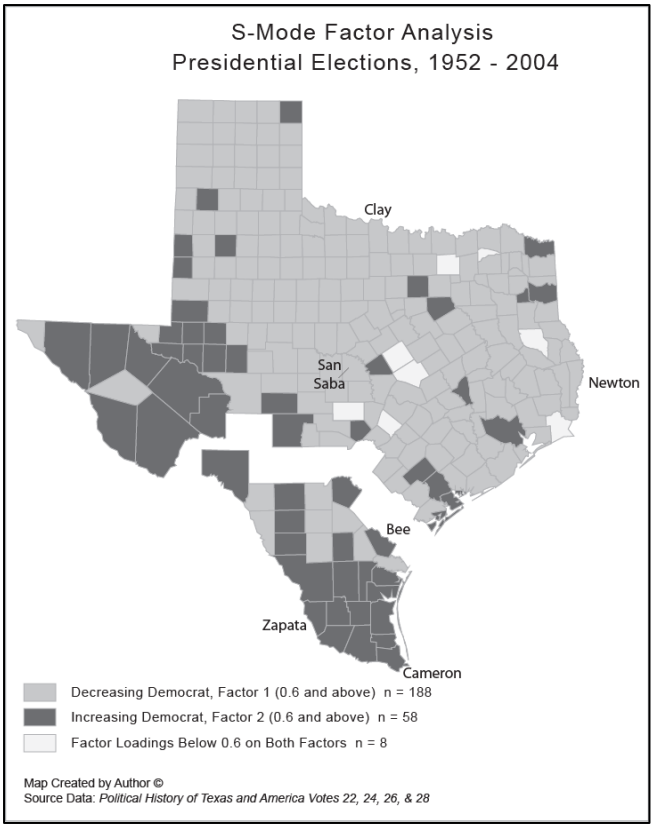

Figure 9. S-Mode factor analysis, 1952 – 2004.

than 0.60, the county was assigned to the factor with the highest loading. Counties that that loaded below 0.60 for both factors were not placed in either region. Figure 9 clearly indicates a spatial Democratic divide between most of the South Texas Region and the southwestern Texas counties compared to the rest of the state.

Analysis of the voting patterns indicates an ideological difference between the voting patterns in each of the regions defined by the S-mode factor analysis. Analyzing the counties associated with factor one, the three counties with the highest factor loadings for factor one, San Saba, Newton, and Clay (see Figure 9), provide historical voting trends for the region. Figure 10 is the Democratic voting profile for those three counties. Linking these results to the T-mode analysis earlier, the decline of Democratic support throughout much of Texas began in 1980 and continues today. While the 2008 election was not part of this analysis, these counties saw even further decline of Democratic support compared to 2004. Support bottomed out in both Clay and San Saba at

twenty percent. Therefore, the counties loading on factor one are designated at the "Decreasing Democratic Region."

Figure 11 shows the voting profile for the three counties loading highest on factor two in the S-mode factor analysis. The results for Cameron, Zapata, and Bee counties show a gradual increase of Democratic support from 1972 to 1996. These patterns were highly consistent with the T-mode analysis conducted for the South Texas Region and the rest of the Texas completed earlier. While slight decreases occurred in the 2000 and 2004 elections, there were gains in all three with the most significant increases in Democratic support occurring in Cameron and Zapata counties. While Bee County has had less support of Democrats compared to the other two, its election patterns mirror the counties throughout the "Increasing Democratic Region."

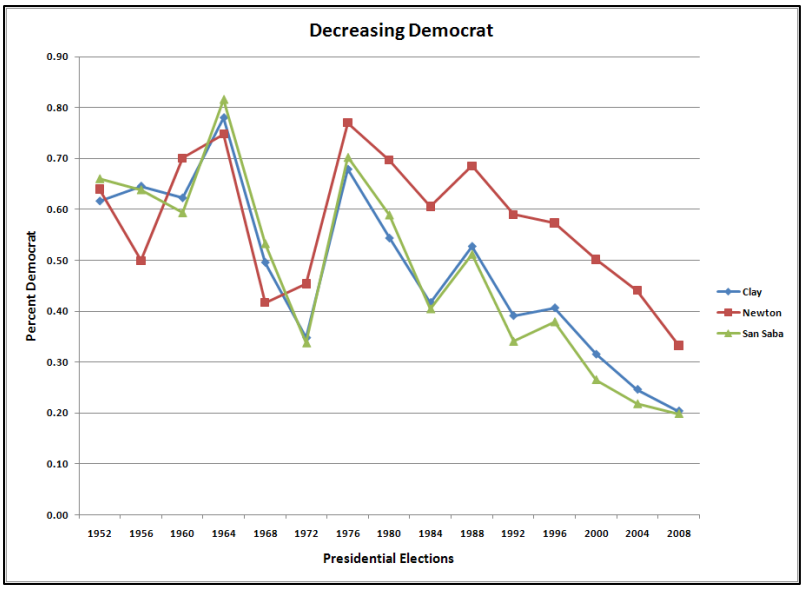

Figure 10. S-mode factor analysis Democratic voting profile for three counties

Voter Turnout

Hispanics have traditionally had the lowest voter turnout of any major group of voters in the United States. Figure 12 shows the average voter turnout for all counties in Texas across all Presidential elections from 1952 to 2004. The figure illustrates three distinct patterns in Texas: low voter turnout in counties with large urban areas, low voter turnout in counties with large Hispanic populations, and high voter turnout in many of the rural counties of Texas.

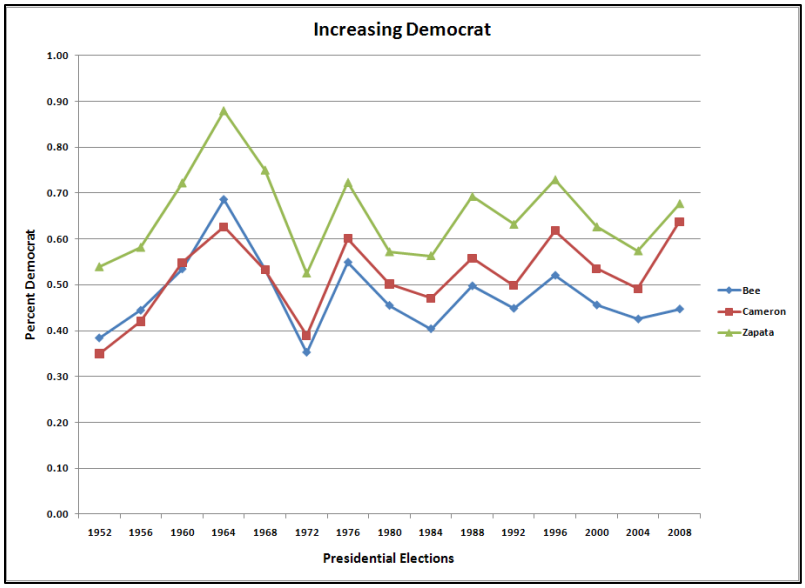

Figure 11. S-mode factor analysis Democratic voting profile for three counties loading highest on Factor 2.

Figures 13 -15 provide a historical analysis of voter turnout corresponding to the passage of both the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent language amendment in the 1975. From 1952 to 1964 the major urban areas of Texas along with much of the Hispanic South Texas Region had the lowest voter turnout rates in Texas. As indicated earlier, poll taxes and literacy tests at the polls kept many blacks and Hispanics away from the ballot box during this time period. After the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the abolishment of the poll tax in 1966 in Texas, a vast majority of Texas counties saw remarkable improvement in voter turnout between 1968 and 1972. The greatest increases could be found in South Texas and in the major urban centers throughout the state. Yet, after 1975, the voter turnout of urban counties and South Texas counties diverged. Texas urban counties saw an increase after 1975, but South Texas counties saw a decrease. Similarly, many of the rural counties of the Texas Panhandle saw decreases in voter turnout as well. These rural counties saw dramatic increases in the number of Hispanic farm workers from the 1980s to 2004. Generally, the counties with large Hispanic populations saw decreasing voter turnout rates in South Texas and elsewhere throughout the state.

Spatial Regression Results

Tables 3, 4, and 5 contain the results of the Spatial Lag analyses, com-

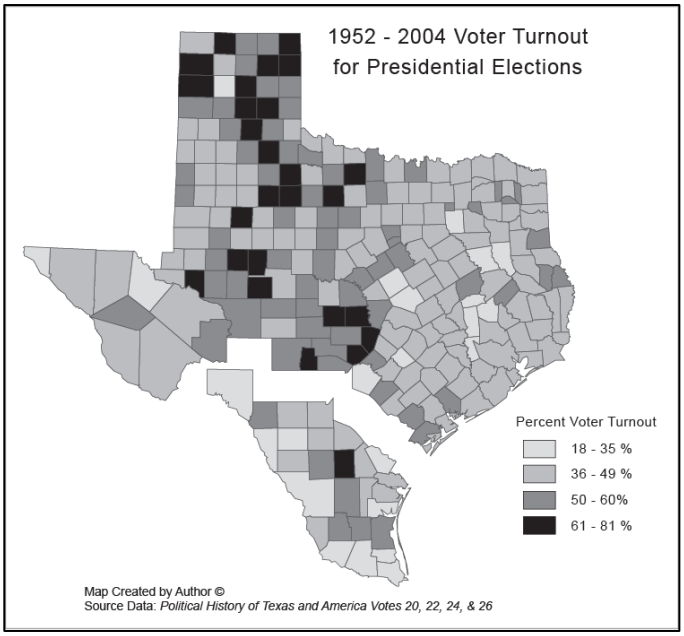

Figure 12. Average voter turnout for presidential elections 1952 – 2004.

pared to the OLS results, using average Democratic vote for presidential elections from 1980 to 2004 as the dependent variable and percent Hispanic population and average voter turnout for the same time period as the independent variables. This time period was chosen, as identified above as a distinct voting period due the switch by many from Democrats to Republicans. In each of the study areas, high spatial autocorrelation was prevalent. Therefore, all spatial lag results improved the OLS results.

Table 3 illustrates the results for the all the counties of Texas. Due to the fact spatial lag statistics are not normally distributed, no statistic can be run to test the significance of the entire equation. While an R-squared is produced, its validity cannot be tested; therefore, the R-square in a spatial lag model is called a pseudo R-squared. As Table 3 indicates, the pseudo R-squared value has increased from the R-squared value of the OLS model. Conversely, the R-squared is not a true test of spatial regression robustness (Anselin 2005). The log likelihood, which is a better way to judge the robustness of a spatial lag model, has also increased from the OLS model. The log likelihood increased from 214.239 (OLS) to 264.083, the Akaike criterion decreased from -422.479 to -520.167, and the Schwarz criterion decreased from -411.867 to -506.018. Furthermore, examining the influence of the percent Hispanic and average voter turnout, the coefficient results in Table 3 show that influence on Democratic votes decreased in the Spatial Lag Model, compared to the values from the OLS Model, when controlling for the confounding effects of spatial autocorre-

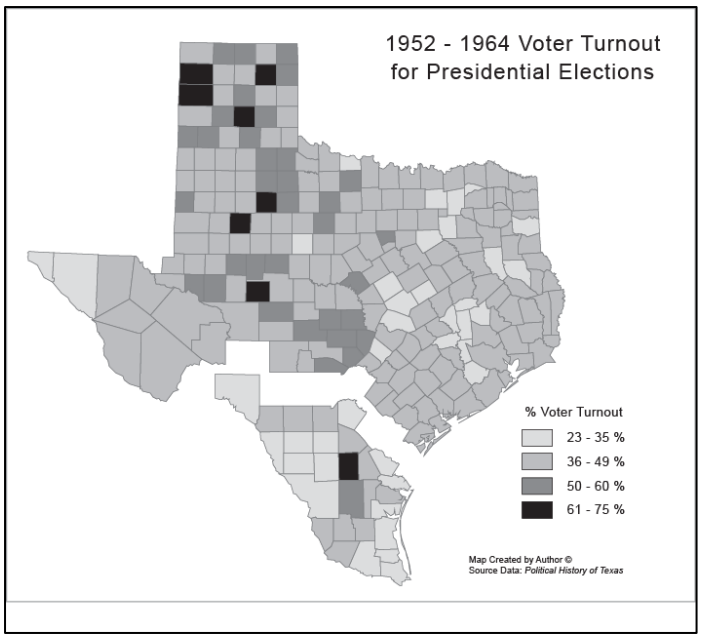

Figure 13. Average voter turnout in presidential elections from 1952 to 1964.

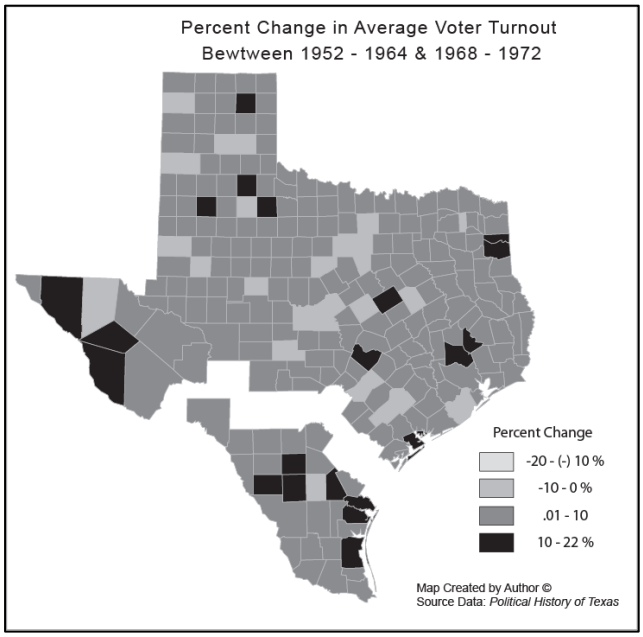

Figure 14. Percent change in average voter turnout between the 1952 – 1964 & 1968 – 1972 Presidential Elections.

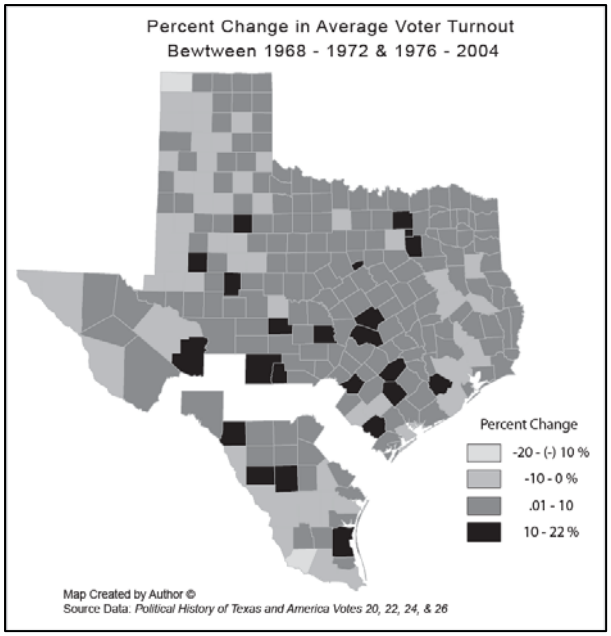

Figure 15. Percent change in average voter turnout between the 1968 – 1972 & 1976 – 2004 presidential elections.

lation. While Hispanic populations were statistically significant and voter turnout was not, the spatially clustering of populations throughout Texas reduced their overall impact on explaining the Democratic vote proportions for presidential elections from 1980 to 2004. Overall, as a result, an improvement from the spatial lag model over the OLS has been achieved.

While Table 3 illustrated that Democratic votes increased in areas with higher populations of Hispanics, voter turnout was too variable across Texas counties. Table 4 shows the results for the South Texas Region. While the Moran's I was smaller than for the entire state, results were again improved upon by the Spatial Lag analysis. Though, not surprising, Hispanics overwhelming support Democrats in this region, compared to Table 3 the coefficient for voter turnout was significant. Comparing Table 54with Figures 12 – 14, voter turnout increases moving away from the Mexican border, providing evidence for this result.

Finally, Table 5 shows the results for the counties outside of the South Texas Region. These results illustrate spatial autocorrelation can influence the results of traditional OLS analysis. The OLS results indicate an R-Squared of 0.012 and a log likelihood of 246.94, while both variables were statistically insignificant. The Spatial Lag results increased the pseudo R-Squared to 0.338 and the log likelihood to 280.98. Likewise both Akaike and Schwarz Criterions decreased as well. Interestingly the Spatial Lag model produced a signifi-

Table 3. Multiple regression results for presidential elections 1980 – 2004, all Texas counties.

All Texas Counties

OLS Results

R-Squared	0.209	Number of Observations	254
Adjusted R-Squared	0.203	Degress of Freedom	3
F-statistic	33.28	F-statistic Prob.	0.000
Log Likelihood	214.239	Akaike Criterion	-422.479
Moran's I	0.528	Schwarz	-411.867

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	t-stat.	Probability
Constant	0.338	0.042	8.00	0.000
Percent Hispanic	0.231	0.029	7.81	0.000
Avg. Voter Turn	-0.037	0.076	-0.49	0.622

Spatial Lag Results

R-Squared	0.514	Number of Observations	254
Adjusted R-Squared	na	Degress of Freedom	250
F-statistic	na	F-statistic Prob.	na
Log Likelihood	264.083	Akaike Criterion	-520.167
		Schwarz	-506.018

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	z-stat.	Probability
W-Dem Vote	0.618	0.055	11.19	0.000
Constant	0.075	0.036	2.06	0.039
Percent Hispanic	0.155	0.027	5.68	0.000
Avg. Voter Turn	0.053	0.059	0.90	0.367

Table 4. Multiple regression results for presidential elections 1980 – 2004, South Texas region.

South Texas Region

OLS Results

R-Squared	0.733	Number of Observations	28
Adjusted R-Squared	0.712	Degress of Freedom	3
F-statistic	34.45	F-statistic Prob.	0.000
Log Likelihood	33.01	Akaike Criterion	-60.029
Moran's I	0.301	Schwarz	-56.032

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	t-stat.	Probability
Constant	0.015	0.086	0.02	0.861
Percent Hispanic	0.554	0.066	8.18	0.000
Avg. Voter Turn	0.309	0.142	2.17	0.039

Spatial Lag Results

R-Squared	0.787	Number of Observations	28
Adjusted R-Squared	na	Degress of Freedom	24
F-statistic	na	F-statistic Prob.	na
Log Likelihood	35.79	Akaike Criterion	-63.586
		Schwarz	--58.258

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	z-stat.	Probability
W-Dem Vote	0.321	0.128	2.49	0.012
Constant	-0.143	0.098	-1.45	0.147
Percent Hispanic	0.514	0.059	8.69	0.000
Avg. Voter Turn	0.329	0.121	2.73	0.006

Table 5. Multiple regression results for presidential elections 1980 – 2004, rest of Texas counties.

Rest of Texas Counties

OLS Results

R-Squared	0.012	Number of Observations	226
Adjusted R-Squared	0.003	Degress of Freedom	223
F-statistic	1.44	F-statistic Prob.	0.238
Log Likelihood	246.94	Akaike Criterion	-487.889
Moran's I	0.408	Schwarz	-477.627

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	t-stat.	Probability
Constant	0.364	0.036	10.08	0.000
Percent Hispanic	0.005	0.033	0.16	0.870
Avg. Voter Turn	-0.106	0.065	-1.63	0.103

Spatial Lag Results

R-Squared	0.338	Number of Observations	226
Adjusted R-Squared	na	Degress of Freedom	222
F-statistic	na	F-statistic Prob.	na
Log Likelihood	280.98	Akaike Criterion	-553.966
		Schwarz	-540.284

Variable	Coefficent	Std. Error	z-stat.	Probability
W-Dem Vote	0.623	0.063	9.88	0.000
Constant	0.105	0.034	3.04	0.002
Percent Hispanic	0.065	0.027	2.35	0.043
Avg. Voter Turn	-0.006	0.053	-0.120	0.904

cant Hispanic variable. This can be explained by the clustering of both higher Democratic support and of greater proportions of Hispanics closer to the Mexican border, especially in west Texas.

Pre-2008 Election Remarks

As the cartographic analysis and the T-mode factor analysis for Presidential elections indicate, Texas saw a realignment of political parties by the 1980s. Anglo Democrats adhering to conservative views recognized the liberal turn the Democratic Party was taking and realigned with the Republican Party by the 1980s. Although much of Texas's population followed suit, South Texas Hispanics stayed committed to the Democratic Party. Agreeing with and benefiting from the Civil Rights Acts in the 1960s, Hispanics stayed loyal which made and continues to make South Texas a solid Democratic stronghold today.

In terms of voter turnout, Figures 12 - 14 illustrate that before the passage of the VRA in 1965 and abolishment of the poll tax in 1966, voter turnout was lowest in the counties with high populations of Hispanics and blacks in mainly urban counties. Voter turnout increased after 1966, especially in those same counties. Yet, after 1975 urban minorities and Hispanics diverged. Urban counties saw an increase in voter turnout during this time period, while areas

with higher concentrations of Hispanics had decreased voter turnout, especially in the South Texas region and the Texas Panhandle.

2008 Presidential Election

In a geographic context, the 2008 Presidential Election illustrated dramatic spatial shifts in electoral support throughout much of the United States. The most dramatic changes occurred in areas throughout the United States with higher proportions of African-American populations. This was highly evident in the slim Democratic victories in North Carolina and Virginia by Barrack Obama. Similarly interesting was the success of Obama in suburban areas, especially among educated white voters. Yet, some questioned the support of Hispanics for Obama after Hillary Clinton's decisive primary victory in large Hispanic populated states like California, Nevada, and Texas earlier in 2008 (Weichelt 2009). In the South Texas Region, Clinton won every county and with the exception of Kinney and McMullen counties, won with over sixty percent of the vote (Leip 2009). With Clinton's success would the South Texas Region remain a strong Democratic ally to Barrack Obama? Were there other electoral changes demonstrated throughout the state compared to previous elections?

Having run a similar t-mode factor analysis as above for numerous regions throughout the United States including the 2008 Presidential Election, in all instances this election loaded by itself. This was true in Texas as well (Weichelt 2009). Figure 16 shows the county-wide election results for the State of Texas during the 2008 Election. As can be seen, Figure 16 doesn't differ from the figures presented earlier. The strongest Democratic support occurred in the South Texas Region and in counties with larger urban populations. McCain took Texas with fifty-five percent to the vote to Obama's forty-four percent in the vote.

Figure 17 shows the change in Democratic vote from 2004 to 2008. The largest gains can be seen throughout the South Texas Region toward El Paso, through the central areas of the Texas, in the large urban areas, and the counties along the I-35 corridor from San Antonio to Dallas. The largest percentage wins occurred in both Zavala and Starr counties, where Obama took over eighty-four percent of the vote. Overall, Obama greatly improved upon Kerry's thirty-eight percent in 2004 by taking nearly forty-four percent in 2008. In total voters, it was the most votes a Democrat received in any presidential election in Texas, and was only 0.20% less than the largest Democratic percentage since Clinton's 1996 victory.

The South Texas Region showed, in general, an overall large increase in Democratic support. While the numbers increased, the continued trend of Democratic support should be of little surprise to most. Democratic support has long remained in the South Texas for decades. The increase from 2004 in this region can be based on numerous reasons, stretching from election hype, greater interest in politics, to the typical lower voter response to reelections for

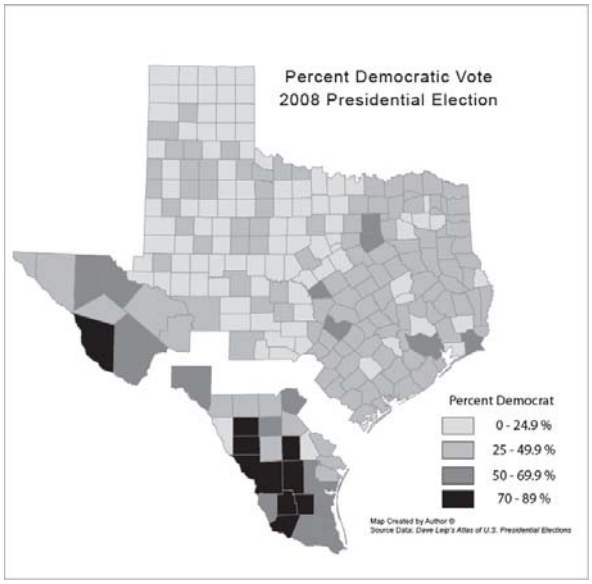

Figure 16. Percent democratic vote, 2008 presidential elections.

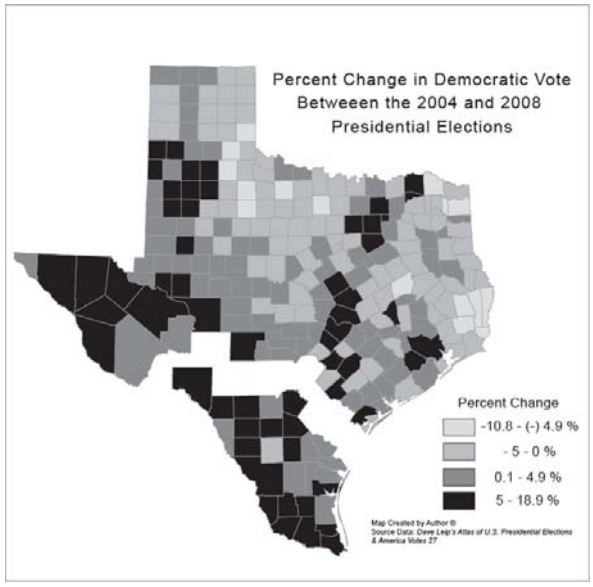

Figure 17. Percent change in democratic vote between the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections.

incumbents. Further investigation is warranted and 2012 will illustrate if these patterns will continue. Yet, I believe the most interesting increases in Democratic support, while still below a simple majority, are the gains in the central rural areas of Texas. These counties generally contain low populations of mainly agricultural workers, but the large support of Hispanics in South Texas for Obama could represent the electoral presence of growing Hispanic populations throughout Texas.

The 2008 Presidential Election was certainly historic. For the State of Texas, the Republican candidate still easily won the election, but the Democratic challenger saw the largest support since Jimmy Carter won the state in 1976. While the South Texas Region remained ardently Democratic, it did see large gains in Democratic support. Obama also made inroads in the central areas of Texas, the large urban areas, and along I-35. Yet, are these results aberrations or will they continue in 2012? Due to the traditional support of Hispanic voters in Texas for Democrats, can their large population growth being contributing to these increases? Overall, these important questions can be answered by electoral geographers and will only be buffered by 2010 Census and 2012 Presidential Election.

Conclusions

The results of this regional analysis provide similar findings for each of the elections analyzed. Three important findings remained consistent for presidential elections in Texas. The first consistent finding, as indicated by the T-mode factor analyses and the cartographic representations, was a decline in Democratic support throughout the state starting the late 1970s. From 1980 on, no Democratic presidential candidate has won the state of Texas. Subsequent analysis of U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial elections during the same time period yielded similar results. Concerning U.S. Senators, after the retirement of Lloyd Bentsen in 1994, no Democrat has come close to winning an election in Texas. As for Texas governors, from 1978 onward Democratic support for governor waned and since 1994, no Democrat has seriously threatened any Republican candidate for the office (Weichelt 2008).

The second consistent finding of this paper pertains to the political behavior of the South Texas Region. The large Hispanic population found in the region provides a contrasting voting behavior with the majority white population found throughout the rest of Texas. The unique history and experiences of the persons living in South Texas have developed a political behavior in defiance of Anglo domination. While the rest of Texas changed parties beginning in the late 1970s, Hispanics in the South Texas Region have remained staunch Democratic supporters for all elections. Even though Democratic support has waned in this area compared to the 1950s and 1960s, Democratic support remains strong in this region compared to the rest of the state.

The final reliable finding in this report involves the voter turnout patterns of Texas voters. As a whole, Hispanic populations have the lowest voter turn-

out rates in the state. While these numbers can be questioned during the 1950s and 1960s due to the lack of fair voting procedures, the subsequent Voting Rights Act in 1965 and the consequent inclusion of Spanish language ballots after the 1975 amendment, did little to bring turnout rates among Hispanics equal to those of Anglos. The South Texas Region exhibits the lowest voter turnout rates for all elections in the entire state.

This paper illustrates that in South Texas, the long history of oppression between Anglos and Hispanics developed the political behavior of South Texas voters seen today. The liberal change attributed to the Democratic Party in 1960s and 1970s appealed to poorer Hispanic populations in the region and was in direct contrast to the conservative nature of white voters found throughout the rest of Texas. The lack of strong Democratic candidates and the growth of white populations in the region have contributed to a recent weakening of Democratic support in the border region, but Hispanic support of Democratic candidates remains strong for the Hispanic populations of South Texas.

Further questions this paper generates for additional investigation is how will the changing demographics of Texas influence future political trends. As more and more Hispanics spread away from the South Texas Region and into many of the rural counties of North and West Texas, will Democratic support at increase? Ideologically, how will second and third generation children of immigrants vote? Will these new generations of children increase voter turnout? These are important questions that geography can help answer. If Hispanic voters are differing from varying regions across Texas, further analysis is warranted to understand the social underpinnings driving these changes.

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