4-9-2016

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Cultural Continuity from 1845 to the 2008 Presidential Election
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Why is this important?
- Burnham (1968) demonstrated cultural continuity over 100 years in New York and Pennsylvania
- Distinct differences between Yankee and Yorker cultures
- New York was settled by both the Dutch and the English
- Puritan theology tended to inspire crusading for social reform, and Yankees spearheaded reform in the region
- Burnham focused on the Civil War and Civil Rights era
- We expanded his research by using Obama’s historical election

What should be used to test the hypotheses?
- 10 control variables for demographic factors that may influence voting behavior
- 2 explanatory variables used to assess individual impact
- Response variable was the DIFFERENCE between the 2004 and 2008 Democratic Vote
- Isolate the tendency to vote for Obama above and beyond tendency to vote Democratic
- Also used the Social Capital Index as a response variable
- Conducted an Ordinary Least Squared Regression

Percentage of New England Births (NEPCT)
- Measured as the percentage of a county’s population that was born in New England as of 1855 New York State Census
- Regressed on DIFF and SC09
- Developed parsimonious model using AICc
- Was significant at the 5% level
- A 1% increase in the NEPCT increased the change in the vote by 0.1%
- Model explained 51.8% of the variation in the change in the Democratic vote from 2004 to 2008

Characteristics of Yankee Culture
- Previously residents of New England who merged with the Yorkers
- Left England because of economic pressures, the Protestant Reformation, and political tensions
- Puritans had open, liberal, and accepting attitudes
- Newcomers assimilated to existing society
- Abolitionists, women’s suffrage activists, and had influence on the press

Key Takeaways
- The results were substantially more significant if the New York City counties were excluded from the data.
- Using Social Capital as a response variable did not produce statistically significant results.
- Two different measures of culture, NEPCT and YES46, were statistically significant in predicting the change in the Dem. vote from 2004 to 2008.
- This indicates that Yankee culture in New York is largely durable and persistent despite 150 years of change and innovation.

This paper intends to examine the durability of culture in elections with a civil rights component by conducting a multiple regression analysis. The difference in the Democratic vote between 2008 and 2004 is regressed on a number of to find the model most likely to align with the true model by dropping variables without explanatory power. At an alpha level of 0.10, it was determined that the characteristics of the county’s population in 1845 did have a statistically significant impact on the difference in the Democratic vote, supporting the hypothesis that culture is durable and persistent over time.