

# NATIONAL SURVIVAL AND THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS \*

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## Abstract

I analyze the voting behavior of legislators in the Congresses of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War. I show that the occupation of Confederate Congressional districts by Federal troops led legislators to abandon their previous voting behavior and instead support the strengthening of the central government in Richmond. Specific case evidence involving voting on *habeus corpus* is provided to further demonstrate the robustness of this result. Most important, the result leads to outcomes at odds with the logic of secession as enunciated by Southern elites.

**Keywords:** Legislatures, Ideal Point Estimation, MCMC, Confederacy, Civil War

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# 1 Introduction

In *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, David Mayhew made the oft-cited observation that members of Congress are “single-minded seekers of reelection” (1974, 17). Pork-barrel spending, candidates’ declarations of independence from national parties during elections, and legislators spending vast amounts of time on constituency casework all lend credence to this observation. Though there is certainly much empirical and theoretical sensibility to this argument, there do exist infrequent, but decisive, moments in American history that effectively set this understanding of legislative behavior aside. Indeed, during times of national crisis, it may very well be the case that the old adage, “desperate times call for desperate measures,” is a more appropriate predictor of legislative voting than constituency interests. This of course is not a law but a proposition: can times of national crisis (especially wartime) cause legislators to alter their behavior in legislative institutions?

The American Civil War provides a rich historical case that can serve in better answering this question. It was at this unique point in the history of America where both (a) survival of the nation was on the line, and (b) members’ districts were directly impacted by the war. Despite the substantive importance of the question posed, few scholars have analyzed it thoroughly. Most works on the Civil War era are either wholly concerned with the military side of the conflict or, if dealing with the political situation, are solely descriptive. Rohde, Carson, Jenkins, and Souva (2001) attempt to bridge this gap by looking at how various crisis-related variables (e.g. war deaths) affected elections in the Union. While their work provides valuable insight to the issue of how military failure can affect political outcomes, it deals only with the Union and focuses on the electoral, and not legislative, context.

On the Confederate side, an even smaller subset of literature has emerged

addressing the political issues confronting the legislature. Years (1960) provided the first comprehensive history of the Confederate legislature from the firing upon Fort Sumter to the collapse at Appomattox Courthouse. However, Years' work was descriptive and did not seek to explain why Confederate legislators behaved the way they did. In *The Anatomy of the Confederate Congresses*, Alexander and Beringer (1972) comprehensively analyze the roll-call voting of Confederate legislators. Their work is impressive, documenting in great detail the various roll calls and providing scholars with a biographical directory of the legislators, complete with occupation, personal wealth, slaveholding data, and more. Yet they fail to provide a *unified model* for the voting behavior of legislators. The closest they come is providing values for the gamma measure of association between voting behavior and several demographic variables in bivariate fashion (1972,300-314). In his analysis of Confederate legislative roll calls, Bense (1986) comes perhaps the closest to identifying causal mechanisms behind voting behavior in that body. Bense makes the striking observation that "the consolidation of economic and social controls within the central government of the Confederacy was in fact so extensive that it **calls into question the standard interpretations of southern opposition to expand federal power in both the antebellum and post-Reconstruction periods**" (1986, 68, emphasis added). Further, Bense provides evidence suggesting that legislators from occupied districts were more likely to support the strengthening of the federal government. Nonetheless, he too fails to provide a unified model, taking into account the cumulative effect of the various possible independent variables.

To date, only one scholar has attempted to look at all of the variables associated with the voting behavior of Confederate legislators in a unified framework (Jenkins 2000). In this analysis, Jenkins employs Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) W-NOMINATE procedure for estimating the legislators' ideal points and then uses these to run a series of regressions, treating the six sessions of the Confederate

House of Representatives as panel data. Using this method, Jenkins finds no evidence to support the shock of district occupation as a significant explanatory variable. However, by employing the static W-NOMINATE and not a dynamic estimation routine, Jenkins' results are called into question. Moreover, this error highlights one of the fundamental problems in estimating legislator preferences over time.

In this paper, I seek, primarily, to fill the gap in the literature on the Confederate Congresses and, secondarily, to address the methodological problems in dynamic ideal point estimation in an applied setting. Specifically, I explain how the war-induced crisis affected the roll-call voting behavior of legislators in the First and Second Confederate House of Representatives. In Section 2, I describe the First and Second Congresses, providing information of their context and of legislators' individual characteristics. Section 3 presents the theory that explains the factors that affect the shift in ideology of legislators. I argue that the occupation of a congressional district by Union troops, given the legislature's survival crisis, led members to support a strong central government in Richmond. Section 4 examines the previous ideal point estimation of Jenkins, surveys extant approaches to dynamic ideal point estimation, and proposes a different methodological approach that produces ideal point estimates that are comparable over time. I then detail the estimation of the ideal points of legislators using Markov Chain Monte Carlo methods (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004). In Section 5, using the estimated ideal points, I employ simple linear regression to evaluate the central hypothesis of this paper. I also provide an analysis of the controversial yet instructive case of the vote to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*. The hypothesis is again put to the test, using descriptive statistics and logit regression. Section 6 provides a discussion of the results and, since the results are not what one would expect from a legislature that based itself upon the Jeffersonian anti-nationalist mentality, I discuss the substantive implications of them.

## 2 The Confederate Congress: Historical and Institutional Background

With the election of 1860 handing victory to Republican Abraham Lincoln, many leading White southerners felt that remaining in the Union was no longer a viable option for maintaining the Southern way of life. Seven southern states seceded soon following the election: South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. In April of 1861, when Confederate forces fired upon Fort Sumter, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas followed suit. Meanwhile, delegates from these states plus Missouri and Kentucky convened in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4, 1861 to begin the first session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America (Martis 1994, 9). A constitution was drafted and elections were scheduled. This Provisional Congress came to a close on February 17, 1862 (Martis 1994, 2). During its short existence, the Confederacy had two regular Congresses. The First Congress began February 18, 1862 and closed February 17, 1864; the Second began on May 2, 1864 and ended March 18, 1865 (Martis 1994, 2). The short tenure of the Second Congress can be attributed to the Confederacy's military surrender and the subsequent fall of the government in Richmond.

The structure of the legislature was very similar to that of the United States. Members of Congress (MCs) were elected in single-member districts. These districts were allocated proportional to the state's population. It is important to add here that, although they remained part of the Union, Southern-sympathizing citizens in Kentucky and Missouri established rival Confederate state governments and thus seated members in the Confederate Congresses (Martis 1994, 117). The MCs dealt with some of the very same issues as their Union counterparts. From 1862-1865, the legislature handled hundreds of roll-calls dealing with matters as diverse as trade and foreign affairs, central-government powers, appropriations

for public works, and the pork-barrel minutiae that have become a staple in the modern U.S. Congress (Alexander and Beringer 1972). Thus, while this legislature was in a certain sense unique, it was in many ways similar to its Union counterpart and, more broadly, much like contemporary Congresses. Indeed, one of the greatest advantages in studying the Confederate Congresses or the Confederacy, more broadly, is their remarkable similarity to the United States Congress.

The Confederate Constitution was essentially identical to that of the U.S., with a few notable exceptions. First, slavery and states' rights were specifically enumerated and, hence, were "closed cases," whereas the U.S. Constitution was vague on these points (Thomas 1979, 37). Second, Section IX of the Confederate Constitution forbade export tariffs and capititation/direct taxes, matters that had been the cause of quarrels in the U.S. Congress. The important implication of these clauses was the *de facto* prohibition of a competitive, meaningful party system (Alexander and Beringer 1972; Beringer 1967; Martis 1994; Bensel 1986). When the old Democrat-Whig divisions broke apart in the aftermath of the Compromise of 1850, Southern Whigs and Democrats came together and formed a single-issue coalition around slavery or, more broadly, states' rights (Jenkins 1999). Once the South seceded, the coalition had no more meaning, as slavery and other matters of contention were taken care of in the Constitution. Thus, with the absence of political party as a factor in voting, there is a *de facto* vacuum in terms of analyzing patterns of voting behavior. Practically speaking, what this means is that one has to look to *other* possible variables affecting legislators' voting behavior.

### **3 A Theory of Preference Change**

When a district was occupied by Federal troops, a number of things could have happened. One intuitive possibility is that a legislator "voted his conscience."

That is to say, a legislator was no longer constrained by district opinion and, if he disagreed with his district on a matter, he had the ability to use his own judgment, as opposed to adopting a “single-minded seeker of reelection” mentality. This makes sense, in that the occupation of his district made a legislator acutely aware of the stakes at hand. Failure to provide the government in Richmond with the resources necessary to conduct the war, even if in opposition to district opinion, would result in the downfall of the Confederate nation and, consequently, the loss of his job.

Another possibility is that he became a delegate in the fashion of Edmund Burke, focusing his efforts on the Confederacy’s best interests and setting aside the wants and desires of his district. Of course, there is the possibility that there was no change, that a legislator just stayed on the path he was on before the change in situation. Which of these best applies to the Confederate Congresses? The answer to this question lies in the nature of the circumstances. Not only were Confederate districts being occupied, but the very survival of the Confederacy was on the line.

Taking both of these into consideration, I argue that the occupation of Confederate districts by Federal troops fundamentally altered the outlook of legislators and undeniably “shocked” their preferences. This occurred in two distinct fashions. First, the occupation of a legislator’s own district made real to him the potential of the South’s loss in the war. It also affected the economies and daily lives of legislators’ districts adversely, something that any large horizon decision-maker would care about. Second, the occupation of proximate districts also affected a legislators’ outlook. The fact that other districts in a legislator’s region were becoming occupied made the near certainty of his own district suffering the same fate.

It is my contention that the shock, either through direct occupation or the occupation of proximate districts, was in the direction of strengthening the central

government, as occupation of their districts amplified the crisis of survival. While potentially undesirable, strengthening the government in Richmond could improve the chances of success. Further, it is also clear that the legislators were not “voting their consciences.” This was a government that argued, at least in official rhetoric, for its very independence on the issue of states’ rights—of the submission of the federal government to the whims of the states. If legislators’ voting behavior was moving toward their “true” ideologies, the shift in ideal point should be to the left and not to the right.<sup>1</sup>

To examine these claims empirically, it is necessary to estimate the preferences of legislators and examine how these shift according to district occupation. One such measure was constructed by Alexander and Beringer (1972, 307-313), which they call a “Confederate support score.” They derive it by performing content analyses of all roll calls in the Congresses. The score identifies how intensely a legislator supports a strong central government. The range is from zero to nine, with the former representing weak support of a powerful central government and the latter representing strong support of a powerful central government. Though this measure is certainly useful, its ordinal nature and rather *ad hoc* construction make more fine-grained distinctions between legislators difficult to impossible. Moreover, the measure is relative to a particular session of the Confederate Congress, making comparisons over time unfeasible. Fortunately, these difficulties can be ameliorated by the use of ideal point estimation.

Another scholar (Jenkins 1999, 2000) has estimated these ideal points previously, but the same problem of cross-temporal comparability arises. This forces scholars to use an alternative approach. Moreover, while there are a plethora of methods to estimate the latent preferences, few methods offer a satisfactory manner to address dynamic shifts. In the next section, I examine Jenkins’ previous work in detail, as well as potential solutions. Therein, I offer a solution that integrates the theory into the statistical estimation.



## 4 Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) Ideal Point Estimation

### 4.1 Previous attempts at Confederate ideal point estimation

Jenkins (1999; 2000) is the first scholar to actually estimate ideal points for the legislators in the Confederate Congress. Employing Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) W-NOMINATE procedure, he is able to estimate ideal points for legislators and analyze the issue space, percent correctly classified, dimensionality of voting, and host of other relevant measures (Jenkins 1999, 1152-1157). In a subsequent paper, Jenkins (2000) looks at the issues that may affect a legislator's ideal point. Specifically, he analyzes the hypothesis of whether the shock to a district caused by being occupied by Federal troops caused a statistically significant change in ideal point, controlling for other relevant demographic variables. To do this, he employs both one-way and two-way fixed effects models regressing a legislator's ideal point at session  $t$  on his ideal point at  $t - 1$  plus some other factors (2000, 819-820). He finds no significant shock effect, but he does find that districts always or never occupied do have different ideal points in the two-way fixed effects models (2000, 820).

Unfortunately, this method relies on the assumption that the ideal points of legislators at the various points in time are directly comparable. This is key because W-NOMINATE is designed to be a *static* measure. More clearly, W-NOMINATE scores at time  $t$  and  $t - 1$  are not directly comparable. By treating W-NOMINATE scores as dynamic, it is possible that Jenkins' coefficient estimates and, more importantly, his inferences about the effect of district occupation on ideal points are not reflective of the true underlying process.

## 4.2 Extant solutions and a new approach

There are a number of ways one could correct this obvious problem. First, one could employ a dynamic ideal point estimation routine, in either a frequentist (e.g., Poole and Rosenthal [1997]’s DW-NOMINATE) or Bayesian (e.g., Martin and Quinn [2002]’s Bayesian Dynamic Linear Model) framework.<sup>2</sup> Poole and Rosenthal’s approach constrains legislators to travel in a polynomial trend over time, that is, for an ideal point  $v_{it}$  of legislator  $i$  and time  $t$ ,

$$v_{it} = \sum_{\tau=0}^T v_{i\tau} t^\tau.$$

Instead of using time period  $t$ , Poole and Rosenthal use  $\mathcal{T}$ , a set of Legendre polynomials. This choice is out of computational convenience and is substantively the same. This approach, as noted by Snyder, Groseclose, and Levitt (1999), constrains legislators to move in the same ideological direction over time. Legislators are not allowed to move in a more conservative direction, then move to a liberal position, and then back. This constraint on legislators’ behavior prevents us from using DW-NOMINATE to evaluate legislators’ changing ideal points.

Martin and Quinn’s (2002) method models the ideal point over time as a random walk in the parameter space that is governed by two parameters: yesterday’s ideal point and the variance parameter. This is presented parametrically as follows:

$$v_{it} \sim \mathcal{N}(v_{i,t-1}, \Delta).$$

This seems to be less restrictive than the Poole and Rosenthal approach, but a natural consequence is the exponential increase in computational time. For estimates of the Supreme Court that cover a handful of justices and a few hundred cases, the process can take weeks to implement. For the Confederate Congresses, with over 150 members and six time sessions, the method is simply impractical.

The second framework is the Snyder, Groseclose, and Levitt (1999) “scale and

shift” approach. Though originally applied to ADA scores, it is equally usable for ideal points. In this framework, one would estimate six separate ideal points and then connect them by the assumption that year-to-year changes are governed by scale and shift parameters ( $a$  and  $b$ ). A legislator  $i$ ’s ideal point at time  $t$  is governed by the linear model

$$v_{it} = a_t + b_t x_i + \varepsilon_{it},$$

where the error term is normal with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma^2$ .  $x_i$  is the legislator’s “over life” ideal point, assumed to be fixed over time. Thus, year-to-year variation is only manifest as a result of the error. Moreover, this error, by virtue of the estimation process, is minimized.<sup>3</sup> This too causes a major problem for our purposes.

A third and more feasible approach is available if one has strong theoretical predictions about when legislators’ ideal points would change.<sup>4</sup> As long as there exist some legislators who don’t change, one can “pin down” the issue space and compute two sets of ideal points for the changing legislators: one before and one after.<sup>5</sup>

To make this procedure clearer, an example is in order. Suppose that we have a legislature with two members,  $A$  and  $B$ . Legislator  $A$ ’s roll call record is chosen arbitrarily. For  $B$ , without loss of generality, assume that his district became occupied at time  $t$  and let legislator  $A$ ’s district remain unchanged (i.e., either always or never occupied). Now, let  $B'$  denote legislator  $B$ ’s new entry after being occupied. The matrix below presents the resulting (hypothetical) roll call matrix where the first row is  $A$ , the second is  $B$ , and the third is  $B'$ . Also, time  $t$  occurs following the first set of ellipses. In the next section, I propose a procedure to estimate ideal points for legislators employing the theoretical argument above with the matrix structure in Table 3.

[Table 3 about here.]

### 4.3 The Model

Though Jenkins (1999; 2000) opts to use Poole and Rosenthal's (1997) W-NOMINATE procedure for estimating legislator ideal points, I found it more expedient to apply the more recent Bayesian approach of Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004).<sup>6</sup> This choice is not out of a strong philosophical commitment to Bayesian inference. Rather, it comes as a result of the simplicity and computational efficiency of Bayesian Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods. Moreover, it has been shown (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004) that W-NOMINATE and MCMC produce essentially the same result.

The foundation of this model is the simple spatial model of voting. Following the setup of Clinton et al. (2004), I denote the roll calls  $j = 1, \dots, J$  and legislators  $i = 1, \dots, n$ . Let  $\psi_j$  denote the spatial position of "Yea" on roll call  $j$  and  $\tau_j$  denote the spatial position of "Nay." We observe a variable  $y_{ij}$  that is equal to 1 if  $i$  votes "Yea" and 0 if he votes "Nay." Following the well-established results of Poole and Rosenthal (1997) as well as Jenkins' (2000) previous results, I assume the policy space to be unidimensional. Furthermore, I assume that the utility functions are quadratic with normal errors.

If legislator  $i$ 's ideal point is given by  $\tilde{v}_i$ , then his utility for "Yea" is given by  $u_i(\psi_j) = -\|\tilde{v}_i - \psi_j\|^2 + \eta_{ij}$  and his utility of "Nay" is given by  $u_i(\tau_j) = -\|\tilde{v}_i - \tau_j\|^2 + \varepsilon_{ij}$ , where  $\eta_{ij}$  and  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  are jointly-distributed normal errors. According to the spatial model, a legislator will choose to vote "Yea" if he gets higher utility for  $\psi_j$

than for  $\tau_j$ . Mathematically, we may express this as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
Pr(y_{ij} = 1) &= Pr(u_i(\psi_j) > u_i(\tau_j)) \\
&= Pr(\varepsilon_{ij} - \eta_{ij} < \|\tilde{v}_i - \psi_j\|^2 - \|\tilde{x}_i - \tau_j\|) \\
&= Pr(\varepsilon_{ij} - \eta_{ij} < 2(\psi_j - \tau_j)\tilde{v}_i + \tau_j^2 - \psi_j^2) \\
&= \Phi(-\alpha_j + \beta_j\tilde{v}_i),
\end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where  $\beta_j = 2(\psi_j - \tau_j)/\sigma_j$  is the discrimination parameter,  $\alpha = (\psi_j^2 - \tau_j^2)/\sigma_j$  is the difficulty parameter,  $\sigma_j^2 = \text{var}(\eta_{ij} - \varepsilon_{ij})$ , and  $\Phi(\cdot)$  is the standard normal cdf. Our likelihood function is thus given by

$$\mathcal{L}(\boldsymbol{\beta}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \mathbf{X}|\mathbf{Y}) = \prod_{i=1}^n \prod_{j=1}^J \Phi(-\alpha_j + \tilde{v}_i\beta_j)^{y_{ij}} (1 - \Phi(-\alpha_j + \tilde{v}_i\beta_j))^{1-y_{ij}}, \tag{2}$$

where  $\boldsymbol{\beta} = (\beta_1, \dots, \beta_J)'$ ,  $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_J)'$ ,  $\mathbf{X}$  is an  $n \times 1$  matrix of ideal points, and  $\mathbf{Y}$  is an  $n \times J$  matrix of roll call votes across legislators such that  $y_{ij} \in \mathbf{Y}$ .

#### 4.4 Identification restrictions

Identification problems are common to all models based on Item Response Theory (IRT). The likelihood in Equation (2) is no exception to this rule. In order to estimate the parameters of interest, one must impose an identification restriction. Rivers (2003) and Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004) suggest fixing two legislators' ideal points at +1 and -1 respectively. Alternatively, one could constrain ideal points to have mean 0 and unit variance. Following the literature, I opt for the latter. In order to do the former, it is necessary for me to pin down two legislators, one on the "left" and one on the "right." This is less obvious than in modern Congresses, where scholars have a fairly clear picture of who the extremes may be. Thus, for simplicity, I choose to just let the ideal points to have a mean at 0 and variance of 1.

## 4.5 Priors

To employ a full Bayesian model, it is necessary to put prior distributions on the discrimination parameters, the difficulty parameters, and the ideal points. For the first two, I assume that they are drawn from a bivariate Normal distribution such that

$$\begin{bmatrix} \alpha_j \\ \beta_j \end{bmatrix} \sim \mathcal{N}_2(\zeta, \Sigma^{-1}), \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathcal{N}_2$  is the bivariate Normal distribution,  $\zeta$  is a  $2 \times 1$  vector of prior means and  $\Sigma^{-1}$  is a  $2 \times 2$  variance-covariance matrix. For simplicity, I assume that the prior means on both of these parameters to be zero and the variance to be 4 (hence, a precision of .25), with zeroes for off-diagonal elements. As a choice for priors for the ideal points,  $\tilde{v}_i$  I assume that they are drawn from a univariate Normal distribution such that

$$\tilde{v}_i \sim \mathcal{N}(\theta, \zeta^{-1}), \quad (4)$$

where  $\theta$  is a prior mean of zero, and  $\zeta^{-1}$  is the prior precision (and variance) of 1.

Combining these prior with the likelihood above yields the full posterior:

$$\pi(\boldsymbol{\beta}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \mathbf{X} | \mathbf{Y}) \propto \prod_{i=1}^n \prod_{j=1}^J \Phi(-\alpha_j + \tilde{v}_i \beta_j)^{y_{ij}} (1 - \Phi(-\alpha_j + \tilde{v}_i \beta_j))^{1-y_{ij}} \mathcal{N}_2(\zeta, \Sigma^{-1})_j \mathcal{N}(\theta, \zeta^{-1})_i. \quad (5)$$

Note that subscripts have been appended to priors defined above. Since the priors are assumed to be the same across all parameters, the subscripts allow us to include them in the products above.

## 4.6 Estimation

The advent of modern computing has made simulation from otherwise complex posteriors (e.g., Equation 4) much more reasonable. In particular, Political Science scholars have made use of Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods to estimate models of the sort presented above (see, e.g., Clinton, Jackman, Rivers 2004 or Martin and Quinn 2002). One can make use of this technology by either opting to program Gibbs sampling routines manually or resorting to existing software packages and various add-ons. Though the freely distributed WinBUGS software is by far the most popular method of employing MCMC, I have opted in this application to employ Martin and Quinn’s library for R, `MCMCpack`. The choice is simply a matter of taste and computational efficiency. Since Martin and Quinn’s code is written in C++, it is able to process information and retrieve estimates much faster than WinBUGS. Moreover, given the popularity of R for statistical computing, `MCMCpack` allows users to work directly in R and obtain R output, thus allowing for further analyses directly in the software of choice.

To initiate the MCMC, simple factor analysis was used to generate initial values for the  $\tilde{v}_i$ ’s.<sup>7</sup> I created 3 chains of 120,000 iterations each. For each chain, I burned-in the first 20,000 observations and employed a thinning interval of 1. Thus, at completion, I had three chains of 100,000 observations each for each of the 213 legislators in my roll call matrix. To assess convergence, I employed Gelman et al. (1992)’s  $\hat{R}$ , given by the following equation:

$$\hat{R} = \sqrt{\frac{\widehat{\text{var}}(\psi|y)}{W}}, \quad (6)$$

where  $\widehat{\text{var}}(\psi|y) = \frac{n-1}{n}W + \frac{1}{n}B$ ,  $n$  is the length of each chain,  $B$  is the between-chain variance, and  $W$  is the across-chain variance. Values of  $\hat{R}$  close to 1 indicate convergence whereas large values do not. All ideal points had values of  $\hat{R}$  close to 1, thus leading us to believe that we have approached the target posterior and,

hence, have the correct ideal points.

## 5 Empirical Results

### 5.1 Ideal point estimates

The estimates of the legislators' ideal points are found in the appendix. Table 4 aggregates the summary statistics of these ideal points by district occupation. As we see, occupation of the district *does* have a strong relationship with the legislators' ideal points. The means of legislators from districts that were either always occupied or became occupied (rows two and four) are much further to the right than those that were from districts that were either never occupied or were unoccupied for a time (rows one and three). Moreover, the 95% region can be seen to shift in all four cases, thus indicating that there is unquestionably a relationship between the occupation of a district and legislators' ideology.

[Table 4 about here.]

For those legislators who came from districts that switched from being unoccupied to occupied, one can compare their ideal points before and after occupation graphically. Figure 3 plots the legislator's ideal point at time  $t$  (before his district was occupied) on the  $x$ -axis against his ideal point at  $t - 1$  (after occupation). Under the null hypothesis, one would expect all legislators' ideal points to lie along the line  $y = x$ , a 45-degree line. If a legislator's ideal point is above this line, it indicates he changed in a direction more in favor of central-state authority. Should his ideal point fall below the line, it would indicate the reverse. As we see in this figure, most legislators lie above the line, as predicted. Indeed, of the 50 legislators in my data set whose districts changed occupation status, 42 moved to the right. Furthermore, for the 8 cases falling below the line, their change is very slight and not significantly negative.



[Figure 3 about here.]

## 5.2 OLS Models

The preliminary results established above can be explored further by employing a simple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model. While I have shown that there is obviously some relationship with district occupation and ideal point, there are a number of other factors that need to be controlled for to guarantee the robustness of the result.

Several scholars (e.g., Martis 2004; Alexander and Berginger 1972; Yearn 1960) have suggested a number of important variables that have some sort of discernable relationship with legislative voting behavior. These variables include the legislators' personal wealth, the number of slaves he owns, his former political party, and his stance on secession. Thanks to Alexander and Berginger (1972, 354-389), the data on all of these variables has been collected and is readily available.

Former political party takes a value of 0 if the legislator was a Democrat and 1 if he was a Whig. Though there were no formal parties in the Confederacy, it is possible that old rivalries and debates could have possibly divided legislators in the Confederate Congresses. Secession stance is set to 0 if the legislator was pro-secession and 1 if he was unionist. Legislators who supported secession may simply desire to "do what it takes" to preserve the Confederacy, whereas those who were unionist would be less inclined to do so.

Table 1 presents the relative proportions (or means) of each of these variables for all members of the Confederate Congresses. Though political party was not a *de jure* component of the legislative process, old political rivalries and debates may have potentially resurfaced. As we see in Table 1, the vast majority of legislators in the Confederate Congress were former Democrats. This is not a surprise, given that party's dominance in the South during the *antebellum* period. What is perhaps more surprising is the fact that only 55% of legislators could be

classified as secessionist. This implies that 45% of legislators were opposed to secession and this—quite possibly—would mean that these legislators would not want to give the government even more authority than it had already wielded. To explore the relationship between partisanship and secessionist beliefs, Table 2 shows a crosstabulation of former party and secession stance. We readily note that most former Whigs were anti-secession and most former Democrats were pro-secession.

**[Table 1 about here.]**

**[Table 2 about here.]**

As for the two other variables in Table 1, number of slaves and personal wealth, we see that the mean legislator had a large number of slaves and was fairly wealthy. The number of slaves is simply the number of slaves that the legislator owned at the time of his election. Presumably those legislators with the the most number of slaves had the most to lose from a Confederate failure and would be willing to go to great lengths to achieve victory.

Personal wealth is the 1860 estate value of the legislator in U.S. dollars. This variable could potentially be significant if legislators from the wealthy cotton and tobacco districts voted differently from those representing poorer districts. For comparative purposes, \$1 in 1860 is worth approximately \$21.66 in 2006 inflation-adjusted US dollars. This puts the mean estate value of Confederate legislators at \$1,556,704 in 2006 dollars. This is a bit misleading however, as the medians are significantly lower than the means. Indeed, upon closer inspection, a few legislators from the deep South (especially Louisiana) had a very large number of slaves and expensive plantations.

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate this. Note the “box and whiskers” for Louisiana stands out and that several other states (notably, Mississippi) have one significant outlier.<sup>8</sup> This being considered, it seems conceivable that legislators with more

slaves and higher-valued estates would have more to lose by a Confederate loss and, hence, would be more willing to support a stronger central government.

[Figure 1 about here.]

[Figure 2 about here.]

The final and, as I argued in detail above, most important variable to consider is a district's occupation by Federal troops. As the war progressed, an ever-increasing number of districts were occupied by Federal troops. In fact, by the midpoint of the Second Congress, almost half of the Confederate states, mostly those along the borderlands of the Confederacy (e.g., Arkansas and Kentucky), were occupied. The occupation forced legislators to remain in Richmond and make decisions without communication with their constituents. Intuitively, it seems reasonable that severing the electoral connection could impact the behavior of legislators.

To consider the effect of district occupation, it is necessary to run two separate regressions. This approach is required because of the way in which legislators' ideal points were estimated. In the case where a legislator's district changed occupation status, we have two ideal points and are consequently interested in factors influencing any ideological shift that may have occurred. For the case of districts that did not change, we only have one ideal point to look at. However, in these cases, we are interested in examining the difference between the districts that were always occupied (i.e., Kentucky, Missouri, and western Virginia) and those that were never occupied (e.g., Texas and Florida).<sup>9</sup>

In the first regression, we consider only those districts that switched in the occupation status. To capture the effect of occupation, I consider two variables. First, to capture the effect of occupation directly, I construct a dummy variable called *Before*. This variable is equal to 1 if it is before occupation and 0 after. Second, I can examine the indirect effect of occupation using a variable called

*Neighbor*. This variable ranges from 0 to 1 and measures the proportion of districts in the legislator’s state that are occupied at a particular time point. This could be important if legislators are not simply reacting to their own district’s occupation (and, hence, future), but rather looking at the districts of their fellow statesman. Indeed, it may be the case that occupation of neighboring districts has a “contagious effect” on a legislator’s voting behavior. Moreover, since the effect of each variable is almost certainly mitigated by the other, it is necessary to interact them in the regression model that follows.

Putting these facts together with the variables above yields the following linear regression model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Idealpoint} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Before} + \beta_2 \text{Neighbor} + \beta_{12} \text{Before} \times \text{Neighbor} + \beta_3 \text{Secession} \\ & + \beta_4 \text{Party} + \beta_5 \text{Slaves} + \beta_6 \text{Estate}. \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

The results are presented in Table 5. As we see first and foremost, the variable *Before* is both negative and significant as predicted and, thus, negates Jenkins’ (2000) previous finding. The related variable, *Neighbor*, is also negative and significant, implying that as the proportion of occupied neighboring districts increases, the ideal point actually shifts in the negative (anti-central authority) direction. However, since these variables are interacted, it is necessary to take partial derivatives in order to evaluate the substantive effects (see Friedrich 1982). For the marginal effect of occupation, we differentiate Equation (7) with respect to *Before*:

$$\frac{\partial \text{Idealpoint}}{\partial \text{Before}} = -1.11 + 1.20 \text{Neighbor}.$$

From this equation, we readily note that if none of the legislator’s home-state districts are occupied, the effect of *Before* is  $-1.11$ , meaning that the ideal point before occupation is 1.11 less than after occupation. To see the effect for other levels of neighboring district occupation, as well as respective confidence bounds,

I provide Figure 4.<sup>10</sup> I vary the proportion of neighboring districts occupied on the  $x$ -axis and place the ideal points on the  $y$ -axis. As we see, as the proportion of neighboring districts that are occupied increases, the magnitude of the effect of occupation on the legislator's own district actually decreases. This makes sense intuitively, in that the "shock" of occupation is essentially dulled in states where the U.S. Army has already gained as substantial foothold.

[Table 5 about here.]

[Figure 4 about here.]

In a similar fashion, to find the effect of *Neighbor*, we differentiate with respect to *Neighbor*:

$$\frac{\partial \text{Ideal point}}{\partial \text{Neighbor}} = -1.08 + 1.20\text{Before}.$$

Since *Before* is a dummy variable, there are only two possible effects for *Neighbor*. If *Before* is equal to zero, the effect is .12. If before *Before* is equal to one, then the effect is  $-1.08$ . However, upon calculating the corresponding  $t$ -statistics, only the effect where *Before* is equal to zero is statistically significant. Since that effect is positive and significant, this means that legislators' ideal points after occupation increase, on average, by .12 for a unit increase in the proportion of neighboring districts occupied. This effect is in line with the argument presented above and the results for the effect of *Before* as well.

The variable *Secession* is also significant and in the predicted direction; unionists had significantly more negative ideal points than secessionists. *Party*, though in the predicted direction, is not statistically significant. The variable *Slaves* is in the right direction—higher values lead to, on average, more positive ideal points—but is not statistically significant. *Estate* is neither in the correct direction nor significant, though the magnitude is extremely small in any event. These results show in a clear and unambiguous fashion that, when controlling for other factors, the effect of changing district occupation is significant.

For the second model, we focus our attention on the cases that *did not* change: that is, districts that were either always or never occupied. The variables will be the same as above, except for the variable *Before*. In its place, I add a dummy indicator called *Never* that is equal to 1 if the district was never occupied or 0 if always occupied. This is important to consider, as Jenkins (2000) found that, though the “shock” of district occupation was not significant, there is a statistically significant difference for those districts that were always or never occupied. As in the case for districts that did change, I include the variable *Neighbor* and the interaction term. These could be important to consider if the difference between always and never occupied districts is related to the proportion of districts in their respective states that are occupied.

The model can be written as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Idealpoint} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Never} + \beta_2 \text{Neighbor} + \beta_{12} \text{Never} \times \text{Neighbor} + \beta_3 \text{Secession} \\
 & + \beta_4 \text{Party} + \beta_5 \text{Slaves} + \beta_6 \text{Estate}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

Results from estimating Equation (8) are presented in Table 6. The primary conclusion from this table is, once again, Jenkins’ (2000) finding is incorrect; *Never* does not have a statistically significant impact on ideal points of legislators. Moreover, *Neighbor* and the interaction are not statistically significant. Though I suppress the marginal effects derived in the first OLS model, I find that for any value of *Never* or *Neighbor*, the respective effects are never statistically significant. Secession stance and estate value have positive and significant effects on ideal points. However, former political party is not significant. Even more telling, the coefficient on the number of slaves is negative and significant, the opposite of what was found previously. This is not surprising and, moreover, further buttresses my argument. Legislators with a lot of slaves from districts that did not change hands did not have the “shock” caused by the invasion. This in turn did not cause them

to support the desperate measures that those in the first model did.

[Table 6 about here.]

The results from these two models indicate that the effect of *changing* district occupation and not just occupation alone is a significant and unmistakable component of legislators' voting behavior. Moreover, by controlling for the other variables and incorporating the effect of occupation of neighboring districts, the results are even more robust. Another interesting factor to consider is that former political party was not significant in either model. This suggests that the political affiliations that were forged in the Southern legislators' pasts were not as deeply-rooted as partisanship seems to be in the modern era.

To make the inferences I have drawn here even more clear and unmistakable, I present a specific case study in the roll call history of the Confederate Congresses: the vote to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*. This issue, where the question of central state authority is perhaps the clearest, will put the hypotheses and results derived heretofore to yet another test.

### 5.3 Specific case study: suspension of *habeas corpus*

The writ of *habeas corpus*, a Latin phrase meaning "ye should have the body," is considered one of the corner-stones of Anglo-Saxon law (Yearns 1960, 150; Martis 1994, 90). It expressly denies the government the right to unlawfully detain persons in captivity. As is often taught in American history courses, President Abraham Lincoln suspended the writ of *habeas corpus* in the North during the war in the face of desertion, draft riots, and other miscellaneous domestic problems (Yearns 1960, 150-152). Less well known is that the same measure was invoked by President Jefferson Davis in the Confederacy. It is perhaps more interesting that the Confederate government suspended the writ, in that this action is expressly opposed to the entire purpose for secession in the first place—states' and

individuals' rights. A number of the South's outspoken statesmen made clear statements on these matters. One John Murray of Tennessee remarked that he did not understand "[a] political doctrine that teaches that in order to get liberty you must first lose it" (Alexander and Beringer 1972, 172-173). Another legislator, Reuben Davis, thought that the suspension of this civil liberty would lead Davis to suspend Congress (Yeans 1960, 152). Thus, the debate on the suspension of *habeas corpus* was intense and it is clear that the suspension was at odds with the Confederate nation's ideals.

Why would a legislator support such a thing? John Murray and Reuben Davis were not alone in their opposition to this apparent usurpation of individuals' rights vis-à-vis the central government. According to my hypothesis, one would expect legislators from occupied districts to be much more in favor of the suspension of the writ than their unoccupied counterparts. Although the measure was unpopular, those from occupied districts could support this "necessary" ceding of power to the executive without fears of electoral retribution. Further, legislators may have supported suspending the writ because the occupation of their districts made vivid the implications of an un-centralized government.

Upon inspection of the controversial vote to suspend the writ on December 8, 1864, we find 82% of legislators from occupied districts supported the suspension of the writ. Contrast this with a mere 22% support from legislators in unoccupied districts. This initial finding can be formalized in a simple logit model. Let  $y_i$  denote legislator  $i$ 's vote on the bill, where  $y_i = 1$  denotes "Yea" and  $y_i = 0$  denotes "Nay." This observed behavior can be thought of as a realization of some latent variable  $y_i^*$  where

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } y_i^* > 0 \\ 0, & \text{if } y_i^* \leq 0 \end{cases} . \quad (9)$$

If we let  $X$  denote the covariates in the previous OLS models (i.e., former party,



secession stance, estate value, number of slaves, and occupation status), the latent  $y_i^*$  can be written as

$$y_i^* = X_i\beta + \varepsilon_i. \quad (10)$$

Letting  $\varepsilon_i$  be distributed Type 1 Extreme Value (T1EV) yields a logit model, the estimates of which are found in Table 7. Though logit coefficients cannot be directly interpreted, we can assess sign and significance. As predicted, occupation of a district leads to a statistically significant increase in the probability of voting “Yea,” controlling for the other variables. *Party* and *Slaves* are both significant as well, and as predicted—Democrats and legislators with more slaves have a higher predicted probability of voting in support of suspending *habeas corpus*. Neither secession stance nor estate value seem to be significant.

[Table 7 about here.]

To go beyond the simple sign and significance found for the coefficients in Table 7, I produce predicted probabilities for the logit model. Using the  $\hat{\beta}$ 's found in the logit regression above, I hold both *Estate* and *Slaves* at their means, vary combinations of party, secession stance, and occupation status, and calculated the predicted probability of voting “Yea.” The results are found in Table 8. As we see, members from occupied districts are always more likely to vote “Yea” than legislators from unoccupied districts. Indeed, changing from unoccupied to occupied increases probabilities exponentially. For example, a Democrat secessionist from an unoccupied district only has a 12% predicted probability of voting “Yea.” Changing his district to occupied increases the predicted probability to 68%, over a five-fold increase! Though former Whigs were the least likely to vote “Yea,” being from an occupied district leads to significantly higher probabilities of supporting the suspension of the writ. In short, district occupation is a clear, powerful factor in predicting voting behavior, even when controlling for

other relevant factors.

[Table 8 about here.]

## 6 Discussion

In this paper, I argue that the national crisis brought about by the Civil War, exacerbated by the Federal occupation of Congressional districts in the Confederacy, led Southern legislators to alter their voting behavior. To demonstrate this, I introduce empirical evidence for the shifting of ideal points of legislators. More importantly, this shift is shown to have a close relationship with the occupation of the legislator's district. Though not a primary goal of the paper, I necessarily address two methodological issues. First, I demonstrate that treating static ideal points as cross-temporally comparable can lead to faulty inferences in subsequent analyses. Second, and related to the first, I have brought to light some of the challenges presented by estimating preferences of decision-makers over time.

All of these objectives, either primary or secondary, are certainly interrelated, at least to the degree that they influence one another. The use of statistical methodology to evaluate historical events and institutions is surely a positive development. Indeed, modern methodological tools afford scholars new and innovative ways to investigate old claims and hypotheses. At the same time, however, it is imperative that the methods employed be appropriate to the historical application. In the case of preferences, using dynamic ideal points allows scholars to evaluate historically-based claims surrounding decision-makers' preferences in a coherent and correct fashion. Nonetheless, the methods themselves are not infallible—all of them rely on a set of more-or-less restrictive assumptions. Depending on the application, some assumptions are more reasonable than others. Thus, it befalls on researchers to evaluate which approach's assumptions are appropriate to the situation at hand.

For the case of the Confederate Congress discussed at length in this paper, the methods employed have provided solid evidence that legislators' preferences shifted as a result of their Congressional district's occupation. Even when controlling for all core factors that might otherwise have affected preferences (e.g., former party, secession stance), district occupation still has a substantial impact on ideal point shifts. Though one cannot have a complete sense of the psychological factors that affected legislators' decisions to change, it seems clear that the reality of military loss and subsequent political change caused enough of a stir in legislators' minds to induce ideal point shifting. However, one must not ignore the intense normative implications of these legislators' choices. The calls for secession among Southern intellectuals were almost wholly theoretical. They based the legitimacy of a Southern Confederacy on the principles of limited, accountable government and individual liberty. To the contrary, the evidence presented in this paper has shown quite clearly that the occupation of legislators' districts caused them to vote in way contrary to these principles. Consequently, a new question begs to be answered: in the aftermath of these anti-states' rights votes, what was the new basis for an independent Southern nation? If the South did in fact win its independence, would legislators go back to their "old selves"? How would they answer to their newly un-occupied constituencies?

Future research should explore these issues further, as similar historical circumstances have reared their heads in the nearly 150 years since the Civil War. By exploring legislators' motives, political scientists will become one step closer to explaining the relationship between historical circumstances and individual behavior. In turn, this will shed light on our understanding of legislative institutions, decision-making, and, more broadly, human behavior when under fire.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>That is, the shift should have been towards opposition to central authority, not the promotion thereof.

<sup>2</sup>As of this draft, Poole does not provide software to perform DW-NOMINATE at his website, <http://www.voteview.com>. Andrew Martin and Kevin Quinn do provide C++ code to run their dynamic Bayesian model, but this code is not supported. New code is expected to be released sometime in the near future.

<sup>3</sup>Since this is a linear model, we desire to minimize the error, i.e., the distance between the estimate and the true value.

<sup>4</sup>One other option would be to simply fix two legislators over the entire time period. If we believed that their ideal points truly remained fixed, then we could identify and compare cross-temporal ideal points for all legislators. Results from this approach do not vary substantially from what follows in this paper.

<sup>5</sup>Even if this assumption fails and legislators, regardless of occupation, are shifting towards the support of a strong government in Richmond, the worst case scenario is *understating* preference shifts. Specifically, if districts that were never or always occupied also shifted, then ensuing estimates for districts that changed occupation status will reflect shifts above and beyond the districts that did not.

<sup>6</sup>As a robustness check, I conducted all ensuing analysis using W-NOMINATE as well. All results are nearly identical and are available, upon request, from the author.

<sup>7</sup>Specifically, the initial ideal points were obtained by performing an eigenvalue-eigenvector decomposition on the matrix of agreement scores.

<sup>8</sup>Though the box and whiskers plots for both estate value and number of slaves show the presence of outliers, there was one even larger outlier from Mississippi truncated from Figure 1 to ensure readability. This was Representative J.W. Clapp from Mississippi's 1st; he had an estate worth about \$1.76 million

(1860 dollars).

<sup>9</sup>If I had estimated multiple ideal points for all legislators, the two-equation setup would not be necessary. Indeed, if one estimates ideal points using one of the alternate methods discussed in Section 2.3, there would be six ideal points for every legislator and subsequent analysis could be performed using a single panel data model.

<sup>10</sup>Standard errors for Figure 4 were calculated by the following equation:

$s.e. = \sqrt{\sigma_1^2 + Neighbor^2 \sigma_{12}^2 + 2 \times Neighbor \times cov(\beta_1 \beta_{12})}$ . See Friedrich 1982 for more details.

## Tables and Figures

Table 1: The Confederate Congresses at a Glance

	Mean/proportion	s.d.	Median	NA
Former Democrat	58.5%	—	—	27
Secessionist	55.8%	—	—	31
Number of slaves	36.8	63.4	13.5	16
Estate value (1860 U.S.D.)	\$71,870	\$125,491.40	\$33,770	14



Table 2: Membership frequency by former party and secession stance

	Secessionist	Unionist
Former Democrat	55	13
Former Whig	8	42

Table 3: Hypothetical matrix of roll call votes

$T$	1	2	...	$t$	$t+1$	...	$N$
$A$	1	0	...	1	0	...	1
$B$	0	1	...	NA	NA	...	NA
$B'$	NA	NA	...	0	1	...	0

Table 4: Legislator ideal points disaggregated by district occupation status

	Mean	Median	2.5% Quantile	97.5% Quantile
Never Occupied	-0.2900	-0.3700	- 0.5800	+ 0.2700
Always Occupied	+0.1390	+0.0650	- 0.4500	+ 1.670
Occupied—before	-0.039	- 0.0300	-0.7200	+ 0.7800
Occupied—after	+0.0690	+ 0.0078	- 0.5300	+ 1.2200

Table 5: OLS model predicting ideal points for districts that changed control

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	p-value
Intercept	<b>0.82</b>	0.37	2.24	0.01
Before	<b>-1.11</b>	0.51	-2.19	0.02
Prop. Neighbor Occupied	<b>-1.08</b>	0.46	-2.34	0.01
Before × Prop. Neighbor Occupied	<b>1.20</b>	0.62	1.92	0.03
Secession Stance	<b>0.42</b>	0.20	2.07	0.02
Former Party	-0.23	0.19	-1.19	0.12
Number of Slaves	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.39
Estate Value	-0.00	0.00	-0.06	0.48
Multiple- $R^2$	0.228			
$N$	56			

Table 6: OLS model predicting ideal points for districts that did not change control

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	p-value
Intercept	-0.21	0.38	-0.54	0.30
Never	0.19	0.38	0.51	0.31
Prop. Neighbor Occupied	-0.26	0.41	-0.65	0.26
Never $\times$ Prop. Neighbor Occupied	0.12	0.48	0.25	0.40
Secession Stance	<b>0.43</b>	0.12	3.45	0.00
Former Party	0.18	0.13	1.43	0.08
Number of Slaves	<b>-0.01</b>	0.00	-2.59	0.01
Estate Value	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	2.30	0.01
Multiple- $R^2$	0.445			
$N$	63			

Table 7: Logit model on the vote for suspension of Habeas Corpus

	Estimate	Std. Error	<i>t</i> -statistic	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	-1.88	1.42	-1.32	0.10
Occupied	<b>2.78</b>	1.48	1.88	0.03
Secession Stance	-0.55	1.18	-0.47	0.32
Former Party	<b>-2.98</b>	1.46	-2.04	0.02
Number of Slaves	<b>0.02</b>	0.01	1.94	0.03
Estate value	-0.00	0.00	-1.46	0.07
$\ln \mathcal{L}$	-23			
AIC	55.56			
<i>N</i>	52			

Table 8: Predicted probability of voting in favor of suspending *habeas corpus*

	Unoccupied	Occupied
Democrat, Secessionist	12.0%	68.0%
Democrat, Unionist	7.20%	56.0%
Whig, Secessionist	0.68%	9.90%
Whig, Unionist	0.39%	6.00%

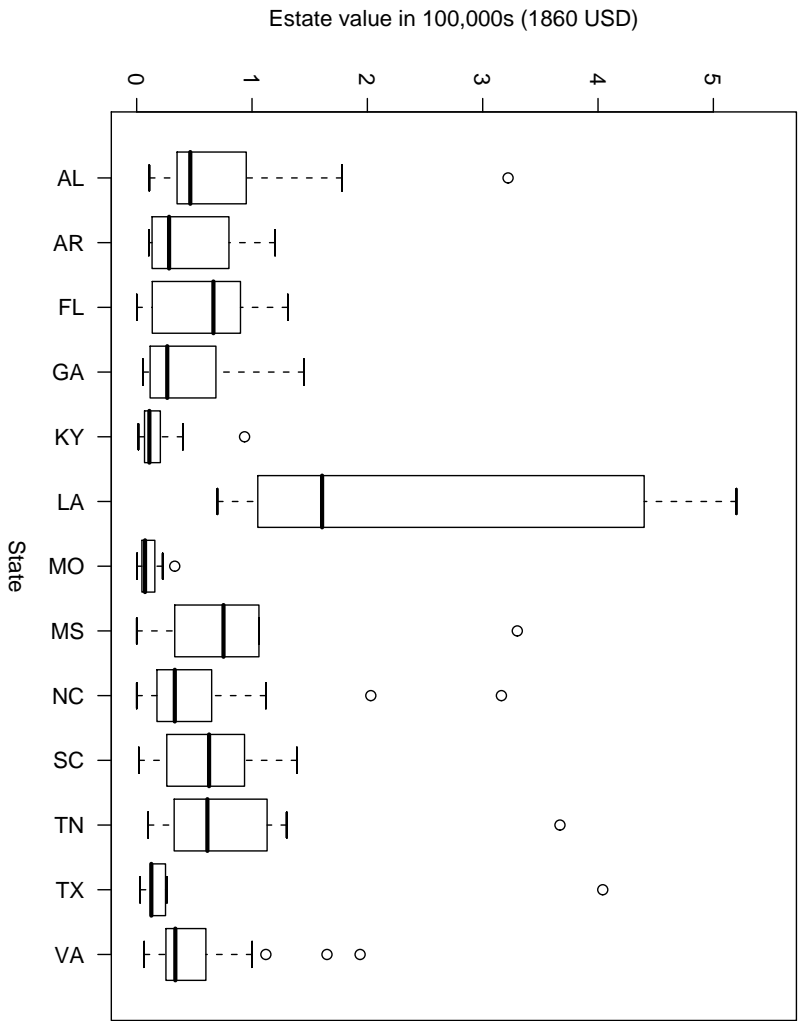


Figure 1: 1860 Estate value by state delegation



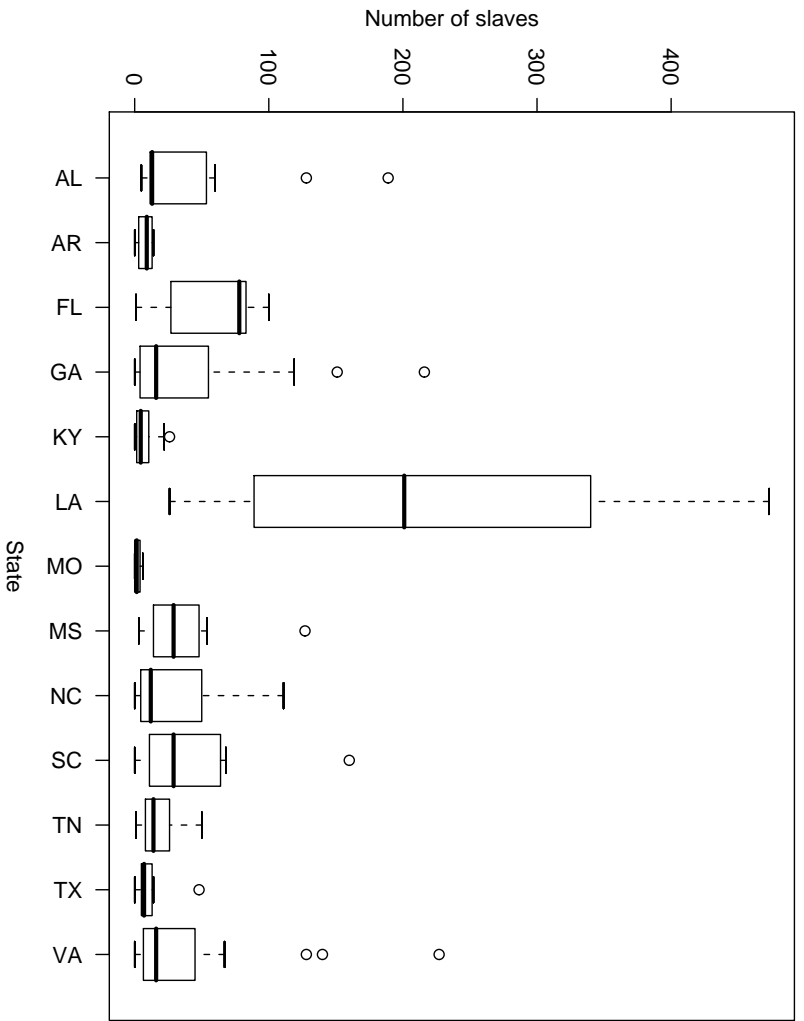


Figure 2: Number of slaves by state delegation

Figure 3: Ideal Points Before and After Occupation

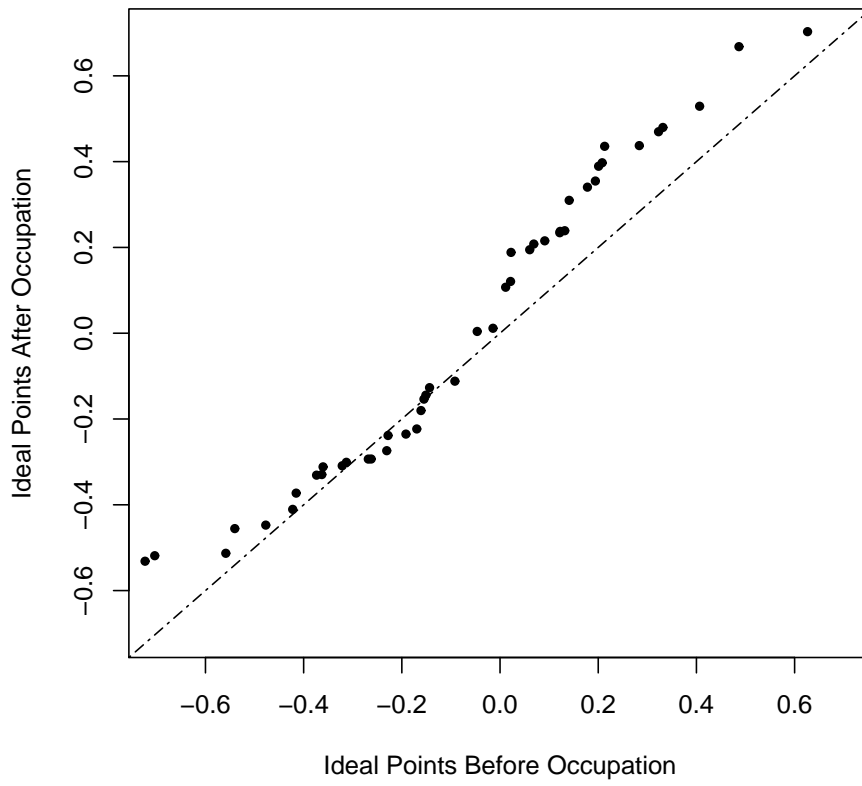


Figure 4: Effect of occupation on voting behavior

