

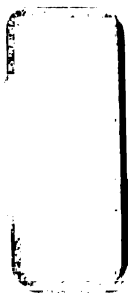
PIETY AND POLITICS: EVANGELICISM IN
THE MICHIGAN HOUSE (1838-60)

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ABSTRACT

PIETY AND POLITICS: EVANGELICISM IN THE MICHIGAN HOUSE (1838-60)

By

John F. Reynolds

This paper utilizes simple quantitative analysis of roll call votes in the Michigan House of Representatives to discern the impact of "evangelical" issues in state politics during the Jacksonian Era. According to historian Ronald Formisano, moral and religious attitudes forged the state's Democratic and Whig parties at the mass level. Democrats were opposed to legislation touching on public morals; Whigs, and later Republicans, were more favorable. An examination of party behavior in the House on "evangelical" issues (slavery, prohibition, dueling etc.), will reveal that partisan identification has only limited influence in determining legislative voting behavior on these issues. It will be seen that other nonevangelical influences, roughly summarized as political expediency, were the main determinants of partisan legislative behavior on these issues. More intensive analysis will leave Formisano's ideological construct of evangelicism in some doubt as it

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applies to party elites. This study of party elite behavior in Michigan also introduces another dimension to Formisano's earlier study of mass political behavior. As separate levels of the party organization, the attitudes and behavior of Michigan's party electorate and elite were often not analogous. Various secondary and primary sources will be utilized throughout this work.

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INTRODUCTION

American political parties have been the subject of considerable research and controversy. Historians and political scientists, seeking to uncover the essence or role of a particular party, have not often arrived at agreement. For instance, the Democratic party in the Jacksonian era has been viewed as an organization promoting democracy by Arthur Schlesinger, an organization promoting individual self-realization by Ronald Formisano, and one for promoting politicians by Richard McCormick.¹ Frank Sorauf has suggested that much of this disagreement stems from the emphasis each observer has placed on different branches of the party: the party organization, the party in office, and the party in the electorate. Each branch contains separate personnel with "differing goals and incentives" that make each a different entity than the party as a whole. Only when we examine the interactions of

¹See Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1945); Ronald P. Formisano, The Birth of Mass Political Parties, Michigan, 1827-1861 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System, Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966).

each of these branches, Sorauf warns, can we begin to understand the party in holistic terms.²

A study by Herbert McCloskey reinforces Sorauf's concept of party heterogeneity. After polling members of a party organization (convention delegates), and party in the electorate (voters identifying with a party), McCloskey found significant differences between the two on political issues. Members of the party organization were significantly more "ideological" than members in the electorate of the same party.³ Sorauf and McCloskey suggest that the American political party must be understood as a conglomerate containing separate, dissimilar, and sometimes competing interests.

This paper will compare the behavior of two branches of a state political party: the party in office and the party in the electorate. As a basis of study I have selected Michigan in the Second American Party System (1824-1860). Michigan was chosen because Ronald Formisano's political history of the state, The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan 1827-60, provides a useful conceptual framework for this study. Using a variety of

²Frank S. Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964).

³Herbert McCloskey, Paul J. Hoffman, and Rosemary O'Hara, "Issue Conflict and Consensus Among Party Leaders and Followers," American Political Science Review, LIV, No. 1 (Spring 1972), pp. 406-27.

census tracts, electoral data and other records, Formisano found little class voting in Michigan; wealthy or impoverished villages might as easily be found voting for the Whig or Republican party as the Democratic. Partisan divisions on an urban-rural axis, or industrial-agricultural cleavage, were no more revealing. It was only when he examined the religious affiliation of electoral units that Formisano perceived a surprisingly strong partisan cleavage. Wards or townships populated by Roman Catholics, Universalists, or Unitarians returned heavy Democratic majorities; voting units containing a high percentage of Presbyterians, Baptists or Congregationalists returned Whig and later Republican majorities. Formisano hypothesized that the religious doctrines of these groups instilled divergent belief systems on the functions of the state. The religious doctrines of those sects voting Whig demanded constant vigilance of their adherents in maintaining a strict moral code within the community. They were sensitive to behavior that violated such virtues as temperance, piety or chastity. Not only was the individual responsible for his own proper behavior, but the community's as well. For Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian sects, the community, in the form of its religious and political institutions, must take an active role in enforcing piety among its members. Formisano labeled these and like sects "evangelical," and argued that they made up the constituency of the Whig party. On the opposite end of the

spectrum were the "antievangelicals," individuals more tolerant of impiety or at least less concerned that the community enforce properly religious behavior. In Michigan, antievangelicals were Democratic. For Roman Catholics, Unitarians and free thinkers the individual bore sole responsibility for his behavior. Governmental action seeking to enforce some moral code was detested because it restricted the realm of individual freedom. Formisano then observed an evangelical appeal in Whig and Republican rhetoric, elite and program. Their propaganda pressed for a union of church and state; their leaders exhibited pious behavior; and their political programs included laws to keep the Sabbath and outlaw such sinful practices as slavery and intemperance. Democrats, while obviously not advocating sin, were skeptical of attempts to enforce proper behavior, placed a premium on individual freedom of choice, and were sensitive to rhetoric and policies that implied a union of church and state. Thus, in mobilizing their respective constituencies, evangelical issues proved highly salient.⁴

Assuming that the parties' electorate were divided on evangelical lines, can the same be said on the parties' officeholders? Formisano conducted limited research on the Michigan legislature and tentatively concluded that it could. Whig and Republican legislators were more favorable

⁴Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, pp. 126-27.

to evangelical legislation than their Democratic peers. This included such issues as anti-slavery resolutions, temperance laws and fornication and adultery statutes.⁵

Formisano presents an intriguing thesis. It does seem plausible that mass attitudes toward newly created political parties were influenced by earlier religious attitudes. Yet, the validity of this evangelical-antievangelical construct of partisan division is less compelling under further scrutiny. Lacking official church records, Formisano was forced to extrapolate the religious affiliation of voting units by computing the church seats of different denominations. Can we be sure that each of a locality's major religious sects were represented by a church of its own? Furthermore, can the issues that divided the parties be labeled distinctly evangelical ones? Formisano identified two major evangelical reforms--anti-slavery and prohibition; but these may also have incorporated nonevangelical appeals. Slavery in the territories, as Eric Foner pointed out, was viewed as a threat to the economic welfare of many Northern yeomen.⁶ Many historians, including Formisano, have recognized prohibition as a nativist program to curb the intemperate

⁵Ibid., pp. 122-25.

⁶See Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 11-39.

habits of immigrant groups.⁷ Formisano's other evangelical issues received less attention in the state's political activity. At the very least, it is to be questioned if various attitudes on different "evangelical" issues can be systemized into evangelical belief system. Finally, if Sorauf and McCloskey are right, is Formisano correct in assuming that these same evangelical influences operated in the Michigan legislature? Were the attitudes and behavior of a party's legislators similar to those of its electorate? These are the questions that will provide the focus of this study. Obviously, any conclusions this paper arrives at will be restricted by the fact that they are based on research in one state for a limited time period. It is also to be admitted that the few roll call votes to be considered in this paper present only a very limited picture of evangelicism and Michigan politics.

⁷Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 233.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on exhaustive research of all the evangelical bills and resolutions that were considered in the Michigan House of Representatives. I have chosen the House because its greater size, relative to that of the Senate's, provides a more reliable estimate of party attitudes as revealed in roll call votes. The House membership was elected annually from 1837 to 1851. After that date the legislature was elected biennially, with only one major session on odd numbered years. Political parties did not appear in the House until 1838. For most of the Jacksonian period the Democratic party held majority status (Table 1). The Whigs held majorities only in 1840 and 1841. After 1854, the Republicans controlled every ante bellum session.

The data for this paper were drawn from the proceedings of the Michigan House Journal. I have examined the disposition of every evangelical bill or resolution presented in the House. Evangelical bills were classified

Table 1.--Party Affiliation in the Michigan House.

Year	Democratic Representatives	Whig Representatives	Republican Representatives
1838	29	21	
1839	31	22	
1840	16	36	
1841	21	33	
1842	46	5	
1843	48	5	
1844	48	7	
1845	45	8	
1846	37	16	
1847	51	19	
1848	52	14	
1849	46	19 ^a	
1850	46	20	
1851	41	27	
1853	50	20	
1855	23		49 ^b
1857	16		64
1859	25		56 ^b

^aIncludes three Free Soilers.

^bIncludes one Independent.

as those dealing with religious or moral concerns of enforcing moral behavior (prohibition laws), or asserting a moral position on a current moral issue (resolutions against slavery and dueling). In every case where a bill was passed or killed in a roll call vote, I have recorded the support each of the parties rendered to the measure. In order to assist in the analysis on these roll calls I employed a simple statistical device called the index of likeness. The index is computed by calculating the difference between the percentile support (per cent voting "yea"), each of the parties' legislators registered on the roll call in question. The resulting differentials between the parties is then subtracted from 100 to produce the actual index of likeness. For example, if 80 per cent of the Whigs and 55 per cent of the Democrats vote "yea" on one roll call the differential of 25, subtracted from 100, produces an index of likeness of 75. It follows that a vote manifesting great disagreement between the parties (one party highly favorable and the other strongly opposed to a particular bill), will produce a high differential that will in turn produce a low index of likeness. Thus, when the index approaches 100 the parties appear in agreement.

CHAPTER II

EVANGELICAL ISSUES AND PARTY BEHAVIOR

The many resolutions concerning slavery in the territories were undoubtedly the most important evangelical issue to come before the House. The division that accompanied this controversy would disrupt a loose coalition of Democratic legislators and later form the Republican party. Originally, both parties were opposed to slavery, but concerns over national unity and party interest led Democratic and non-Democratic legislators to take opposing views. By the end of the Mexican War, Democratic leaders presented their party as one promoting national unity and popular sovereignty. The Whigs developed a position on the issue that was identical to that later endorsed by the Republican party.

Indexes on anti-slavery resolutions can be found in Table 2. In the era before the Mexican War both parties in the legislature sought to remove the slavery controversy from public debate so as to safeguard the Union. Michigan's first partisan legislature met the issue in 1838 with a resolution condemning even the discussion of slavery in

Table 2.--Roll Call Votes on Anti-slavery Resolutions.

Year	Description of Vote	Tot. Vote (yea-nay)	Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Whig Vote (yea-nay)	Index of Likeness
1838	Passage of Resolution condemning anti-slavery rhetoric.	38-7	23-2	15-5	83
1845	Amendment that Texas enter only as a Free State.	13-33	6-33	7-0	15
1848	Endorsing the Wilmot Proviso.	29-26	20-26	9-0	57
1849	Permitting slavery below 36 30. Passage of anti-slavery resolution	15-46 46-17	15-29 29-17	0-17 17-0	66 63
1850	Move to table anti-slavery resolutions. Move to table Liberty Law. Passage of resolution favorable to Compromise.	29-19 27-21 37-27	28-4 27-3 37-7	1-15 0-18 0-20	18 10 16
1851	Accepting report adverse to Liberty Law.	42-24	39-2	3-22	17
1855	Passage of anti-slavery resolution.	47-23	1-22	46-1	8
1857	Passage of anti-slavery resolution.	61-14	0-14	61-0	0
1859	Passage of anti-slavery resolution	49-20	0-19	49-1	2

the U.S. Congress. The state's major Democratic newspaper, the Detroit Free Press, claimed that Whig officials were attempting to make opposition to this measure party policy.⁸ This attempt failed since 75 percent of the Whigs supported the resolution along with 90 percent of the Democrats. The foregoing was probably passed as a reprimand to abolitionist agitators, but neither party wished to be misinterpreted as apologists for slavery and both feared the divisive ramifications of the issue. The same legislature passed a resolution by 44 to 4 against the annexation of Texas since "extending the territory of the U.S." would "create dissent" and "endanger the stability of the Union." All four voting against the resolution were Democrats, and they were overruled by 21 members of their own party.⁹ At no time during the pre Mexican War period did either party entertain further resolutions on slavery. Petitions on this topic were abruptly tabled.

Whig propaganda, as represented in the Detroit Advertiser before the Mexican War, often directed itself against the abolitionists, using the same arguments the Democrats would later wield against the Republicans.

What assurance do they hold out for any reunion of the states? How steadily do they conceal from their

⁸ Detroit Free Press, Jan. 17, 1838.

⁹ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1838, pp. 88-91

followers the horrors of dissolution? To what power will they refer us for a disestablishment of the National Prosperity.¹⁰

The Democratic Detroit Free Press avoided the issue at all turns, but by 1845 the paper had aligned itself with the policy of the national administration on Texas and slavery. However, it assured its readership, as soon as Texas is placed "in a position of stability and security, the region must soon pass from the dominion of slavery to that of freedom." This was an argument the paper would employ throughout the debate over the territories.¹¹

The election of Polk and the Mexican War introduced a wrenching decade and a half for both state parties. The state Democratic party found its interests tied with those of Polk, though they had originally supported Van Buren. As the out party the Whigs made numerous attempts to embarrass the Democrats on their national coalition, while propagating their own anti-slavery and anti-southern rhetoric. Table 2 indicates how remarkably solid Whig opposition to slavery was. In the legislatures of 1845, 1847, and 1848 Whigs votes unanimously and consistently

¹⁰Detroit Advertiser, April 2, 1842.

¹¹Detroit Free Press, Jan. 7, 1845. See also Jan 1, 1846; Feb. 2, 1849; June 28, 1854; and Sept. 25, 1858. And see Justin E. Walsh, "Radically and Thoroughly Democratic: Wilbur F. Story and the Detroit Free Press," Michigan History, XLVIII, No. 3 (September 1963), pp. 193-225.

against the introduction of further slave territory.¹² Democratic opposition to new slave territory grows dramatically during this period, raising the index of likeness from 15 to 63. Despite this shift in the sympathies of its own legislators, the Free Press would continue to proclaim opposition to policies such as the Wilmot Proviso to be "Democratic Creed." As trustees of Lewis Cass' presidential campaign, state Democratic leaders enunciated a conciliatory policy to bolster Cass' popularity in the South. In 1848 Cass' Nicholson letter, in which he introduced popular sovereignty as a solution to the territories question, was embraced by the Free Press as the proper state and national Democratic policy.¹³ The Whig Advertiser berated the Democrats for this policy and their association with a slave aristocracy. When Democratic opposition killed the anti-slavery resolution of 1845 the Advertiser first raised the spectre of "doughface" Democrats.

We hope we shall hear no more canting pretenses from them [Democrats] on the subject of slavery and a southern ascendancy. They stand before the world in their own recorded votes as the open advocates of both.

Opposition to further slave territory was soon recognized as state party policy, and the paper derived considerable satisfaction from the discomfort of the Democrats on this issue. The Advertiser observed of the Nicholson letter:

¹²Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1845, p. 69; 1847, p. 78; 1848, p. 155.

¹³Detroit Free Press, Jan. 29, 1848 and Jan. 8, 1848.

The Whigs of Michigan need no further discussion on this question. Their minds are made up. When they abandon the principle of no more slave territory they will have forgotten their own righteous cause.¹⁴

Fully six years before the Kansas-Nebraska Act the state's Whig legislators and newspapers had developed a slave policy and rhetoric later to be expounded by the Republican party.

Only a year before the Compromise of 1850 the House voted down an amendment that would have permitted slavery below 36 30'. The amendment was defeated 46 to 15, all the Whigs and two-thirds of the Democrats voting against it.¹⁵ In the same legislature an abortive attempt was made by about a dozen Democrats to replace Senator Cass with Epaphroditus Ransom, the then Democratic Governor who made no secret of his opposition to any additional slave territory. Most historians dismiss this struggle as an uprising by Democrats from the western portion of the state to gain better patronage for one of their own. However true this is, Democrats from counties supporting Ransom had been significantly more sympathetic to anti-slavery resolutions in the past than those counties supporting Cass.¹⁶ While the effort to unseat Cass failed, the

¹⁴Detroit Advertiser, Jan. 18, 1845; Jan. 16, 1847; Jan. 11, 1848.

¹⁵Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1849, p. 52.

¹⁶In ten roll calls on slavery resolutions 21 percent of the Democrats from counties represented by pro-Cass

insurgents did delay his re-election by several ballots, and the Free Press betrayed considerable consternation on the part of Democratic leaders. Following this conflict articles in the Free Press and the Advertiser suggested a minor purge was afoot in the Democratic party to eliminate those who had disrupted the party over slavery. Wilber Story, soon to become editor of the Free Press, wrote in the Pontiac Jacksonian:

If it has really come to this, that the great mass of the party must yield to a most limited minority, the sooner we disband and submit to dismemberment the better. . . . [W]e shall thank God that the crisis has arisen that has driven from us into the Whig or Abolition ranks, that class of politicians who only adhered to the party for selfish motives, and the views of self interest or aggrandizement.¹⁷

The crisis on 1850 seemed to be a boon to the state Democratic party, proving everything they had warned concerning slavery and disunion. Said the Free Press: "We are rejoiced to see the people awakened and are [sic] rebuking the fanatical efforts of those who have been attempting to prostrate the honor and welfare of our country to the shrine of an ideal abstraction."¹⁸ The purge of 1849 and the national reconciliation that

men voted against the extension of slavery as compared to 35 percent of the Democrats from counties supporting Ransom.

¹⁷Detroit Free Press, Feb. 2, 1849. For other articles on the Democratic split see: Detroit Free Press, Jan. 6; April 5; and April 7, 1849. Also Detroit Advertiser, Jan. 10, 1849.

¹⁸Detroit Free Press, March 8, 1850.

accompanied the Compromise seemed to have cleaned the party of anti-slavery legislators. After 1849, roughly 90 percent of the Democrats in the House would vote against any anti-slavery resolution. The Whig Advertiser also expressed satisfaction that the Union had been saved, but its position on the compromise and territories question was ambiguous. The paper identified itself with the Fillmore administration, but frequently published speeches and articles unfavorable to the Compromise. The Advertiser no longer agitated on the question, but it did not retract the earlier state party position on slavery:

Considering slavery an evil, and its extension a direct act of injustice to the North politically, the Whig party has uniformly lifted its voice against such extension. . . . The danger of disunion, if any exists, comes not from the Whigs; the South knows well what the Whig sentiment is.¹⁹

This ambiguity is reflected by Whigs in the House. They unaimously opposed the passage of resolutions favorable to the compromise in 1850, but thereafter joined the Democrats in quietly tabling further anti-slavery petitions.²⁰

The ascendancy of the Republicans after 1854 presented the House with at least one anti-slavery petition in each session. Introduced as "instructions" to the state's U.S. Senators, these resolutions were presented

¹⁹Detroit Advertiser, Feb. 9, 1850.

²⁰Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1850, p. 802 and p. 489. Petitions against slavery or the Fugitive Slave Law were tabled without roll calls. Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1851, p. 113; 1853, p. 156.

with the hope of forcing these Democrats to resign. The resolutions registered very low indexes of likeness. The 1855 resolution branded slavery a "great moral, social and political evil," and instructed the state's U.S. Senators to keep slavery out of Kansas and Nebraska and to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. This resolution passed on a very nearly straight party vote with an index of 8. When Republicans introduced a measure forbidding the use of common jails for persons claimed as fugitive slaves, enough Democrats voted with the Republicans to produce an index of 34. Succeeding legislatures passed anti-slavery resolutions with equal polarization.²¹

In 1855, Michigan's first Republican governor, Kingsley Bingham, devoted the greater part of his inaugural address to the controversy. Bingham presented the slavery question as the dark conspiracy of arrogant Southern aristocrats and ambitious politicians seeking to make "slavery national and freedom sectional." The Free Press attempted to establish its own independence by attacking disunionists of the North and South. But most commonly the Democratic paper counterattacked by associating the Republicans with "negroism," often decrying the "nigger government in Lansing."²² Most of the slavery propaganda

²¹Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1855, p; . 195, 190, 408; 1857, pp. 656, 328; 1859, pp. 130-31.

²²Detroit Free Press, Feb. 16, 1859. See also Justin E. Walsh, "Radically and Thoroughly Democratic:

for this ante bellum period was a vigorous attempt to associate the opposition with some negative reference group, either the black man or his master.

Anti-slavery was a vexing problem for both the Whig and Democratic legislators. Both were opposed to the extension of slavery in the period of early statehood, but their affiliation with a national union and a national party also required that they be against anti-slavery agitation. Recognizing the divisive ramifications of this issue for themselves and the Union, members of both parties attempted to ignore the slavery question. Yet, even fifteen years before the "meeting under the Oaks," Whig legislators appear more anti-slavery inclined than their Democratic counterparts. The Mexican War and the resulting territories fomented such state concern that it was difficult for either party to ignore the issue. By 1847 the Advertiser and the legislature advocated an anti-slavery program identical to that later espoused by the Republicans. Democrats, standing in the shadow of Lewis Cass, continued to take the "middle road" on the slavery question. A growing portion of the party voted against Cass' position, but these iconoclasts were tolerated in the interest of party harmony. It was only when this anti-slavery wing voted against General Cass himself that their apostasy

triggered a party response. Thereafter Democratic anti-slavery sentiment virtually disappeared. The Whigs remained opposed to the extension of slavery and much of the Compromise of 1850, but general anxiety over disunion repressed this impulse. The state Republican party was not formed from a sudden opposition to slavery or even slavery in the territories. Rather, the Republicans were a response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act that heightened hatred of southern slavemasters and mitigated concerns of national unity.

The political catalysm that first brought the Republicans to power coincided with a wave of prohibitory laws that restricted or outlawed liquor in many Northern states. Some historians have suggested that this association was not coincidental but that the Republican party was allied to the temperance cause.²³ In Michigan however, the temperance movement took place outside all of the states political parties and succeeded in imposing its reform on the political system only through its own efforts. Over the time span of this study temperance petitions easily outnumbered all other evangelical petitions combined, both

²³See Andrew Wallace Crandall, The Early History of the Republican Party (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith Publishing Co., 1960), p. 15.

Eric Foner claims that Republicans abandoned temperance by 1856, a conclusion that generally concurs with this study. Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 241-42.

Formisano emphasizes the disruptive effects of temperance on older party loyalties though claiming that the Fusionists of 1854 were viewed as the "Maine Law Party," p. 243.

in terms of signatures and sheer number. The mass grass roots activism on temperance's behalf forced the political parties to come to grips with the issue, though they avoided it as much as possible.

Temperance had been a controversial and popular issue in Michigan for some time preceding statehood. Up until the 1840s however, the focus of the drive was not political but exhortatory--an attempt to win converts by personal appeals and local pledge drives. In the 1840s temperance advocates began turning to the political process. It is indicative of temperance's limited influence among political parties that the movement found it necessary to deluge the legislature with petitions in the forties and fifties. Whig and Republican legislators were more favorable to temperance legislation than their Democratic counterparts; but it would be a mistake to label either of them as pro-temperance parties. The similarity of Democratic, Whig, and Republican attempts to kill the reform is the striking feature of legislative activity in this area.

Indexes of likeness for temperance legislation can be found in Table 3. In all but one of these roll calls the non-Democratic legislators appear more sympathetic to temperance reform. But the index is often not very small. Up until 1853 no strict prohibitory law had been passed. Votes on the passage of the five temperance bills passed before 1853 produced an average index of 74.2. It was

Table 3.--Roll Call Votes on Temperance Legislation.

Year	Description of Vote	Tot. Vote (yea-nay)	Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Non-Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Index of Likeness
1844	Making Friday nights open to discussion of temperance.	38-10	33-10	5-0	77
1845	Permitting local option on prohibition.	38-7	32-7	6-0	82
1846	Move to strike out all after enacting clause of bill restricting the issuance of licenses. Passage of Bill.	14-23 25-9	10-14 19-8	4-9 6-1	89 84
1850	Move to strike out all after enacting clause of bill regulating the sale of liquor. Ordering bill to third reading. Defeat on passage. Bill revived, then move to indefinitely postpone.	18-39 33-26 26-33 18-29	18-20 18-23 13-27 14-15	0-19 15-3 13-6 4-14	53 61 65 74
1851	Passage of bill forbidding sale of liquor to intoxicants and outlawing gambling in taverns.	47-16	22-15	25-1	63
1853	Amending Maine Law to permit sale of "highwines." Amending Maine Law to require a popular referendum. Passage of Maine Law.	28-40 43-25 57-12	23-25 34-14 41-10	5-15 9-11 16-2	77 74 91
1855	Passage on Democratic bill permitting the sale of liquor to all but known intoxicants. Amending Republican bill to permit the sale of cider and wine. Amending Republican bill to restrict sale to one gallon wine and ten gallons cider. Passage of Republican bill.	20-50 39-32 43-24 51-21	20-2 12-11 13-9 4-20	0-48 27-21 30-15 47-1	9 96 92 19
1857	Permitting sale of beer.	42-26	1-12	41-14	34
1859	Move to indefinitely postpone bill re-establishing license.	38-33	1-24	37-9	22

not until 1853 that the state's first prohibition law was passed. Passage was no doubt aided by petitions bearing 70,000 signatures. The aim of almost all these petitions was a prohibition law similar to that passed in Maine, thereafter called the Maine Law. The report of the Democratic Committee on the Petitions for the Maine Law was as fiery and righteous as any temperance cause could wish. The "certain and evident devastation" of liquor could only "corrupt and debase the morals of society to an alarming extent."

It is indisputable that individual rights must be surrendered for the public good and benefit; that a minority must submit to the majority when constitutionally expressed. That we have an undoubted right to prohibit the manufacture and sale of any poisonous decoction or substance, calculated to enter into the general consumption, the too free use of which would surely but slowly terminate life.²⁴

A stringent bill was presented to the House prescribing the sale of all liquor for all but medicinal and mechanical purposes. An amendment permitting the sale of "highwines" was defeated 40 to 28: half the Democrats and a quarter of the Whigs voting in the affirmative. Despite this defeat the opponents of temperance found means to kill the statute. The original bill called for enforcement beginning in the fall, but this provision was defeated in a close vote with a fourth of the Whigs and three-fourths of the Democrats opposed. In its stead it was proposed that the

²⁴ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1853, pp. 600-01. And Laws of Michigan, 1853, pp. 306-11.

law be first voted in a popular referendum. The new Michigan Constitution contained no provision for a popular referendum. And this rendered the bill legally dubious as at least one legislator and the Free Press pointed out.²⁵ Whether this was a conscious ploy to kill the bill by anti-temperance legislators can only be surmised, but a breakdown of legislative votes on the amendment to permit the sale of "highwines" with that requiring enforcement in the fall presents intriguing results. Those who opposed complete prohibition (voted to permit the sale of "highwines"), voted overwhelmingly against automatic enactment (25 to 3). The crucial swing group were the twenty-four legislators voting favorably toward total prohibition but against automatic enactment of the law. Eighteen of these swing legislators were Democrats. A majority of those voting for total prohibition and for automatic enactment were Whigs. Following this, the bill passed without difficulty, 57 to 12, and an index of 91.²⁶ The 1853 referendum later passed the measure overwhelmingly. But, reported the Advertiser, "The friends of temperance are by no means pleased with the bill."²⁷ And with good reason,

²⁵Detroit Free Press, Feb. 11, 1853.

²⁶Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1853, pp. 130-40, 235, 238.

²⁷Detroit Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1853.

within a year the State Supreme Court would strike down the law because of the referendum.

The convening of the first Republican legislature seemed to bode well for temperance interests. The Republicans had campaigned on the promise to enact a Maine Law, and they had healthy majorities in both Houses. The result was the presentation of two prohibitory bills, each advanced by one of the political parties. The Democratic program called for liquor to be sold in quantities of more than a gallon not to be drunk on the premises of sale. None was to be sold to "known intoxicants." The Republicans convened without any settled program. The Free Press reported division in the Republican ranks, some wanting the "whole hog" Maine Law and others a more moderate statute permitting wine and beer.²⁸ Only after a week of caucus meetings was a consensus reached on a Republican measure. One finds no evangelical or antievangelical polemics on the right of the government to impose prohibition during the House debates. The issue revolved solely on the most expedient means by which it could be enforced. Superficially, there was considerable division between the parties. The Democratic Bill was defeated producing an index of 9; the Republican bill passed with an index of 19. But in depth analysis of the creation of this Republican bill reveals considerable party consensus on key points.

²⁸Detroit Free Press, Jan. 4; Jan. 7, 1855.

An important amendment to this law permitted the sale of wine and hard cider. It was incorporated into the bill in a 39 to 32 split with an index of 96. An additional amendment permitted sale in quantities of ten and one gallons respectively and was passed with an index of 92.²⁹ Despite the nonpartisanship which wrote the most important segments of the bill, both the state's political parties campaigned on the fact that it was a Republican measure. Democrats did not attack "prohibition" or "temperance legislation," but devoted their criticism to "Maine Lawism," that it claimed to be unconstitutional and unenforceable.³⁰ Time soon proved the Democrats right. In Wayne County bars turned into "drug stores" and complaints of lack of enforcement flooded the state. Governor Bingham's address to the legislature of 1857 failed to make any mention of and Maine Law and the Free Press claimed this was a confession,

. . . that black Republicanism embraced the Maine Law not as a genuine temperance measure, but as a temporary element of popular strength, without regard to its consequences to temperance, and that the law itself has turned out a failure. . . . No person in his senses doubts that the act of 1855 is dead as though it were repealed.³¹

²⁹ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1855, pp. 183, 209, 174, 175-76.

³⁰ Detroit Free Press, Jan. 23, Jan. 25, 1855; Jan. 9, 1857; Feb. 8, 1859.

³¹ Detroit Free Press, Jan. 7, 1857.

In the same legislature a Republican introduced a bill exempting beer from the Maine Law and abrogating certain enforcement measures. Yet, so partisan an issue had the Maine Law become at this point, that the Democrats opposed passage of this bill weakening the Maine Law. Republican support carried it through with an index of 34. The 1859 legislature found itself met with 20 more petitions asking for a stronger Maine Law more vigorously enforced. Instead the House considered a Democratic bill to permit the state to re-issue liquor licenses. The bill was killed after it was postponed on a vote of 38 to 33 with an index of 22.³²

If the mass electorate was motivated by evangelical and antiangelical belief systems toward temperance legislation, this general concern did not permeate the state's party elites. Both the Whig and Democratic legislators sought to undermine stiff legislation prior to 1855. Both the Advertiser and the Free Press seemed sympathetic to temperance, perhaps the latter a little more so. But neither paper endorsed a strong prohibitory enactment.³³ After 1855 both parties present themselves as favorable to some sort of temperance legislation, though the Republicans endorsed a stricter law than the Democrats. The public

³²Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1857, p. 665; 1859, p. 649; and Laws of Michigan, p. 442.

³³Detroit Advertiser, March 30, 1841. See also Detroit Advertiser, March 23, 1849; Feb. 8, 1851; Jan. 11, 1859. Detroit Free Press, March 8, 1847; Jan. 25, 1855.

debate then shifted to the most expedient means of enforcing temperance, not over the issue of temperance itself. Much unanimity is seen between the parties on crucial amendments that substantially defined these statues. Despite this agreement between two wings of the party legislators, the parties rejoiced in the opportunity of manifesting partisan divisions in votes on formal passage and propaganda that praised or condemned the Maine Law. Flabby enforcement and a loosening of the law in 1857 leave the sincerity of the Republicans dubious. At least it cannot be said that either party was interested in transforming public sentiment for reform, indicated by the 1853 referendum into public enactments. Legislative elites seemed much more interested in protecting party identity and interest.

Formisano points to one incident during the 1835 State Constitutional Convention that exemplified partisan evangelical cleavage. This was a debate over inviting the clergy to officiate with opening prayers.³⁴ Occasionally, the House membership divided on this same issue. Such invocations are the norm at political meetings and ceremonies today. But in a time when infrequent legislative meetings were a novel experience in a new state, such resolutions created debate and voting patterns strikingly

³⁴Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 106.

similar to that which we would expect given an evangelical cleavage. No other issue debated in the legislature so clearly elicited evangelical and antievangelical arguments. Democrats were sometimes dubious of the propriety of such prayers in a government presumably separated from the church; Whigs were abashed that any body of men would undertake such important work without calling for Divine guidance (Table 4).

In the 1839 session a bill providing token reimbursements for officiating clergymen out of the state treasury failed in two attempts at passage. These two attempts registered low indexes of 34 and 28.³⁵ When the clergy were invited in 1841 one Democrat moved to amend the invitation with the warning that the clergy expect no contribution from the legislature. The State Constitution, he pointed out, "declares that every person has the right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and that no person can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support against his will, any place of religious worship, or pay any tithes, taxes or other rates; for the support of any minister of the Gospel or teacher of religion."³⁶ This resolution angered the Advertiser:

³⁵ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1839, pp. 553, 624.

³⁶ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1841, p. 46.

Table 4.--Roll Call Votes on Minor Evangelical Issues.

Year	Description of Vote	Tot. Vote (yea-nay)	Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Non-Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Index of Likeness
1839	Move to strike out amendment paying clergy. Move to suspend rules to pass bill paying clergy.	31-19 23-22	27-4 6-21	4-15 17-1	34 28
1843	Inviting the clergy.	41-10	37-10	4-0	79
1847	Inviting the clergy.	42-22	31-18	11-4	90
1848	Inviting the clergy. Resolution that House elect chaplains. Move to suspend election.	32-28 31-33 33-30	27-21 22-29 27-22	5-7 9-4 6-8	86 74 88
1851	Inviting the clergy. Amending invitation that they make their prayers "as short as possible." Rescinding invitation.	44-22 9-53 30-33	22-18 8-28 25-14	22-4 1-25 5-19	70 82 57

It argues well for the good sense and good morals of the House, that it would not, for a moment, entertain this infidel insult. If those entertaining principles sufficiently diabolical to wish to dispense with daily invocations to Almighty God, have the unblushing effrontery to avow those principles, we are glad to find sufficient firmness in those who have the power to do so, to rebuke those by whom they are avowed.³⁷

It is noteworthy that the Advertiser chose not to mention the fact that the source of the amendment was a Democrat or that Democrats were more sympathetic to such resolutions. The amendment failed without a vote, but the clergy were not granted remuneration.

In legislative sessions after this the Democrats became more favorable to inviting the clergy. The indexes for 1843, 1847, and 1848 were 79, 90, and 86 respectively.³⁸

The 1850 State Constitution specifically prohibited the expenditure of state funds to religious officials serving at government functions. This left the propriety of such innovations also in doubt, and when the 1851 legislature convened the issue was raised again. When one Whig introduced a resolution inviting the clergy, a Democrat asked that it be amended "that they be requested to make such prayers as short as possible." The latter amendment failed 53 to 9, with an index of 82. The former

³⁷ Detroit Advertiser, Jan. 9, 1841.

³⁸ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1843, p. 38; 1847, p. 21; 1848, pp. 25, 81, 92.

resolution was passed 44 to 22 with an index of 70. Later this same resolution was rescinded leaving an index of 57.³⁹ The Advertiser was incensed at this latter vote, wondering how any governmental body could ever hope to function without Divine guidance. The Free Press was also favorable to opening prayers since they would "hurt no one" and were "exceedingly appropriate." Unlike the Advertiser, the Free Press would not castigate those who voted against the resolution. "They have acted, we believe, honestly and conscientiously." Once again, neither party ascribed a position on the issue to itself or to its opposition.⁴⁰ After 1851 the clergy problem no longer troubled the legislature and the clergy were invited to each session thereafter.

The fact that legislators argued over inviting the clergy implies that tension over the church and state relationship did divide that body. Democrats were indeed less evangelical than the Whigs, and the index of 1839 is surprisingly low. But after 1842, when the Democrats gain almost complete control of the House, the controversy continued with the Democrats so split as to create much higher indexes of likeness: 79 in 1843, 90 in 1847, and 86 in 1848. When the Whigs become a more powerful

³⁹ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1851, pp. 34, 35, 48.

⁴⁰ Detroit Advertiser, Feb. 13, 1851; Detroit Free Press, Feb. 15, 1851.

minority this index dips again to 57. Simple partisan identification was not always the crucial determinant in legislative voting on this issue. Other possible factors will be explored later in this paper.

A variety of other evangelical bills and resolutions were considered in the House, and these are summarized in Table 5. The expeditious manner in which they were passed or defeated suggests they were considered too unimportant to stir up evangelical or antievangelical fervor. At most, this legislation attracted only passing attention in the Advertiser and the Free Press. In most instances the Whigs are more evangelical, but the index is low in only one instance. In 8 of 14 roll calls the index is above 70.

The only low index was passage of a bill abolishing the death penalty. According to Formisano, party lines were less distinct on this than on other reforms, "but evangelicals and Whigs did occupy the vanguard of opposition to abolition to capital punishment, and anti-evangelical Democrats led in the fight for it."⁴¹ The Whigs were opposed to abolition in 1843 and 1844, but Democratic support is favorable one year and divided the next. By 1846 the abolition bill was approved without a roll call. The only divisive issue concerned its substitute. One Democate sponsored an amendment calling for

⁴¹Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 125.

Table 5.--Roll Call Votes on Minor Evangelical Issues.

Year	Description of Vote	Tot. Vote (yea-nay)	Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Non-Dem. Vote (yea-nay)	Index of Likeness
<u>Capital Punishment</u>					
1843	Abolishing capital punishment.	35-15	35-11	0-4	24
1844	Move to postpone abolition bill.	22-27	21-22	1-5	68
1846	Making "solitary confinement at hard labor" substitute for life imprisonment.	19-16	12-13	7-3	78
<u>Divorce</u>					
1849	Amending divorce bill requiring insanity for five years.	11-44	6-36	5-8	76
1851	Passage of bill permitting divorce in cases of drunkenness, desertion, sterility and adultery.	40-12	29-2	11-10	58
<u>Duelling</u>					
1838	Making duellists ineligible to sit in Congress. Ejecting duellists from the present Congress.	25-12 29-10	19-7 22-3	7-5 7-7	85 62
<u>Sabbath Law</u>					
1840	Prohibiting rail transit on Sunday, when "expedient." Prohibiting rail transit on Sunday.	17-26 25-19	11-19 17-14	6-7 8-5	91 93
1842	Abrogating Sabbath Law.	27-24	26-20	1-44	63
<u>Fornication and Adultery</u>					
1843	Move striking out enacting clause of fornication and adultery bill.	29-16	27-13	2-3	72
1844	First reading of fornication and adultery bill. Third reading. Passage.	32-21 42-10 44-8	26-21 36-10 38-8	6-0 6-0 6-0	55 78 83

imprisonment, but the sentence that was adopted specified "solitary confinement at hard labor for life." Whigs were more favorable to the more astringent substitute.⁴²

Despite the partisan voting pattern it is not clear that this reform was viewed as an antievangelical accomplishment. Two Michigan historians ascribe abolition to a desire to obtain more convictions for first degree murder.⁴³

Concerns about the barbarity or righteousness of the issue were rarely raised in the Advertiser or the Free Press.

Said the latter of abolition in 1846:

Where the penalty was death, it was almost impossible to procure a conviction. Under the revised code we hesitate not to say that fewer murders will be committed, and more convictions be had, for it is the certainty of punishment, more than its cruelty, that prevents crime.⁴⁴

The divorce laws are singled out as evangelical issues because it is assumed that legislation loosening this important socializing institution would not be viewed favorably by evangelicals. Formisano makes no mention of the issue. The two bills listed on Table 5 attracted no notice in the party presses. In both cases the Whigs are

⁴² Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1843, pp. 199, 235; 1844, pp. 442, 461.

⁴³ See Utley and Cutcheon, as quoted from Jean Jay Fennimore, "Austin Blair: Political Idealist, 1845-60," Michigan History, XLVIII, No. 2 (June, 1964), p. 136.

⁴⁴ Detroit Free Press, May 5, 1846.

the more opposed to legislation widening the grounds for divorce.⁴⁵

The only issue on which Democrats appear more evangelical than non-Democrats is on resolutions condemning dueling and calling for the removal of government officials who participated in them. The origin of the resolutions explain this anomaly. The resolutions were presented in response to a much publicized duel in which one Whig congressman killed a Democratic peer. However evangelical the Whigs may have been, they were reluctant to censure a member of their own party. Party interest tempered Whig evangelicism.⁴⁶

Keeping the Sabbath was one reform in particular vogue in the 1840s. The Whig House of 1840 passed a Sabbath Law that prohibited the operation of passenger railroad cars on Sunday. An earlier bill that would have prohibited passenger service when it was "expedient" failed. Formisano implies these were largely Whig measures, but indexes of 93 and 91 dispute this.⁴⁷ In 1842 this bill was abrogated over Whig opposition, but the index is 63.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1849, pp. 524-25; 1851, p. 323.

⁴⁶ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1838, pp. 130-35.

⁴⁷ Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 124.

⁴⁸ Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1840, pp. 481, 442, 483-84, 442; 1842, pp. 331-32.

Neither the Free Press or the Advertiser devoted much attention to this bill, nor did either describe it as a Whig measure.⁴⁹ In 1841 the Advertiser called for the suspension of all mail delivery on Sunday claiming that "no nation would ever be ruined by the observance of the Sabbath." The Free Press was also amenable to the prescription.⁵⁰ Three House votes and the pronouncements of party newspapers present no great partisan division on this issue.

No action of the Michigan House appears quite so scandalous as the tabling of a law prescribing penalties for the crime of fornication and adultery. Formisano surmises that "the capacity of Democrats to encourage evil doers must have seemed limitless" to the state's evangelicals after this vote.⁵¹ Actually, the bill was killed when a motion to strike out everything after the enacting clause passed 29 to 16.⁵² The defeat of this bill provided evangelicals with a potent propaganda weapon, so it is surprising that neither the Free Press nor the Advertiser

⁴⁹The Detroit Free Press blandly reported: "The House of Representatives yesterday passed a bill to stop the running of railroads on the first day of the week," March 13, 1840. The Detroit Advertiser said nothing.

⁵⁰Detroit Advertiser, March 9, 1841; Detroit Free Press, March 15, 1841.

⁵¹Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 124.

⁵²Journal of the Michigan House of Representatives, 1843, p. 162.

commented when the bill was lost. The Advertiser really had little reason to appear righteous, two of five Whig legislators helped kill the bill. Passage of a new law in 1844 received the approbation of both party presses.⁵³ Initial Democratic opposition to the 1844 bill faded as the bill neared passage. Once again neither of the parties appear strikingly evangelical or antievangelical.

Analysis from Tables 2 through 5 has not presented either of Michigan's parties as distinctly evangelical or antievangelical. With the exception of slavery resolutions, real partisan differences, creating low indexes of likeness, are rare. Forty-two roll calls on various non-slavery evangelical issues created only sixteen indexes that fell below seventy. In only five instances is the index below 30. The consistency by which non-Democrats remain more evangelical than Democrats is noteworthy, but many votes do not seem to be properly evangelical test cases. Only the clergy issue initiated a legislative struggle publicly debated in evangelical terms. Other evangelical issues were favored or opposed on largely non-evangelical grounds. Capital punishment was passed to reduce crime; slavery resolutions mainly concerned themselves with its extension to the territories; the enforcement of prohibition, not prohibition itself, was the point

⁵³Detroit Free Press, Feb. 29, 1844; Detroit Advertiser, Jan. 18, 1844.

of the debate on the Maine Law. Obviously, further analysis of evangelicism and the House is necessary before any compelling conclusions on the subject can be entertained.

CHAPTER III

EVANGELICAL BEHAVIOR BY COUNTY

One possible factor was locality, and this will be studied separately and as it influenced party behavior. Research indicates that local influences were important and were in many instances independent of partisan influences. Certain counties were evangelical, no matter which party represented them, and these often made up the constituency of non-Democratic parties. In analyzing the vote of legislators by county another link will be constructed between Whig electoral support and legislative evangelicism. It will be further seen that the slavery issue interrupted this coalition. Anti-slavery was also embraced by antievangelicals and this created a political realignment that partially eclipsed the earlier partisan evangelical cleavage. In brief, locality will prove a useful variable in examining evangelicism and Michigan politics in the Jacksonian era.

To analyze the influence of locality, I have prepared an Evangelical Index that compares the evangelical

voting pattern of legislators by county. To create the index, I have first designated the votes tabulated on each roll call as either evangelical or antievangelical votes. Next I have tabulated the voting records of individual legislators separating them by county (i.e., a Wayne County's legislator's evangelical and antievangelical votes are added with those of other Wayne County legislators). The Evangelical Index this produces is nothing more than the totaled evangelical votes divided by the sum of the totaled evangelical and antievangelical votes. The preparation of such an index does present some problems. The most vexing one asks which and how many roll calls will be used for each issue? On the one hand, one roll call per issue could be selected, but this only leads to a double problem. First, on measures such as inviting the clergy, temperance legislation and anti-slavery resolutions, which of numerous votes, in different legislatures, do we choose? Secondly, such an index lends to divorce and Sabbath laws an artificial equivalence to slavery and temperance. The chronic and discordant legislative struggles over the latter do not seem to make this justified. On the other hand, all the votes on all the issues could be tabulated, but this would drown out the influence of lesser issues in the numerous votes that were recorded on slavery and temperance in one and several sessions. I have choosen instead to strike a balance. I have recorded one roll call per legislative session in every vote that has more than

15 percent of the legislators voting in the minority. One slavery resolution from 1850 and one from 1859 were eliminated because the disunion sentiments they expressed made their validity as evangelical test cases less certain. Three votes on paying the clergy were dropped because they introduce economic matters to what should be a purely evangelical index. In cases where one or more roll calls preceded passage or defeat (efforts to kill a bill by tabling or indefinitely postponing it), I have selected the roll call that most nearly creates a tie vote. So formed, the index contains the following: eight votes on slavery; six on temperance; three each on capital punishment and inviting the clergy; two each on fornication, divorce and Sabbath laws; and one dueling resolution. Only those counties formed by 1838 were studied so as to be assured that every county's representatives voted on the same issues.

Table 6 presents this Evangelical Index. It is apparent that some counties were represented by more evangelically voting legislators than others. Such local influences often overrode party influences. This is to say that some counties were evangelical not only because they were often represented by Whigs, but also because their Democratic representatives were evangelical. The reverse is also true. For example, antievangelical counties, such as Wayne, Lapeer, and Chippewa, have Whig legislators with antievangelical voting patterns. Democrats in evangelical

Table 6.--Evangelical Index by County.

County	Total Anti- Evan.	Total Evan.	% Evan.	Dem. Anti- Evan.	Dem. Evan.	% Dem. Evan.	Non- Dem. Anti- Evan.	Non- Dem. Evan.
Machinac	15	9	38	14	7	33	1	2
Oakland	82	61	43	78	48	38	4	13
Ottawa	15	17	53	13	11	46	2	6
Livingston	24	23	49	23	20	47	1	3
Monroe	42	22	34	38	17	31	4	5
Macomb	35	32	48	31	23	43	4	9
Berrien	20	16	44	19	11	37	1	5
Wayne	92	58	39	78	44	36	14	14
Chippewa	12	9	43	9	7	44	3	2
Ionia	8	17	68	6	8	57	2	9
Kent	20	21	51	17	11	39	3	10
Ingham	11	8	42	11	2	15	0	6
Branch	15	23	61	10	13	57	5	10
Shiawassee	7	15	68	7	8	53	0	7
St. Clair	18	18	50	13	10	43	5	8
Van Buren	15	19	56	12	12	50	3	7
St. Joseph	19	29	60	13	14	52	6	15
Cass	25	28	53	20	13	39	5	15
Lenawee	35	63	64	26	27	51	9	36
Saginaw	11	15	58	9	6	67	2	9
Hillsdale	18	33	65	16	10	38	2	23
Allegan	10	15	60	9	7	44	1	8
Jackson	29	40	58	25	22	47	4	18
Clinton	7	14	67	4	7	64	3	7
Calhoun	22	37	63	11	13	54	11	24
Washtenaw	46	82	64	27	34	56	19	48
Barry	6	13	68	4	5	56	2	8
Genessee	8	25	76	4	8	67	4	17
Lapeer	12	10	45	6	4	40	6	6
Eaton	11	12	52	9	3	25	2	9
Kalamazoo	10	35	78	4	9	69	6	26

counties, such as Washtenaw, Kalamazoo, and Clinton, show a decided strain of evangelicism. As we would expect Whigs seem more immune to these influences than Democrats.

Figures 1 and 2 correlate each of these counties' legislative Evangelical Index with the percentile support its electorate gave to non-Democratic parties in the 1840 and 1860 presidential elections. The general line of both figures indicates a positive relationship--the higher the percentage of Whig or Republican electoral support the more inclined a county's legislators, of both parties, to vote evangelically. This reinforces Formisano's thesis of Whig evangelicism in the electorate and the House. Note that the 1860 vote presents a more orderly curve--does this indicate a more "evangelical" realignment at the mass base with the formation of the Republican party?

We can compare evangelical and antievangelical counties in another manner. Table 7 compares the votes of legislators from the nine most evangelical and nine least evangelical counties.⁵⁴ Both Democratic and non-Democratic legislators reflect their counties evangelicism. But, while Democrats are sometimes evangelical and sometimes antievangelical, the non-Democrats remain evangelical in even the least evangelical counties. In the presidential election of 1840 evangelical counties are strongholds of

⁵⁴Nine counties were selected because there was a four-way tie for tenth place in the Evangelical Column.

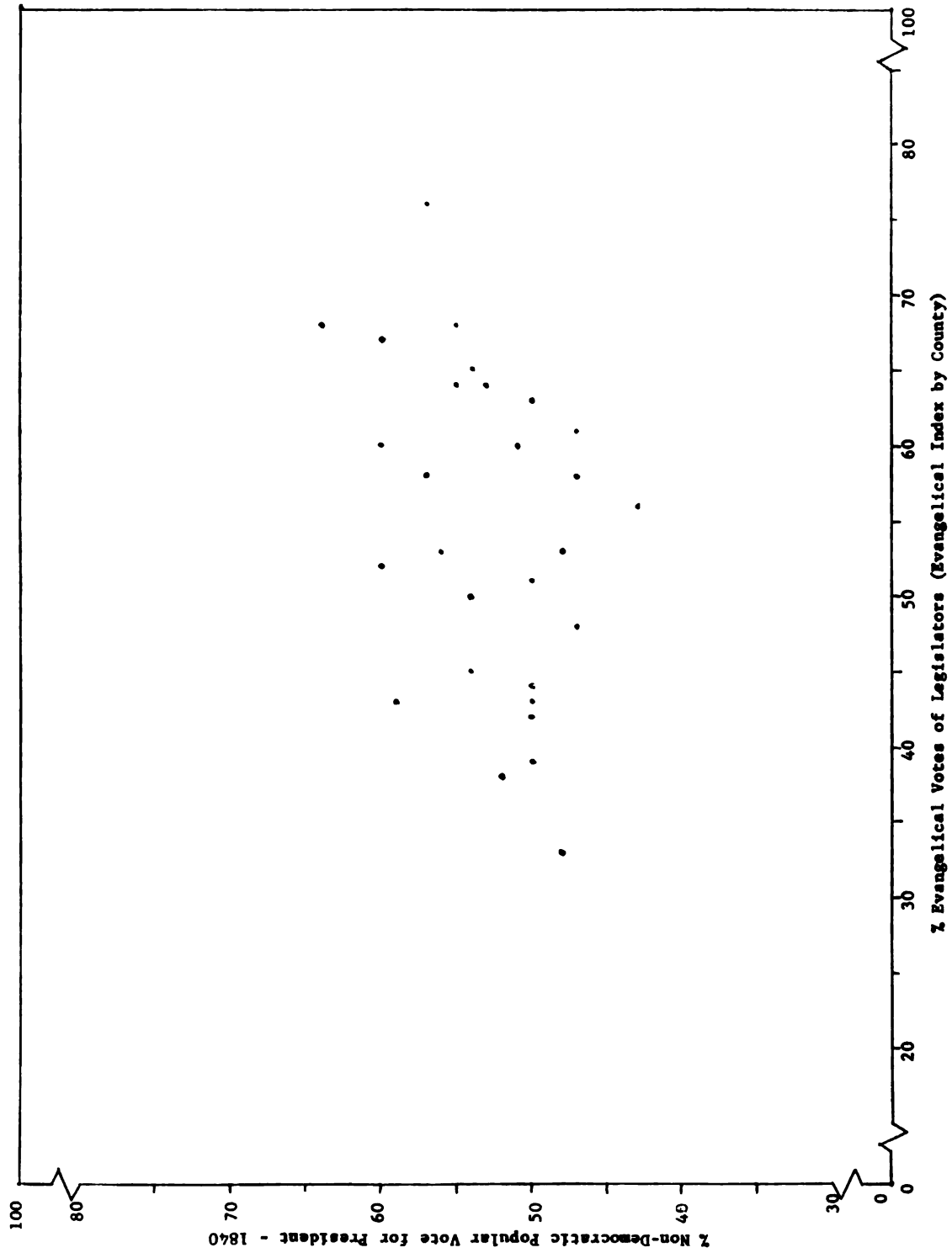


Figure 1. Legislative Evangelicism and Presidential Vote--1840.

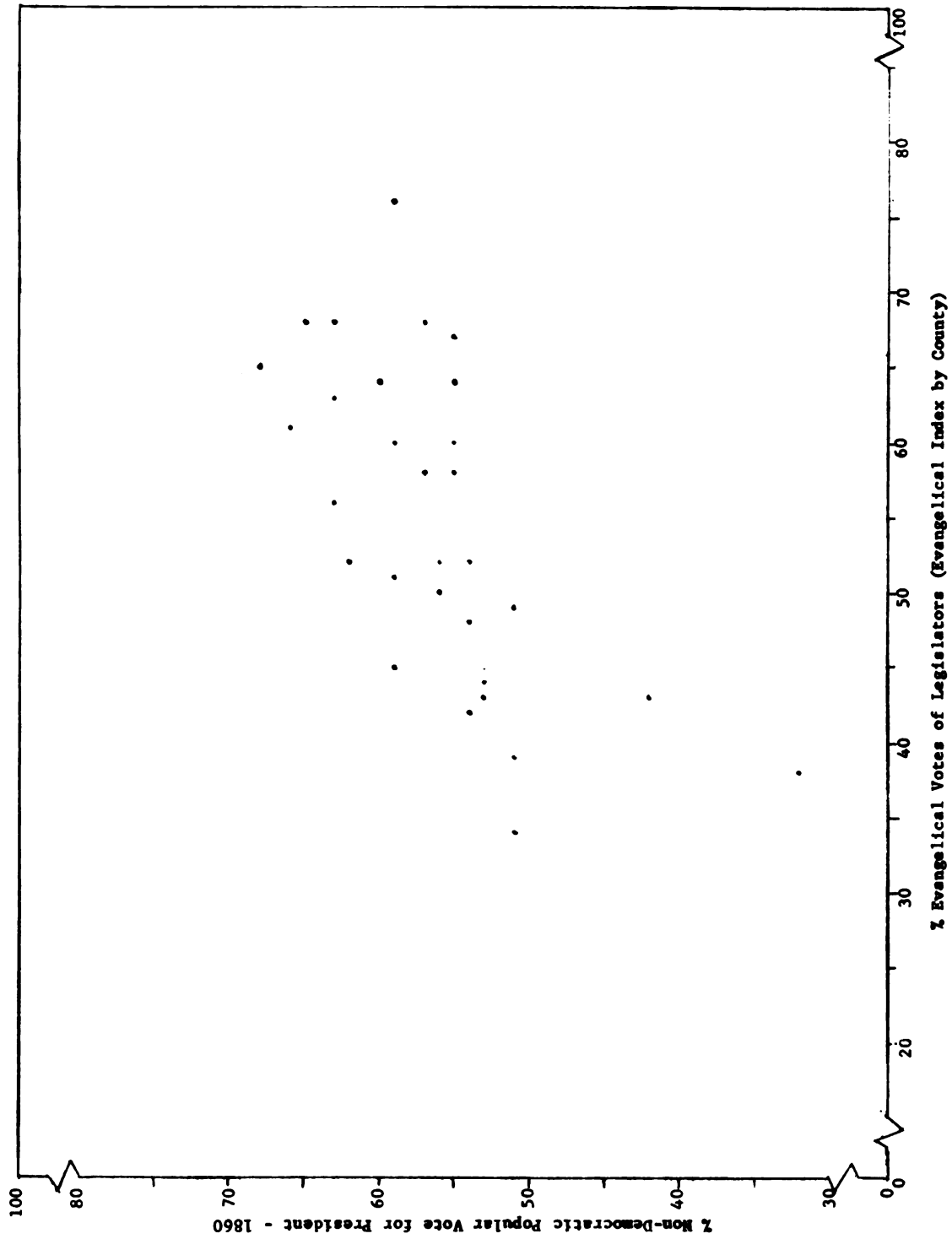


Figure 2. Legislative Evangelicism and Presidential Vote--1860.

Table 7.--Nine High and Low Evangelical Counties.

	Evan.	Dem. Evan.	Non- Dem. Evan.	Slavery	Clergy	Temper- ance	% Dem. 1840	% Dem. 1860
Least Evan.	41%	36%	63%	35%	50%	40%	49	51
Most Evan.	67%	54%	79%	72%	74%	79%	43	41

Whig electoral support and antievangelical counties are competitive. By 1860 the partisan difference between evangelicals and antievangelicals is more pronounced: a ten point spread instead of a six point one. In both the graphs and the table the election of 1860 produces the more polarized vote between evangelical and antievangelical counties. Richard McCormick argues that national parties in the Second Party System were "artificial" because they divided on nebulous and national issues--such as "Monster Banks." Sectional and divisive issues were avoided to maintain national unity. Rising agitation on the slavery question later made this impossible. Slavery confronted the parties with a serious issue. The realignment that brought the Republicans to power signified a more rational or ideological system.⁵⁵ My study does not suggest that

⁵⁵Richard P. McCormick, "Political Development in the Second Party System," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, The American Party Systems, Stages of Political Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 112.

the 1840 state party system was "artificial," Whig voters did tend to send evangelicals to the House. But the Republican party's formation did seem to lead to more political polarization between evangelicals and antievangelicals. As additional insight into this evangelicism Table 7 also examined how three issues created this evangelicism: votes on temperance, on the clergy controversy, and on slavery. Prohibition and slavery are highly divisive issues between the groups, more so than other issues computed in the Evangelical index. Temperance is the reform most uniting the evangelicals; anti-slavery agitation is the concern most uniting the antievangelicals. The abstract problem of inviting the clergy did not present the same degree of polarization--even the antievangelicals were split on the matter.

Democratic representatives are a heterogenous group, sometimes voting evangelically and sometimes antievangelically. This duality is examined in Table 8, which contains the nine counties wherein Democrats are the most evangelical and nine in which they are the least evangelical. Wide disagreement divided them on the clergy and temperance issues, but much party unity was maintained on slavery; even evangelical Democrats will lend it only 37 percent of their votes. Apparently concerns of national party identity made party regularity on this issue a high priority. Ransom's revolt in 1849 violated this party precept, and a general purge resulted. Thus, for many

Table 8.--Nine High and Low Democratic Evangelical Counties.

	Evan.	Dem. Evan.	Non- Dem. Evan.	Slavery	Clergy	Temper- ance	% Dem. 1840	% Dem. 1860
Least Evan.	35	74	44	16	48	36	48	46
Most Evan.	57	75	61	37	58	70	48	41

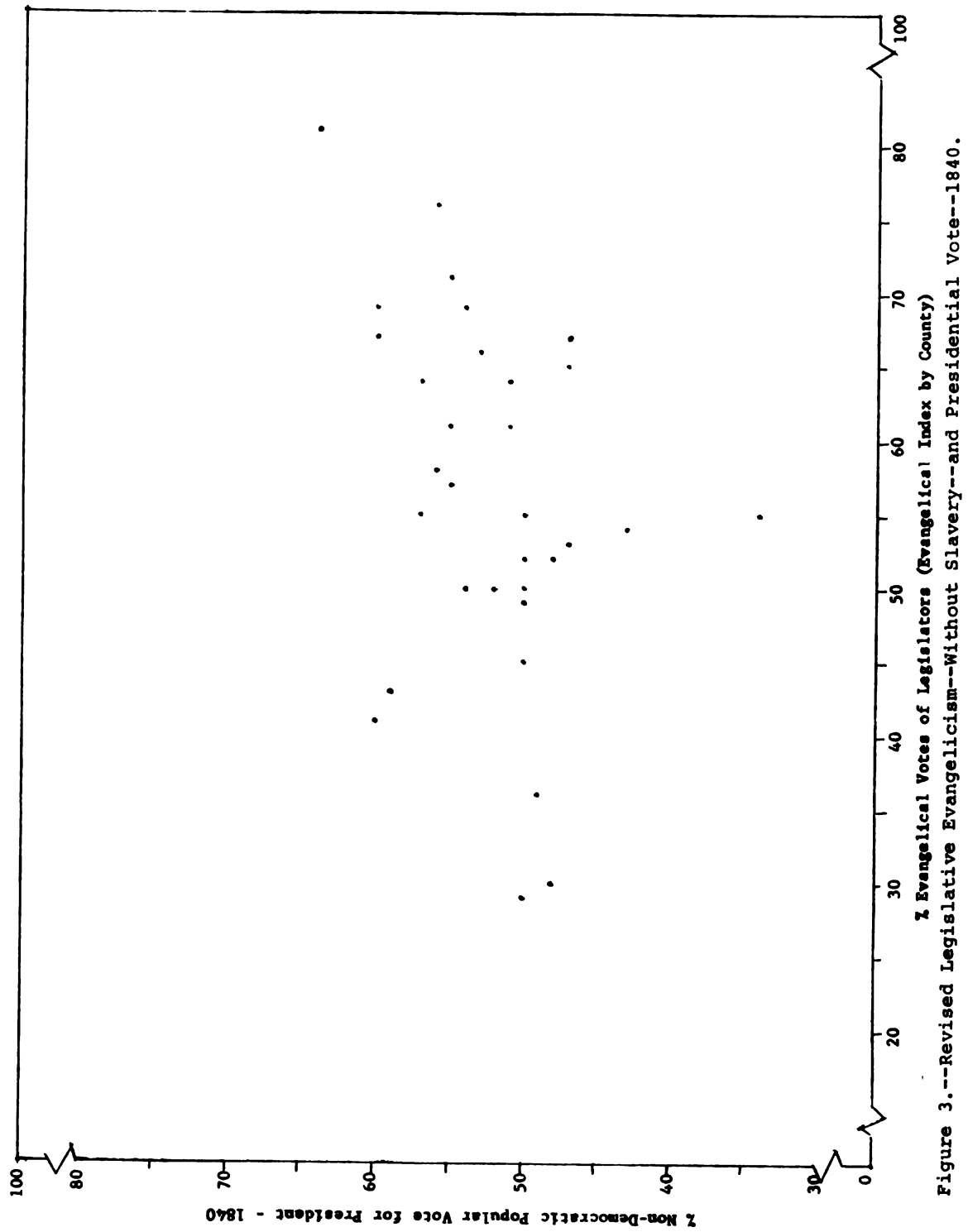
Democrats, it was possible to be generally evangelical while being against anti-slavery agitation.

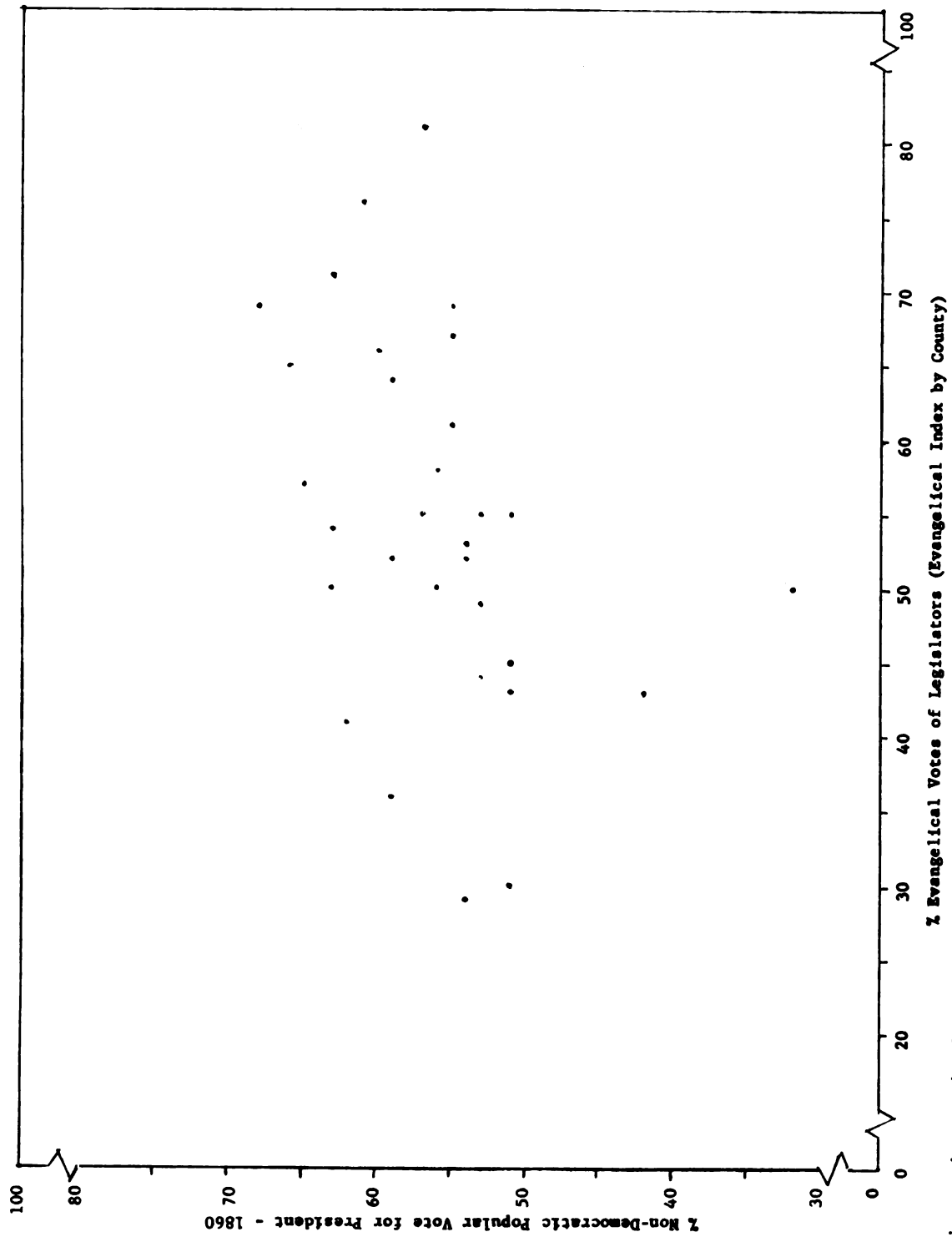
As an issue highly influenced by partisanship, anti-slavery was different from other evangelical reforms where party support, at least among Democrats, varied greatly. Since it is an atypical issue, and since it makes up a third of the earlier Evangelical Index, another index has been prepared that deletes all anti-slavery resolutions. Table 9 presents this revised Evangelicism by county, and again, evangelical and antievangelical counties are very apparent. Now the influence of local institutions is more obvious, whether one notes the Evangelical Democrats in Shiawassee, Kalamazoo, and Livingston or the antievangelical non-Democrats in Wayne, St. Clair, and Lapeer.

Figures 3 and 4 compare this revised evangelicism with county presidential vote, as in Figures 1 and 2. In Figure 3 a direct relationship between legislative evangelicism and non-Democratic electoral support in 1840 is observed again, perhaps even more strongly than in Figure 1.

Table 9.--Revised Evangelical Index--Without Slavery--By County.

County	Total Anti- Evan.	Total Evan.	Evan.	Dem. Anti- Evan.	Dem. Evan.	% Dem Evan.	Non- Dem. Anti- Evan.	Non- Dem. Evan.
Mackinac	9	9	50	8	7	47	1	2
Oakland	49	48	49	45	43	49	4	5
Ottawa	10	11	52	9	7	44	1	4
Livingston	15	18	55	14	17	55	1	1
Monroe	32	14	30	28	12	30	4	2
Macomb	21	24	53	18	21	54	3	3
Berrien	9	11	55	9	9	50	0	2
Wayne	57	47	45	49	39	44	8	8
Chippewa	8	6	43	6	5	45	2	1
Ionia	5	12	71	3	7	70	2	5
Kent	13	14	52	10	7	41	3	7
Ingham	10	4	29	10	2	17	0	2
Branch	9	17	65	6	11	65	3	6
Shiawassee	3	13	81	3	8	73	0	5
St. Clair	11	11	50	6	10	63	5	1
Van Buren	12	14	54	9	10	53	3	4
St. Joseph	12	21	64	9	14	61	3	7
Cass	16	22	58	12	12	50	4	10
Lenawee	24	46	66	17	25	60	7	21
Saginaw	6	12	67	5	6	55	1	6
Hillsdale	11	24	69	9	10	53	2	14
Allegan	6	12	67	6	6	50	4	10
Jackson	22	27	55	19	17	47	3	10
Clinton	4	11	69	2	6	75	2	5
Calhoun	21	21	50	10	9	47	11	12
Washtenaw	37	57	61	19	29	60	18	28
Barry	6	8	57	4	4	50	2	4
Genesee	8	14	64	4	7	64	4	7
Lapeer	9	5	36	4	3	43	5	2
Eaton	10	7	41	8	3	27	2	4
Kalamzoo	7	22	76	3	8	73	4	14





But twenty years later (Figure 4), this relationship breaks down. A slightly positive line might still be drawn in Figure 4, but the Republican party and the slavery controversy plainly disrupted the evangelical voting alignment of the Second Party System in Michigan. Even counties generally antievangelical make a slight swing toward the Republican party. The comparison of these two figures differs with the previous pair where the 1860 alignment led to a more structured system. The implication is that the Third Party System in Michigan partially erased the older evangelical cleavage with an issue, presumably slavery, that could win the support of many antievangelicals.

Table 10 makes the same presentation on Evangelicism as did Table 7 with the first Evangelical Index. Certain comparisons are striking. First, while the general polarization on evangelicism remains largely the same, partisan polarization is much less distinct. Whereas earlier there had been a 16 point spread between the evangelical and antievangelical non-Democrats, there is now a 33 point one. Non-Democrats remain more evangelical than Democrats, but the partisan polarization of Table 7 has been mitigated in Table 10. Temperance is still an important source of friction between the evangelicals and the antievangelicals, but the clergy issue is much less so. One other point is very significant, while the anti-evangelical counties in Table 7 swing toward the Democratic party in 1860, the antievangelical counties in Table 10

Table 10.--Nine High and Low Revised Evangelical--Without Slavery--Counties.

	Evan.	Dem. Evan.	Non- Dem. Evan.	Slavery	Clergy	Temper- ance	% Dem. 1840	% Dem. 1860
Least Evan.	44	43	47	44	49	40	47	45
Most Evan.	69	62	80	64	70	77	45	40

swing toward the Republican party. The slavery issue makes a difference. In the earlier Evangelical Index the differential between evangelical counties and antievangelical counties in the 1860 election is 10; counties selected by the second Evangelical Index produce a differential of only 5. Both the figures and the tables agree that a significant amount of Republican support was garnered from anti-evangelical counties opposed to the extension of slavery and a slave aristocracy.

So far we have utilized electoral data from 1840 and 1860 as dependent variables. If we analyze the evangelicism of high and low Democratic counties we can verify the preceding evidence. This is done in Table 11. As expected, the 1860 election presents a more polarized profile: an evangelical differential of 11 between high and low Democratic counties in 1840, and a differential of 22 in 1860. The Republican counties emerge as slightly more evangelical than the Whig counties (64 to 61), and

Table 11.--Evangelicism of Ten High and Low Democratic Counties.

	Evan.	Evan. w/o Slavery	Slavery	Clergy	Temperance
Low Dem. 1840	61	61	68	72	68
Low Dem. 1860	64	60	78	67	68
High Dem. 1840	50	50	55	58	55
High Dem. 1860	42	45	35	51	41

the Democratic ones become significantly less evangelical (50 to 42). It is obvious that slavery is a crucial factor in fomenting this realignment. Without slavery the Republicans are no more evangelical than the Whigs, and the Democratic swing toward antievangelicism is less pronounced. The temperance crusade reflects this same shift. Again the Republicans are no more evangelical than the Whigs and the Democrats become more anti-temperance. On the clergy issue the Republicans are significantly less evangelical than the Whigs, and Democrats undergo another shift toward antievangelicism. Thus, if we assume that legislators reflected local attitudes in their voting behavior on evangelical issues, we arrive at two observations on the realignment of the 1850s. First, it appears that its major impact shattered the Democratic party especially loosening many evangelical and anti-slavery counties. The result was a Democratic party significantly more antievangelical than earlier, creating greater evangelical polarization between

the parties. Yet, if there was any difference between the Whig and Republican counties, the latter were less evangelical except on matters concerning slavery. It is significant that while Whigs exhibit the most consensus on the clergy controversy, the Republicans achieve the most consensus on slavery and significantly less on the clergy matter. Anti-slavery seems to have diluted the evangelicism of the Republican party.

Evangelicism has some validity as a concept analyzing Michigan politics before the birth of the Republican party. Some important evangelical issues were debated in this period and Whig legislators are almost always more evangelical than Democratic ones. But in utilizing this concept it is important to note its limitations. Evangelicism did not represent a strictly partisan division. Iconolasts could be found in all parties when party attitudes conflicted with local attitudes. Moreover, while slavery was the crucial element in the formation of the Republican party, the anti-slavery appeal was not strictly evangelical. The earlier partisan polarization was mitigated by a new non-Democratic majority including many antievangelicals. This fact is further evidence that evangelical issues encompassed a broad appeal that transcended strictly evangelical attitudes. Legislators, and presumably their constituencies, could agree with evangelicals on slavery and remain otherwise antievangelical.

CHAPTER IV

CONSISTENCY OF EVANGELICAL VOTES

AS A BELIEF SYSTEM

Given the results of this study up to now, it is pertinent to wonder how well evangelicism operated as a belief system among House members. That is, how many representatives seem genuinely evangelical from their voting records. Philip Converse defines a belief system as a "configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence."⁵⁶ Converse claims that the crucial element in a belief system is "constraint" which compels an individual having a particular opinion on one issue to have a particular opinion on another different but related concern. Formisano has developed an evangelical belief system that identifies certain attitudes evangelicals shared on Sabbath laws, slavery, temperance, etc. The conclusions of the previous section dispute Formisano's

⁵⁶Philip P. McCormick, "Political Development in the Second Party System," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, The American Party Systems, Stages of Political Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 112.

construct. Republicans could be more anti-slavery and less evangelical than their Whig predecessors.

Table 11 presents what I call a Consistency Index. If evangelicals or antievangelicals represented the parties in the House they should maintain a consistent voting record. In every House session in which two or more evangelical issues resulted in roll call votes, I have paired the votes of each representative to determine if he voted evangelically on both issues, antievangelically on both issues, or split his vote (voting evangelically on one and antievangelically on the other). Table 11 compiles the results of this survey first for all representatives, and then for Democratic and non-Democratic legislators separately. For the House members as a whole the voting pattern that emerges is not very different from what it would have been had the legislators been voting randomly. In only 7 of 17 pairings do the sum total of evangelical and antievangelical votes outnumber split ones. When the political parties themselves are examined an expected polarization does develop. The Whigs appear slightly evangelical and the Democrats much more splintered: evangelical pairs outnumber antievangelicals by 27 to 1 among non-Democrats; antievangelicals outnumber evangelicals 4 to 1 among Democrats. The large number of split voters in both groups, however, would have to disappoint anyone hypothesizing evangelical or antievangelical parties in the House. Research in this and other studies

Table 12.--Consistency Index.

Year	Issues	All Legis.			Dem. Legis.			Non-Dem. Leg.		
		Ev.	A-Ev.	Split	Ev.	A-Ev.	Split	Ev.	A-Ev.	Split
1838	Slavery/Dueling	6	9	23	2	5	19	4	4	4
1843	Clergy/Forn. + Adult.	9	3	31	6	3	31	3	0	0
1843	Cap. Pun./Forn. + Adult.	5	18	19	2	18	19	3	0	0
1843	Cap. Pun./Clergy	15	10	25	11	10	25	4	0	0
1844	Cap. Pun./Forn. + Adult.	14	10	20	13	10	20	1	0	0
1848	Clergy/Divorce	10	6	33	7	6	29	3	0	4
1849	Divorce/Slavery	10	14	27	6	14	22	4	0	5
1850	Slavery/License	11	19	14	2	19	8	9	0	6
1851	Clergy/Divorce	5	17	26	1	17	11	4	0	15
1851	Clergy/License	27	13	20	8	12	16	19	1	4
1851	Clergy/Liberty Law	16	25	21	0	29	15	16	1	6
1851	Liberty/License	22	14	26	1	14	22	21	0	4
1851	Divorce/License	9	11	29	0	11	17	9	0	12
1851	Divorce/Liberty Law	9	28	14	0	27	4	9	1	10
1855	Slavery/License	22	12	36	0	11	12	22	1	24
1857	Slavery/License	14	0	51	0	0	11	14	0	40
1859	Slavery/License	37	20	7	0	19	1	37	0	6
Total		241	229	427	59	225	278	182	18	147
Percent		27%	26%	48%	11%	40%	50%	54%	2%	44%

has identified various nonevangelical factors that could influence a legislators votes on an evangelical bill. Votes on slavery were accompanied by racist or pro-union arguments. Expedient concerns of reducing crime affected the abolition of capital punishment. Prohibition, as many, including Formisano have pointed out, was for some an illy disguised nativist attack on the presumed indulgence of immigrant groups.⁵⁷ Political concerns, exemplified by Whig reaction to the dueling resolutions, were also at work. Legislators were subject to a variety of sometimes conflicting interests. Few issues presented a solely evangelical or antiévangélical alternative. Table 11 indicates that non-Democrats were more susceptible to evangelical influences than Democrats, but both groups were heavily influenced by other concerns. On an individual level these nonevangelical influences disrupted "constraint." But on a party level "constraint" was maintained since non-Democratic legislators are more evangelical. Rather than being staffed by evangelicals, the legislative parties were conglomerates of indiviudals holding one or another of evangelical attitudes. The legislators of particular parties were not interested in instituting an evangelical program because they did not share a belief system.

⁵⁷Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 243.

Party unity on evangelical bills also seems influenced by party competition. Comparisons of Tables 1 and 11 indicate that the emergence of evangelical Democrats and split or antievangelical non-Democrats is directly related with party success. When the Democrats had overwhelming control of the legislature (1842-49), a more evangelically inclined group of Democrats can be observed. The Democratic purge of 1849 seems to have eradicated this wing of the party. After 1854, when non-Democrats capture overwhelming control of the House, a significant body of Republicans voted against both slavery and prohibition. The non-Democrats before 1854 and the Democrats after that date are able to maintain greater party regularity on evangelical issues. Party unity tends to deteriorate whenever a party holds an inordinate percentage of legislators. It seems plausible that the same county influences identified in Section III are at work here. Whig and evangelical counties, when sending a Democratic legislator to the House, sent an evangelical. Where there was party competition, or especially where one party was a distinct minority, unity reappeared because the party was dependent on its true believers. Since evangelical attitudes were often local in character and did not always divide the parties, massive electoral success could only be achieved at the expense of doctrinal purity.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This paper neither fully confirms nor categorically refutes Formisano's thesis of evangelicalism in Michigan in the Second Party System. Evidence of party behavior at the elite level affirms the existence of evangelical attitudes.

The fact that Whig legislators emerge as more evangelical on all but one issue is significant and suggests that they did represent a more evangelical constituency. Yet, evangelicalism did not have quite the salience or party polarity that Formisano ascribes to it. The party presses said very little about these reforms, and only two or three stirred up partisan rancor in the House. The Consistency Index does not unearth an overbearing body of evangelicals or antievangelicals in any party. As a group Whig legislators were sympathetic to evangelical appeals; as individuals they did not exercise the "restraint" of an evangelical belief system but were each influenced by such nonevangelical influences as practicality and party interest. This explains why legislative parties can appear

"evangelical" in House votes while "evangelical" legislators were few.

Of course, no party can be labeled evangelical or antievangelical if the term is to mean a fixation on moral reform. Issues that most closely reflect the evangelical ideal, such as Sabbath laws and inviting the clergy, rarely created great partisan cleavages. Those that fostered the most partisanship, slavery and prohibition, also held strong nonevangelical appeals. A review of each of the political parties will make these points more clear.

Whig representatives appear more evangelical than Democratic ones, but they never attempted to "moralize" the state. When they controlled the legislature (1840-41), only one evangelical measure was passed: a Sabbath Law. Whigs are rarely much more evangelical than the Democrats on non-slavery issues. The legislators muted their evangelicism when dueling or temperance legislation made it in their party's interest to do so. The Detroit Advertiser reflects this limited evangelicism. When it concerned itself with an evangelical issue it spoke evangelically. But the only matter that ever acquired regular notice in the paper was slavery. Even when the legislature committed grave acts of immorality (defeat of the fornication and adultery law or motions to abandon opening prayers), the Advertiser's temper was shortlived. It associated the Democrats with antievangelicism only on

the issues of slavery and prohibition. Most of the non-slavery bills and resolutions considered by the House received no notice in the Whig journal. The Advertiser and the legislators preferred to concern themselves with very concrete matters such as banking, patronage, currency, and honest, efficient and limited government. In 1843 the Advertiser greeted the incoming legislature with what it believed to be the major business for the House:

Some disposition . . . must be made of our state debt. . . . The claims too of our domestic creditors will require prompt and earnest attention. Our internal improvements must at any rate be provided for. . . . Some system must also be devised for the management and disposition of the lands of the state. . . . [T]he judiciary, militia and tax systems are to be revised, and they certainly need it. Some reduction in public expenses and especially in the pay of members would certainly be desirable.⁵⁸

It was on issues such as these that the national party's image was drawn, and the state party adjusted its own propaganda accordingly. The Advertiser never seemed concerned with who the Whigs were or what they stood for, but preferred to identify the party with certain national figures such as Henry Clay. Evangelical issues, were not highly salient for the Whig elite because they presented none of the rewards of patronage and economic programs and did not bolster party identity. Perhaps the Whigs even feared the unambiguous nature of evangelicism. If we assume that the average voter was not well educated or

⁵⁸Detroit Advertiser, Jan. 2, 1843.

well informed, party spirit could be reinforced by campaigning on nebulous and abstruse issues such as "Banks," "Clay," "Corruption," etc. These are concerns that are so distant and complex for the common man that it was easy for him to assimilate his attitudes with those of his party. But evangelical issues were quite another matter in that they directly intruded into his day to day activities. Whigs who were habitually intemperate may have been forced to reassess their own party affiliation had their party sided so unmistakably with temperance as it did with Clay. Evangelical reforms were not distinctly political issues little influenced by personal attitudes, but ones that affected the values and lifestyles of much of the electorate. An isolated farmer could believe almost anything he was told about "Clay" or "Banks," but he held certain religious and ethnocultural attitudes more deeply rooted and independent than his political identification. Slavery was likewise early perceived by Whigs as an evangelical issue, one that could only summon up the moral wrath of abolitionists or invite mass anxiety over disunion. This explains the efforts of both parties in the legislature to keep the controversy offstage. But the Mexican War and the territories question publicized the issue to an extent that it could no longer be tolerated by anti-slavery Whigs. To assist in "politicizing" this issue the "slave master" or "slave aristocracy" were introduced to provide a democratic, not purely evangelical,

appeal. Like "Clay" or "Banks," the "slave master" was an individual distant from the common Michigander's experience, but one offensive to his democratic spirit. (Formisano also identified a new democratic impulse with the birth of the Republican party.)⁵⁹ Temperance reform gained similar popularity when it moved beyond its evangelical appeal to become a nativist attack on immigrants. The two most popular and partisan of the evangelical issues succeeded because their appeal was not strictly evangelical. Whig representatives may have individually incorporated evangelical attitudes, but they did not espouse evangelical politics.

The Democrats are far more divided on evangelical matters than the Whigs. Electoral success for the Democrats in the House did not lead to a substantially more antievangelical legislature since evangelically inclined Whigs were replaced by evangelically inclined Democrats. Evangelicism was not a divisive party issue at this level of political conflict. Democratic legislators who occasionally voted evangelically did not seem to disturb the party hierarchy probably because antievangelicism in the Democratic party was even less important than evangelicism in the Whig party. The Free Press often advocated evangelical positions on inviting the clergy, capital

⁵⁹Formisano, Birth of Mass Political Parties, p. 330.

punishment, the Sabbath Law, and the fornication and adultery law. Like the Whigs it is the abstruse issues of "Banks," "the tariff," and "Jackson" around which the party centered its major appeal. An 1841 pamphlet titled "Address of the Democratic Members of the Legislature" attacked the Whigs as lackies of banking interests, accused them of general mismanagment of state interests, and charged Whig corruption in state printing, apportionment and disputed elections. Nowhere in the sixteen page indictment are evangelical issues even mentioned.⁶⁰ Given, as we have seen, that some Democrats were from evangelical districts this neutrality was surely the wisest policy for party unity and electoral success. Even anti-slavery men could be found within its ranks. The greatest part of the Democratic legislators should be labeled nonevangelicals, unconcerned with establishing any consistency on evangelical matters. Assuming that the most important concerns of the party elite were those that directly affected the fortunes of the party (patronage, apportionment, state printing), party regularity on these matters was probably all that was demanded of Democratic legislators. The slavery issue intruded on this modus vivendi by disrupting the state party's ties with the national party and by proving an

⁶⁰ "Address of the Democratic Members of the Legislature," pamphlet in the Michigan State Library. Printed as a supplement to the Detroit Free Press, May 1, 1841.

embarrassment to Lewis Cass. This tenuous coexistence in the party is exemplified by the 1848 election in which some counties voted Lewis Cass for president and certain anti-slavery Democrats to the House. The 1849 legislature was a critical turning point for the state's Democratic party. The attempt of the anti-slavery group to overthrow Cass ostensibly over the slavery issue alarmed more moderate or regular Democrats enough to initiate a purge. What concerned the regular Democrats was not the anti-slavery attitudes of the Ransom men so much as their willingness to disrupt party harmony for the benefit of their cause. Such Democrats would be of no more use to the Democrats than their Whig opposition. It is after this that the Free Press begins its condemnation of "higher Lawism." Such reaction from regular Democrats, and the formation of the Fusion party, altered the balance of power in the Democratic party as early 1849. The lack of a national party organization and the reconciliation that followed 1850 killed this first attempt at fusion.

The Republican party emerges as less evangelical than its predecessor, its ranks swelled with antievangelicals voting against the extension of slavery. Recognizing this heterogeneity, the party eschewed evangelical issues. No evangelical issues were raised in any of the three Republican legislatures after 1855 except slavery and temperance. The Republicans could have altered the

antievangelical measures of previous Democratic legislatures by tightening the Sabbath and Divorce laws and reintroducing capital punishment. While the Republicans did pass a Maine Law in 1855, they subsequently loosened it in 1857, and in 1859 some members opted for the earlier license system. Electoral success was diluting non-Democratic evangelicism. While anti-slavery remained a uniform concern of the state's Republicans, other party issues were more temporal in character. When Kingsley Bingham stepped down from the governorship, he summarized the following as the major achievements of his party's four years in office: railroad and banking laws, the St. Mary's canal, disposal of state swamp lands, resolutions against slavery, and the establishment of a state House of Corrections and Agricultural College (the latter were originally designed as separate institutions). The governor nowhere implied that the administration had protected or uplifted public morals. He did not even mention the Maine Law.⁶¹

The foregoing is not to suggest that evangelicism was a false or nonexistent issue. Certain legislators had evangelical attitudes, and they were most often Whigs or Republicans. Glimpses of this evangelicism can be found in debates over the clergy and certain other matters.

⁶¹Detroit Free Press, Jan. 6, 1859.

But the evidence presented in this paper strongly suggests that the party's elite were far more interested in advancing temporal party and state interests than those of evangelicism. Like McCloskey, this paper has identified distinct differences between the party elite and its electoral base. The electorate might support or oppose a party because it perceives it as holding a distinct or amorphous position on some belief system or issue; the party in office is predisposed to accept all into the party's ranks who will advance the party's own interests in such areas as patronage and power. Both the Democrats and the Republicans seemed to have tolerated a significant degree of evangelical or antievangelical iconoclasm within their organizations. As a result, no party instituted an evangelical or antievangelical program or propaganda for fear of contracting the party's heterogenous constituency. Democratic leaders were even tolerant of anti-slavery until it threatened to disrupt the party.

This finding does not contradict McCloskey's study which found stronger ideological attitudes in the elite. McCloskey examined attitudes and belief systems; this paper analyzed the actual political behavior of the elite that had real ramifications on their personal or partisan interests. Even McCloskey's "conservative" Republicans and "liberal" Democrats supported the "middle of the road" candidacies of Eisenhower and Stevenson. Party elites may be better informed, more committed, and even more

ideological than the electorate. However, a separate incentive of maintaining and nurturing a party organization requires them to blunt that ideology or at least tolerate a wide spectrum of alternate and even opposing views. In analyzing elite party behavior for the Second Party System in Michigan, temporal concerns of party welfare are more important determinants of party behavior than abstract evangelical ones.

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