

PATTERNS OF VOTING IN PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES, 1944-1958

BY EDWARD F. COOKE*

THREE of the last four state elections in Pennsylvania have been so close that the determination of the final outcome could not be made until nearly all the returns had been tabulated. Exceedingly close contests are somewhat of a rarity in a state noted for overwhelming majorities polled by Republican candidates for three-quarters of a century. Equally significant in these recent elections is the fact that Democratic candidates carried two of the three close contests.¹

The resurgence of the Democratic party during the decade of the nineteen fifties has provided observers within the Commonwealth with a political situation for which no definitive interpretation can yet be accepted. Political speculators have suggested a number of reasons for the Democratic surge to power and have indicated that such factors as the evolution of a competitive two-party system, the caliber of recent Democratic candidates, the impact of unsettled economic conditions, and the effectiveness of urban machines underlie the political transition from minority to majority party. Without attempting to evaluate each of these possibilities, insight into the changing character of Pennsylvania politics may be obtained from an analysis of the voting behavior of the several counties. Such an examination extending over a period of time provides a basis for the determination of whether or not these close elections are temporary, short-term aberrations or permanent, long-range trends.

*Dr. Cooke is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the Director of the Program for Practical Political Education and the Citizenship Clearing House for Western Pennsylvania. In 1957 he co-authored the *Guide to Pennsylvania Politics*.

¹In 1956 Senator Joseph S. Clark (D) carried the state with 50.2 per cent of the two-party vote. Governor David L. Lawrence (D) and Senator Hugh Scott (R) won in 1958 with 50.9 per cent and 51.5 per cent respectively of the two-party vote. President Eisenhower (R) carried the state in 1952 and 1956 with the traditional Republican ease. In 1954 Governor George M. Leader's (D) majority, 53.8 per cent, was abnormally high for a Democrat and reflected more of an anti-Republican bias than a pro-Leader or pro-Democratic vote. Leader's defeat in 1958 substantiates the abnormality of 1954.

The two-party percentages for each of the 67 counties have been calculated for presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections for the period 1944-1958.² Counties have then been ranked, one through 67, for each election according to their Republican and Democratic percentages. Next, the ten counties having the highest rankings for each election have been identified for each party. A summary of the results indicates that there was a total of 15 counties ranking one or more times in the top ten during this span of 14 elections. The most Republican counties and the number of occasions each ranked in the top ten are as follows: Tioga (14), Snyder (14), Wayne (14), Union (14), Venango (14), Bradford (13), Wyoming (12), McKean (11), Warren (8), Pike (7), Susquehanna (7), Lancaster (5), Montgomery (4), Potter (4) and Cameron (1). Geographically, sources of Republican strength are situated in the northern tier counties, a mid-state rural pocket, and to a lesser extent the southeastern metropolitan region.

A similar composite ranking of the most Democratic counties included: Greene (14), Fayette (14), Washington (14), Cambria (14), Westmoreland (14), Lackawanna (11), Northampton (11), Philadelphia (10), Beaver (9), Allegheny (7), Berks (6), Fulton (5), York (5), Elk (2), Lawrence (2), Carbon (1). Democratic domination thus occurs in three areas: the southwestern industrial and soft-coal counties, the city of Philadelphia, and the northeast hard-coal region. When these contemporary rankings of county political behavior are compared to rankings of an earlier period in Pennsylvania history, the transitional nature of the Commonwealth's recent politics becomes clearer.

For the six gubernatorial elections between 1922 and 1942, the top ten Republican and Democratic counties have been tabulated and the rankings disclose a much broader distribution of county support for both major parties.³ In this 20-year period a total of 28 counties ranked one or more times within the top ten Republican districts. The most Republican counties were: Tioga (5),

² Minor party voting was insignificant, averaging .6 per cent for the period and never exceeding 2 per cent in any one election. For the 1920-1942 period the average minor party vote was 5 per cent with a high of 20 per cent in 1930. The use of two-party percentages eliminates many unessential calculations as well as making for clarity in comparisons. Election data are from the official returns published in the *Pennsylvania Manual*.

³ Data are compiled from Harold F. Alderfer and Fanette H. Luhrs, *Gubernatorial Elections in Pennsylvania, 1922-1942* (State College, 1946), 23-25.

Bradford (5), Cameron (4), Snyder (4), Union (4), Delaware (3), McKean (3), Wayne (3), Wyoming (3), Dauphin (2), Elk (2), Indiana (2), Huntingdon (2), Mifflin (2), Montgomery (2), and Philadelphia (2). The 1922-1942 rankings indicated that the Republican party had general support throughout the Commonwealth, with the exception of the hard-coal region and the southwestern industrial counties. A comparison of the relative county rankings for the two periods also points up another aspect of the changing pattern of voting. The 1922-1942 data show that 42 per cent of the counties in the state were ranked at least one or more times in the top ten most Republican counties; the 1944-1958 summary, however, indicates that Republican strength has become localized in only 20 per cent of the 67 counties, primarily those of a rural character.

The dimensions of Republican strength, however, should not be equated with a mere 15 counties; if that were ever the case only a political miracle would enable the GOP to win a state-wide election. The significance of the shift in Republican county rankings lies in the nature of these deviant counties. Thus, the 16 counties scoring two or more times within the top ten during the 1922-1942 period comprised 35 per cent of the total Republican registration in the state and provided an average of about 39 per cent of the state vote received by Republican candidates. In contrast, the 15 counties ranked in the top ten for the 1944-1958 era comprise only about 12 per cent of the total Republican registration and 12 per cent of the vote received by Republican candidates. It is obvious that the failure of the GOP to maintain a high level of support in the more populous counties has had a determining effect on Republican election fortunes.

A comparative analysis of the rankings of the most Democratic counties during the two periods provides additional evidence of the transitional nature of present Pennsylvania politics. During the 1922-1942 period the most Democratic counties in the six gubernatorial elections were: Greene (6), Columbia (4), Monroe (4), Montour (4), Adams (3), Berks (3), Elk (3), Fayette (3), Lackawanna (3), Washington (3), Westmoreland (3), Allegheny (2), Carbon (2), Fulton (2), Lehigh (2), Northampton (2), and Philadelphia (2). Nine other counties made the select list once, making a grand total of 26 counties for the 1922-1942 era. Notice

the high rankings of such counties as Columbia, Montour, Monroe, Adams, and Lehigh. These four disappeared completely from the top ten Democratic counties during the 1944-1958 period and Columbia barely made the list in 1946. Conversely, such counties as Cambria, Beaver, York, and Lawrence, unranked in 1922-1942, became strong Democratic territories in the contemporary political era. Further manifestations of not only the concentration but the stabilization of strength of the two parties is found in a comparison of the numbers of counties ranked within the top ten. Whereas, from 1922 through 1942, 26 counties could be tabulated on the list of most Democratic districts, only 17 could be so identified in the 1944-1958 span.

Corroboration of a polarization of power between the two major parties is offered in Table 1 which compares the number of counties voting Republican in the 1920-1942 period with the number of counties having a similar record during the 1944-1958 era.⁴ In the early term only 15 counties had a perfect Republican record, that is, voting Republican in each presidential and gubernatorial election, but more than double that number, 33 to be exact, turned in perfect Republican majorities in the contemporary era. The Democratic party witnessed a similar trend toward concentration of power since the best showing the party made between 1920 and 1942 was one county voting Democratic in nine out of the 12 elections. From 1944 through 1958, however, the Democrats shut out the Republicans in every state election in three counties and in nine other counties Democratic candidates won nine or more of the 14 contests. A comparison of the range of the distributions between the two parties offers supporting evidence of the dispersion of votes into two blocs of counties. The political era of 1920-1942 saw the Republican party sweep the state in nine out of 12 presidential and gubernatorial elections, but Table 1 indicates that in almost half the counties Republican candidates failed to match their state-wide successes. That is, 28 counties had voting records which resulted in Republican candidates winning in only eight or fewer of the 12 elections. Between 1944 and 1958 Republicans won the state in nine of 14 elections, a more balanced political situation, yet only 14 counties fell below the Republican state distribution.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-28. See also Harold F. Alderfer and Robert Sigmund, *Presidential Elections by Pennsylvania Counties, 1920-1940* (State College, 1941).

TABLE 1

PENNSYLVANIA PRESIDENTIAL AND GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS,
1920-1958: FREQUENCY OF REPUBLICAN MAJORITIES IN 67 COUNTIES.

<i>Number of Republican Majorities</i>	<i>Number of Counties 1920-1942 (12 elections)</i>	<i>Number of Counties 1944-1958 (14 elections)</i>
14	—	33
13	—	13
12	15	2
11	13	2
10	5	0
9	6	3
8	10	0
7	6	2
6	8	0
5	1	1
4	2	1
3	1	4
2	0	2
1	0	1
0	0	3

If the data of Table 1 are expanded to show the political performances of each county, the transition and resulting polarization of strength becomes obvious. Represented on a map of the Commonwealth, Figure 1 depicts the distribution of party support in the 12 state elections from 1920 to 1942. Similarly, Figure 2 represents the distribution of Republican majorities in the counties during the period 1944-1958. From Figure 1, it is plain that the Republican party dominated the state during the 1920-1942 era, since urban as well as rural counties were credited with consistent Republican majorities. Only Greene, Columbia, Berks and Monroe could be identified as strong Democratic counties; and Allegheny, Washington, Fayette, Westmoreland, Montour, Lackawanna, Lehigh and Northampton could be counted on in only half the elections. In all other counties, 55, Republican candidates captured a majority in more than half of the 12 presidential and gubernatorial elections. However, an important political fact is contained in the group of 22 counties, primarily rural, included in the 7-9 category (roughly 51 to 80 per cent of Republican victories). Though these counties were predominantly Republican, nevertheless Figure 1 shows that the Democratic party was able to win an occasional state election. In effect, these counties, plus the southern tier counties, represented the rural wing of the Demo-

cratic party. Likewise, Figure 1 demonstrates that the Republicans had respectable support in such urban counties as Philadelphia, Luzerne, Lehigh, Northampton, Erie and Allegheny.

Now, turning to Figure 2, the first conclusion reached is that the Republican party has solidified its rural support and the Democrats their urban support. In addition to Greene from the earlier period, the Democrats have strengthened their positions in Beaver, Washington, Fayette, Westmoreland, Cambria, York, Philadelphia, Northampton, Lackawanna and, to a lesser extent, in Allegheny and Berks counties. Elk and Carbon counties, previously Republican, divided their loyalty in the 14 elections between 1944 and 1958. Whereas about one-half of the counties could be considered strong Republican districts in the 1920-1942 period, approximately 75 per cent of the 67 counties could be so identified now. Furthermore, while there were some 22 counties that could classify as "weak Republican" in the earlier era, only three, Fulton, Columbia, and Luzerne, could bear the same label in the contemporary period. Another facet of the transition is evident in the behavior of the eight counties which had divided their allegiance equally in the 12 elections between 1920-1942. Six became strong Democratic districts and only two, Monroe and Lehigh, became more Republican. Note also that the number of these "swing" counties dropped significantly from eight to two during the span of 38 years.

The summaries of the two periods in Pennsylvania history clearly show that a rural-urban division has developed in contemporary elections. To be sure, Democratic voters are not confined to cities, nor Republicans to the rural counties, but the main sources of support lie in these two areas for the respective parties. Of course, since both parties make appeals and attract voters in all sections of the state, certain inconsistencies inevitably arise. For example, such counties as Delaware, Montgomery, and Dauphin are essentially urban in character yet their voting history indicates a consistent Republican pattern. Similarly, such rural counties as Greene, Fayette, and Fulton rank high in their Democratic support. The nonconformity of urban Delaware and Montgomery is explained in part by a suburban population, plus a long Republican tradition originating in a rural environment. Dauphin County's variance likewise is interpreted to arise from suburban

FIGURE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF REPUBLICAN COUNTY MAJORITIES IN PRESIDENTIAL AND GUBERNATORIAL
ELECTIONS, 1920-1942.

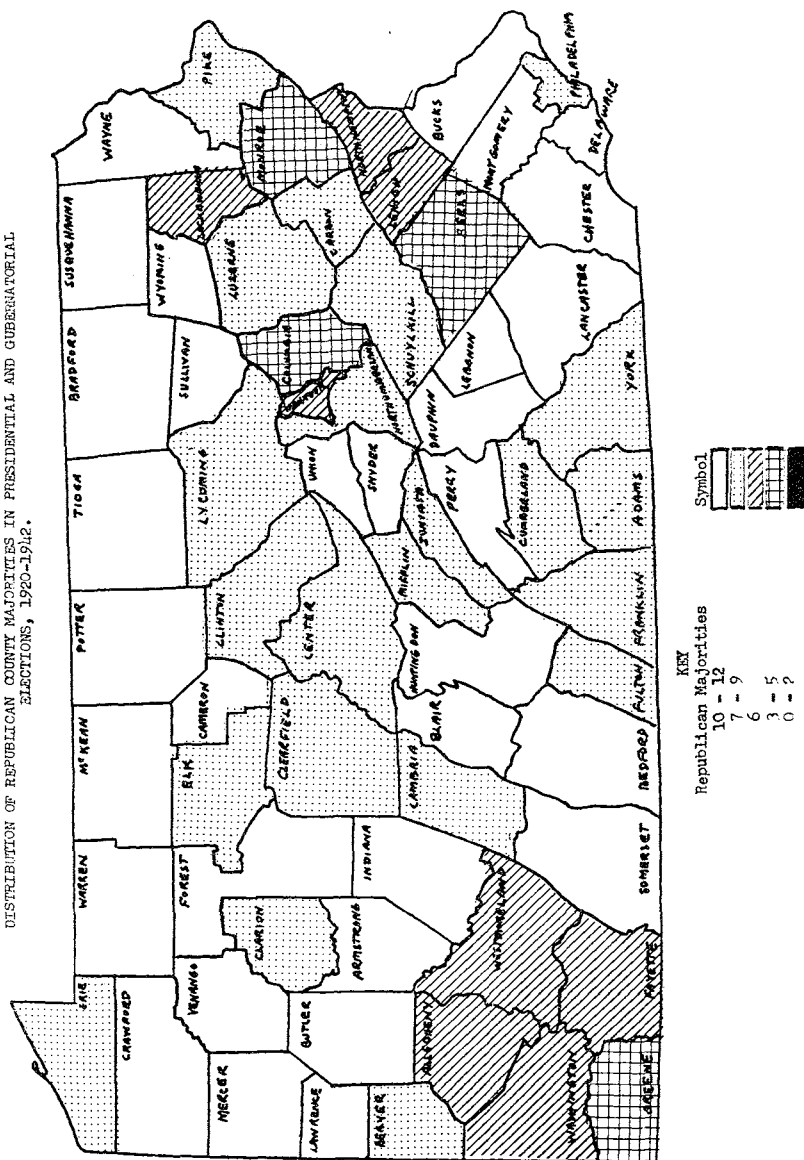
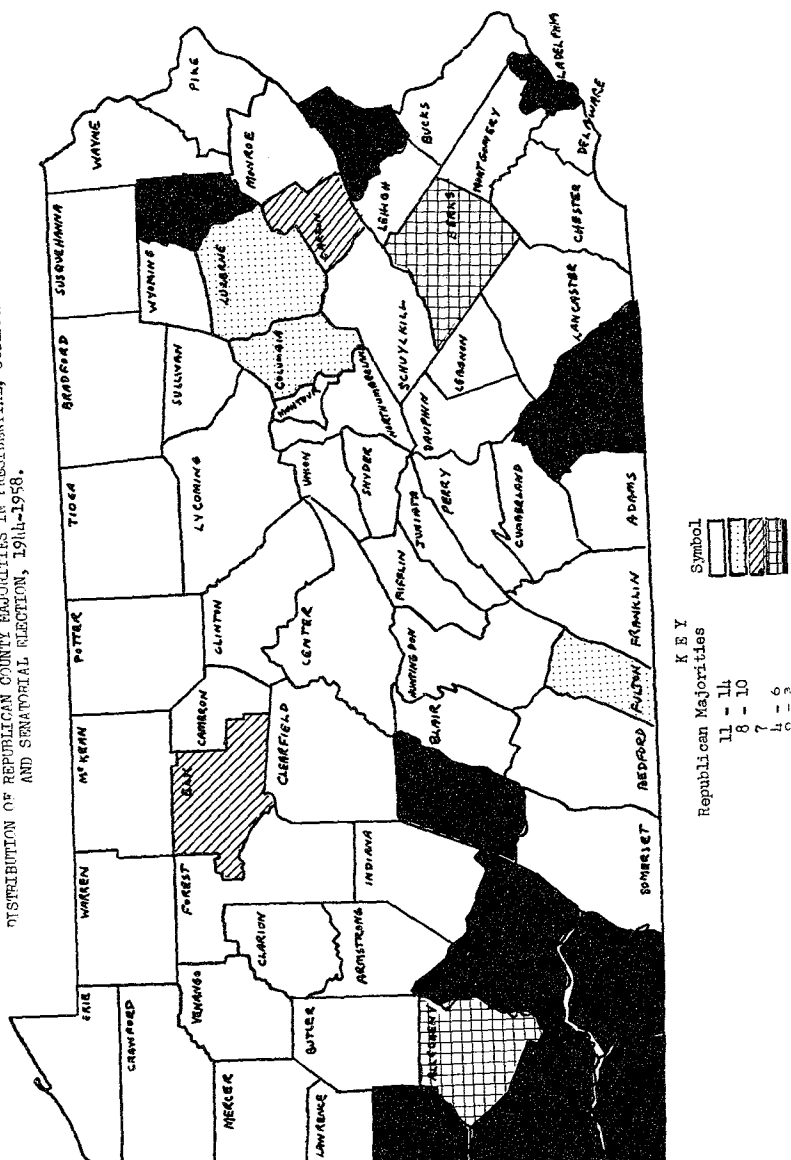


FIGURE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF REPUBLICAN COUNTY MAJORITIES IN PRESIDENTIAL, GUBERNATORIAL
AND SENATORIAL ELECTION, 1904-1956.



and traditional points of view, with the added factor of a legacy from many decades of Republican control of the state. These factors, coupled with economic and ethnic characteristics, account for a moderately high Republicanism and an absence from the very top positions in contemporary Republican rankings. The Democratic tradition in certain southern tier counties, especially in Greene, Fayette, and Washington, may be attributed to a rural Democratic heritage from the nineteenth century rather than a conversion to the party during the New Deal period. With few exceptions, Democratic strength became basically urban and industrial, whereas Republican support became primarily rural.⁵

At this stage, the analysis has pinpointed the two extremities of the problem, that is, strong Republican and Democratic counties and changes in voting patterns throughout Pennsylvania. The data have clearly demonstrated that the Republican party can depend upon a greater number of counties, but the Democratic party is stronger in the more populous regions. An examination of voting results over a period of years indicates that neither party is able to win a state-wide election if it is dependent upon only its "sure" or "safe" counties. Therefore, a combination of support appears to be essential for any party to win a state election.

A commonly accepted theory of combination employed by some observers of Pennsylvania politics is to divide the state into three sections: Philadelphia County, Allegheny County, and the remainder of the state, sometimes referred to as "Upstate." A successful state candidate, so this theory goes, would have to carry at least two of the three sections. Table 2 summarizes the percentage of votes cast in these three sections. Applying the theory to the political facts of Pennsylvania, it had validity between 1920 and 1942 when every successful candidate in 12 elections met the conditions of the proposition.⁶ Specifically, Republican candidates carried all three sections in every election from 1920 through 1928, and the Democratic Roosevelt equaled this accomplishment in 1936. In 1932, 1938, and 1942 the Philadelphia-Upstate combination proved successful for Republican candidates, whereas in 1930 and 1934 an Allegheny-Upstate fusion provided the winning

⁵ For additional confirmation of this transition see Harold F. Gosnell, *Grass Roots Politics* (Washington, D. C., 1942), 32-33.

⁶ Alderfer and Luhrs, *Gubernatorial Elections*, 20-34.

pattern for both parties. Only in 1940, when Roosevelt carried the state, was a Philadelphia-Allegheny alignment triumphant. This election was, perhaps, a harbinger of political change because from that time on the "triangular" theory failed to explain Pennsylvania elections with complete dependability.

In the 14 elections between 1942 and 1958 the Democratic party won majorities in two of the three sections, Philadelphia and Allegheny counties, but lost the state to Republican candidates on five occasions. These anomalies occurred in the presidential elections of 1948 and 1952, the gubernatorial contest of 1950 and the senatorial competitions of 1950 and 1952. In the other elections, successful candidates won all three sections in the 1946 and 1954 gubernatorial races and the 1946 senate contest. The Philadelphia-Allegheny alignment performed its expected role in the 1944 elections. In each of these latter cases, a Democrat was the successful candidate. The Allegheny-Upstate combination carried Republican presidential and senatorial candidates to victory in the 1956 and 1958 elections.

The triangular theory has, of course, obvious shortcomings (a large vote, as in 1948, for example, in one section could offset close votes in the other two), but it is a useful device to analyze trends in the Commonwealth. Table 2 which is based upon the votes cast in the three sections illustrates the transitional nature of Pennsylvania politics over the last 20 presidential and gubernatorial elections. The graphic example also substantiates the conclusions derived earlier which showed that both parties had considerable rural support and that urban regions had contributed greatly to Republican majorities in the nineteen twenties and early thirties. In 1920, for example, 72 per cent of the vote received by the Democratic candidate for president came from counties outside Philadelphia and Allegheny, and over 35 per cent of the Republican vote was concentrated in these two counties. For the five elections in the decade, the Democratic vote averaged slightly over 73 per cent from Upstate counties, despite a substantial decrease in the 1928 election when Alfred E. Smith polled a heavy vote in the cities.

The impact of the depression and the New Deal can be adduced from the new trend after 1930 as urban areas began to vote Democratic, first in Allegheny County and later in Philadelphia. The

urban shift was not so pronounced in gubernatorial elections as to enable the Democratic party to duplicate its presidential successes of 1936, 1940, and 1944. Only in 1934 was it able to win the governor's office. With the decline of the Upstate vote came a simultaneous upsurge of influence for Philadelphia and Allegheny counties in state elections. Philadelphia's percentage of the total vote increased from 21 per cent in 1932 to 25 per cent by 1942; Allegheny County experienced a similar spurt in jumping from 12.4 per cent to 16.2 per cent in 1942; and the Upstate vote decreased from 66.6 per cent to 60.4 per cent over the same decade.

A study of the contemporary period, 1944-1958, shows that the urban political surge tended to lose momentum and then ultimately reverse itself. Commencing in the post-World War II era, the Upstate vote increased absolutely and in percentage. Again referring to Table 2, Philadelphia's percentage of the total vote dropped from 24.9 per cent in 1946 to 19.0 per cent, and both Democratic and Republican vote percentages in Philadelphia experienced a similar decline. However, in the latter stages of the contemporary period the comparative behavior of Philadelphia and Allegheny counties suggests that it might be misleading to consider the two great metropolitan centers as a single political entity. Observing the short-range trend since 1950 for the three sections of the state, note that while depicting the irregular pattern of the Philadelphia vote, a general downward movement is apparent. Allegheny County, on the other hand, is shown in Table 2 to have developed a relatively stable vote distribution. In 1950 Allegheny County accounted for 14.8 per cent of the total vote, 15.8 per cent of the Democratic vote, and 13.7 per cent of the Republican vote; yet in 1958, with an estimated increase of over 60,000 in population, Allegheny polled exactly 14.8 per cent of the total vote, 15.9 per cent of the Democratic vote, and 13.8 per cent of the Republican vote.

An interpretation of the data of Table 2 indicates the possibility that Philadelphia has reached the maximum of its vote potential whereas in Allegheny County expansion is still possible. In 1940, 887,027 people went to the polls in Philadelphia to vote for a president, yet in the last presidential election in 1956, only 890,703 people voted, an increase of only 3,676 in 16 years. Similarly, the 821,652 people who voted in the 1938 gubernatorial election ex-

ceeded the highest number of participants in any gubernatorial election except that of 1950 and then the difference in turnout was only 5,380 votes. Although the total vote in Philadelphia has reached a plateau, the party distribution within the city has not become stratified. Table 2 demonstrates that both parties must depend upon a relatively low immigration rate and "converts to the cause" in order to add votes to their respective totals. Considering this relatively stable electorate, credit for the overwhelming Democratic successes in Philadelphia in recent years can be attributed to nothing else but the tremendously efficient and effective Democratic city organization.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL AND PARTY VOTES CAST IN THREE SECTIONS
OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1920-1958.

Year	<i>Philadelphia</i>			<i>Allegheny</i>			<i>Upstate</i>		
	<i>Rep. Vote</i>	<i>Dem. Vote</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>	<i>Rep. Vote</i>	<i>Dem. Vote</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>	<i>Rep. Vote</i>	<i>Dem. Vote</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>
1920	25.2	17.9	23.1	10.1	10.1	10.4	64.7	72.0	66.5
1922	20.9	11.0	22.0	9.0	7.5	8.7	70.1	81.5	69.3
1924	24.1	13.2	22.0	10.6	5.4	9.4	65.3	81.4	68.6
1926	28.3	19.2	26.1	11.3	8.4	10.6	60.4	72.4	63.3
1928	20.4	25.9	21.6	10.4	15.0	12.0	69.2	59.1	66.4
1930	10.5	20.2	14.2	13.7	7.3	11.2	75.8	72.5	74.6
1932	22.8	20.0	21.0	10.5	14.6	12.4	66.7	65.4	66.6
1934	24.4	22.0	23.1	10.5	15.0	12.1	65.1	63.0	64.8
1936	19.5	22.1	21.1	10.4	15.6	13.4	70.1	62.3	65.5
1938	20.5	23.2	21.7	10.2	10.5	13.5	69.3	66.3	64.8
1940	18.8	24.5	21.8	13.1	16.9	15.5	68.1	59.6	62.7
1942	23.3	27.6	25.0	12.1	16.9	14.6	64.6	55.5	60.4
1944	18.8	25.0	22.3	14.2	18.0	16.2	67.0	57.0	61.5
1946	24.0	26.2	24.9	14.8	17.8	16.0	61.2	56.0	59.1
1948	22.3	24.6	23.4	13.3	18.6	15.8	64.2	56.8	60.8
1950	20.8	26.4	23.5	13.7	15.8	14.8	65.5	57.8	61.7
1952	16.0	25.9	20.9	14.8	17.2	16.0	68.7	56.9	63.1
1954	18.7	21.8	20.0	13.8	16.2	15.1	67.5	62.0	64.9
1956	14.8	25.5	19.5	14.8	15.9	15.3	70.4	58.6	65.2
1958	14.0	23.1	19.0	13.8	15.9	14.8	72.2	61.0	66.2

A different kind of pattern developed in Allegheny County where, after a moderate increase in the nineteen thirties and early 'forties, a general leveling off has taken place in recent elections. The postwar housing boom materially aided both parties, since the Republicans picked up votes in the more prosperous suburbs and the Democrats added strength in Pittsburgh and the older mill

towns. Whereas in Philadelphia the suburban migration meant people moving out of the city and into traditional Republican counties, in Allegheny it has resulted in a movement out of Pittsburgh, but often to Democratic-controlled boroughs and townships within the county; yet this increase has, in turn, been balanced by a steady influx of new voters into Republican townships.⁷ In Pittsburgh, as in Philadelphia, the vacuum created has been filled by new residents, primarily by Negroes from outside the state.⁸ The electorates which went to the polls in the 1956 presidential and 1958 gubernatorial elections were the largest ever to participate in these contests in Allegheny County history. The fact that the county's percentages in total and party votes were not greater was because of increasing voter activity in the Upstate section during the same elections.

Clearly, this analysis of county voting behavior has demonstrated that since the nineteen forties a rural-urban alignment has emerged. However, each party has been able to poll sufficient numbers of votes in normally opposition counties occasionally to carry a district or elect one or more representatives.⁹ This latter occurrence points up a disadvantage in using the county as the basis for analysis because refinements in technique and scope may indicate that certain intracounty factors are important.¹⁰ The slight, but

⁷ Between 1950 and 1956 Democratic registration in Allegheny County showed the following trends: a decrease in the boroughs from 54.7 per cent to 54.6 per cent; a decrease in the townships from 52.0 per cent to 49.3 per cent; an increase in the third class cities from 52.3 per cent to 60.2 per cent (with a decreasing population). In Pittsburgh, Democrats made a slight gain from 59.4 per cent to 59.8 per cent, but in the communities outside Pittsburgh the net effect was a decrease from 53.5 per cent to 53.2 per cent.

⁸ See *Pennsylvania Statistical Abstract, 1958* (Department of Internal Affairs, Harrisburg, 1958), 8-11. Also estimated population of each county as of July 1, 1957, in *Statistical Supplement Annual Report, 1957* (Department of Health, Harrisburg, 1958).

⁹ The rural-versus-urban theory of state politics is a familiar story, especially as it attempts to explain legislative behavior and public issues. Recent studies have tended to refute the adage that representatives, regardless of party, divide on issues on the basis of residence. These studies show that it is the party which binds legislators and not regional interests. See W. J. Keefe, "Parties, Partisanship and Public Policy in the Pennsylvania Legislature," *American Political Science Review*, 48 (June, 1954), 450-464; also D. R. Derge, "Metropolitan and Outstate Alignments in Illinois and Missouri Legislative Delegations," *ibid.*, 52 (December, 1958), 1051-1066.

¹⁰ Examples of refinements are Leon D. Epstein, *Politics in Wisconsin* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 57-77, wherein size of community was shown to be a significant factor, and N. A. Masters and D. S. Wright, "Trends and Variations in the Two Party Vote: The Case of Michigan," *American Political Science Review*, 52 (December, 1958), 1078-

noticeable, divergence in the voting patterns which have evolved as between Philadelphia and Allegheny counties since 1950 may be a symptom of this development. Philadelphia, densely populated, highly commercialized, heavily industrialized, has steadily increased its Democratic majorities notwithstanding a decrease in its share of the total two-party vote. But Allegheny County, only slightly less urban, yet with a longer tradition of Democratic voting backed by a large "payroll" political organization, has not turned in as substantial Democratic majorities as these factors would lead us to expect. In fact, Allegheny went Republican in the 1956 presidential and 1958 senatorial elections. Perhaps Allegheny's defection from the Democratic ranks may be attributed to the fact that less than one-half of the county's population lives in the core city, Pittsburgh. Migration, as mentioned above, is to the suburbs within the county, whereas in Philadelphia the migration is to suburbs in neighboring counties.¹¹ Thus, in the future, it may be inaccurate to treat Philadelphia and Allegheny counties as equal manifestations of the same political species. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh may be analyzed together, but the latter should be distinguished from the remainder of the county.

The burgeoning Upstate vote reflects an urban-suburban movement, which is attested to by evidence from the 1950 census and recent population projections. In general the Republicans have been the beneficiaries of the Upstate suburban drift, and the Democrats have had more success in older mining and industrial urban areas such as Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lawrence, Beaver, and Erie counties. These and a few other counties appear to be crucial or key regions for winning control of the Commonwealth because their voting behavior follows no set pattern, but swings from one party to another.

The term "marginal" or "doubtful" is usually applied to election units which have a history of vacillating between parties. More specifically the term is used to designate political areas which are won by 55 per cent or less of the vote. Under this definition,

1090, wherein the predominant occupational groups within communities were the determining forces. My own incomplete research on Pennsylvania communities tends to support Epstein's conclusion, and further investigation is under way to test Masters and Wright's thesis in Pennsylvania.

¹¹ A pioneering study of the suburban political drift in Pennsylvania in G. Edward Janosik, "Suburban Balance of Power," *American Quarterly*, 9 (Summer, 1955), 123-141.

slightly over half of Pennsylvania's counties, 34 on at least one occasion between 1944 and 1958, have been won by 55 per cent or less of the two-party vote. However, for many of these counties their marginal nature was a unique event, occurring but once, generally in the 1954 gubernatorial election which resulted in a number of rural counties going Democratic by very narrow margins. Nevertheless, after these "one-shot" counties are eliminated, there still remains a small group of counties which stand out because of their consistent inconsistencies.

TABLE 3

MARGINAL COUNTIES IN PENNSYLVANIA: COUNTIES WON BY 55 PER CENT OR LESS OF THE TWO-PARTY VOTE IN 14 ELECTIONS, 1944-1958.

<i>County</i>	<i>Rep. Majority</i>	<i>Dem. Majority</i>	<i>Total Marginal Majorities</i>	<i>Urban Rank 1950</i>
Carbon	5	4	9	14
Lawrence	5	3	8	19
Luzerne	4	4	8	5
Clearfield	6	1	7	48
Elk	4	3	7	23
Berks	3	3	6	15
Northampton	2	4	6	10
York	2	4	6	25
Allegheny	3	2	5	3
Clinton	4	1	5	34
Erie	4	1	5	8
Fulton	4	1	5	64
Lackawanna	3	2	5	2
Lehigh	4	1	5	6
Columbia	3	1	4	29
Juniata	3	1	4	64
Northumberland	3	1	4	12
17 Counties	25	9	34	

The political records of these marginal counties are condensed in Table 3 which also lists their respective urban ranks determined by the 1950 census. It is apparent that relatively high correlation exists between urbanization and marginal voting, since only four of the 17 most doubtful regions are classified as rural in population. Moreover, it is equally obvious that Republican candidates have been the recipients of the narrow majorities in these marginal counties on most occasions, and this accounts in part for that party's successes in a number of state elections. The importance of marginal

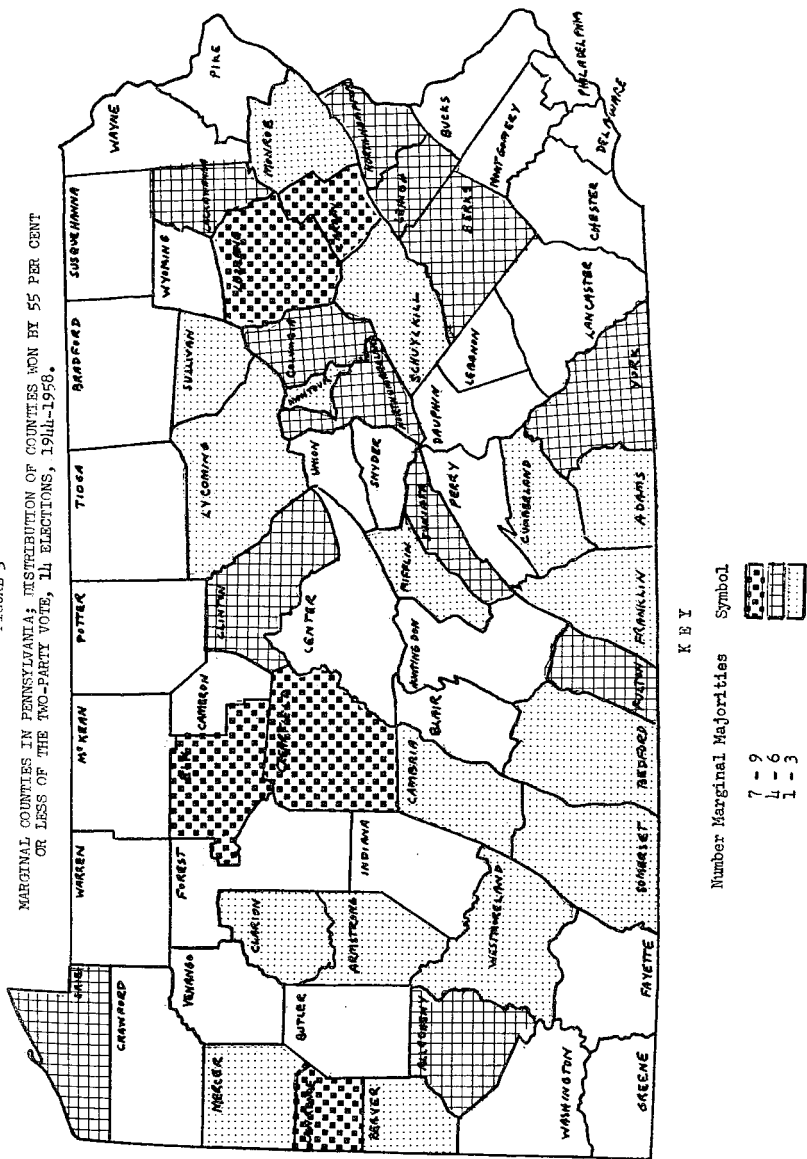
counties to the Republican party becomes increasingly clear when a comparison is made with the list of the top ten Democratic counties, the result indicating that over half of the marginal counties are also ranked high on the list of the most Democratic counties. Thus, if the Republicans can cut into the Democratic vote in these counties, they not only stand to increase their own pluralities but also tend to reduce Democratic chances for state victory since that party is dependent upon a large urban vote. The Republican party, however, with more than half the Commonwealth's counties safely tallied in its column is not subject to the same degree of pressure to win large majorities in the urban centers.

The distribution of Pennsylvania counties into "safe" and "marginal" units raises an interesting question concerning the nature and locus of party voting. Both the popular and scholarly presses abound with admonitions against voting on a strict party basis, and urban voters are usually singled out as the main practitioners of "machine voting." But if we assume that a history of switching one's vote between parties is evidence of "independent" or non-machine voting, then most of the urban counties in Pennsylvania may be considered to have enlightened electorates and, conversely, most of the rural counties may be judged to have electorates which are slaves to tradition, symbolism, or, conceivably, political bosses.¹²

For the purpose of giving another perspective to the problem of change the data of Table 3 have been projected in Figure 3 on a map of the Commonwealth. The map distinctly shows that the most volatile area in the state insofar as political ambivalence is concerned is concentrated in the northeastern hard-coal region. Another area of political instability is in the eastern section of the

¹² No analysis of Pennsylvania politics is complete without indicating the importance of political bosses, past and present. However, the emphasis in this article is on how counties voted and not on why. An answer to the latter question would undoubtedly entail a detailed examination of power structures and relative influences of such Democratic political leaders as Governor David L. Lawrence in Pittsburgh, Congressman William Green in Philadelphia, the Lawler brothers in Lackawanna, John R. Torquato in Cambria, or Congressman Francis E. Walter in Easton. Also, Republican leaders such as Senator M. Harvey Taylor in Dauphin County, former Senator J. J. McClure in Delaware, or T. Newell Wood in Luzerne would have to be considered. These and other local bosses have tended to dominate Pennsylvania politics since the demise of the state bosses of the Penrose-Quay tradition. See E. F. Cooke and G. E. Janosik, *Guide to Pennsylvania Politics* (New York: Henry Holt Co., 1957), 6-19.

FIGURE 3
MARGINAL COUNTIES IN PENNSYLVANIA: DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTIES WON BY 55 PER CENT
OR LESS OF THE TWO-PARTY VOTE, 14 ELECTIONS, 1944-1958.



state, identified as the eastern middle region, and includes Northampton, Lehigh, Berks, and York counties. Erie and Fulton counties stand alone surrounded by strong Republican neighbors. Finally there is a tier of counties, stretching from the hard-coal region in the east through the center of the state through Elk and Clearfield counties to the southwestern industrial complex, that has exhibited a history of political independence. This middle tier of counties closely parallels the proposed route of the "Shortway" superhighway. Such a geographic coincidence raises an interesting question on the future of Pennsylvania politics if, in the course of time, the highway fulfills the expectations of its planners and brings industrialization as well as urbanization to what are now basically rural counties. Leaving the geographic variable for future commentators to analyze, we can summarize the results of this study as follows:

1. Prior to 1932 both major parties had sizable elements of rural and urban support with the Republican party especially strong in Philadelphia and Allegheny counties.

2. The depression and the New Deal tended to change the established patterns of voting, first in Allegheny County and later in Philadelphia. During the late 1930's and early 1940's Pennsylvania was divided into a rural-oriented Republican party and an urban-dominated Democratic party. Exceptions to this alignment were suburban counties in the southeastern metropolitan region and "old line" rural Democrats in the southern tier counties. Urban influence in state elections increased during this period.

3. Since World War II there has been a gradual concentration of party strength into two unequal but well-defined areas. Republicans control approximately two-thirds of the 67 counties, but Democrats have substantial support in the more populous counties.

4. The Philadelphia-Allegheny-Upstate combination theory is no longer a valid explanation of the behavior of the Pennsylvania electorate. Since the late 1940's the Upstate vote has assumed more significance in determining the outcome of state elections; Philadelphia's contribution to the total vote is declining, and Allegheny's vote percentage is stabilizing.

5. Since 1950 a slight but noticeable divergence in voting patterns has developed between Philadelphia and Allegheny counties. This deviation may indicate that the two metropolitan areas should be

analyzed separately because of the large suburban population located in Allegheny County.

6. Recent elections also reveal the development of a significant number of marginal counties whose vote may be a crucial factor in winning a state election. These marginal counties, urban in population for the most part, tended to go Republican in the 1930-1940 elections, but appear to be voting more Democratic in recent contests. The hard-coal region, the eastern middle region, and a mid-state tier of counties tend to be the main geographic centers of political volatility.

7. Finally, the increasing Democratic pluralities in the urban areas, the Republican suburban and rural dominance, and a growing number of marginal counties indicate that close contests will be common to Pennsylvania in future state elections.