

Linking Party and Congressional Agendas: New Datasets on Policymaking During the Gilded Age and Progressive Era

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Abstract

The American Political Party System stultified during the Gilded Age, seemingly unable to capture the dynamic changes occurring in American society. Because of the frozen two-party system, a vigorous set of minor parties emerged, pressing ignored issues onto the policymaking agenda. Political scientists and historians have claimed the importance of minor parties in forcing the two-party system to break out of its lethargy. But they have not been able to evaluate this surge in policymaking as the Progressive era dawned because of poor data availability. In this paper, we introduce two rich new datasets of policymaking from the period. The first dataset consists of party platform planks from both the Republican and Democratic Parties, as well as dozens of minor parties, from 1868-1944. The second consists of Congressional hearings conducted from 1870-1944. We coded each dataset using the Comparative Agendas Project subtopic classification system, allowing us to track the emergence of 220 subtopics onto the Congressional and party system policy agendas. Using these new datasets, we present a method of assessing the effects that the emergence of minor parties had on the policymaking system in the period and beyond.

What is the role of minor political parties in the U.S. political system? In his paper we present findings from the system we have developed a system capable of addressing some of the major issues in assessing that role. Minor parties were especially prominent in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period of dynamic political, cultural, and technological change. The invention and wide deployment of revolutionary new technologies from the scientific and industrial revolutions changed American life, but also introduced new problems for public policy to solve. The end of slavery, internal migrations, waves of immigration and gradual acceptance of women as equal citizens transformed American culture. The American party system failed to respond to this dynamism. It was polarized and closed, frozen in a pattern of policymaking which failed to address many of the major problems facing Americans. Consequently, the turbulent period generated a plethora of parties and social movements representing interests excluded from the existing two-party system.

Political scientists and historians have postulated three distinct roles for minor parties in the party system. First, there is the “spoiler” role in which the minor party siphons off enough votes to shift the outcome of the contest between the two major parties. Second is the “bridge” role, in which a third party provides a mechanism for voters with an allegiance to one major party to move from that party to a minor party and thence to the other major party. When third parties serve as bridges an electoral realignment can result, as it did in 1896 (Key, 1955; Burnham 1970). Finally there is the “agenda setting” role, in which minor parties stress issues that are generally popular, forcing the political system to deal with them (Hicks, 1933; Hirano, 2008). These new issues can be picked up by a major party and added to its platform, or the issue can move directly onto the governmental agenda.

It is this agenda-setting function that we explore in this paper. We do so by comparing the issue scopes of the policymaking agendas of minor parties, major parties, and the federal government across time, with particular attention to the Progressive period. By ‘scope’ we mean the number of issues actively being addressed at any one point in time. We use party platforms to assess the issue structure of both major and minor parties. We use congressional hearings to assess the extent to which different

policy issues are being addressed by Congress. Hearings are the preferred measure for agenda access because they indicate serious governmental interest in a policy issue (Jones, Theriault and Whyman, 2019).

In this paper, we contribute two new large-n datasets: Congressional hearings from 1870-1944 and party platforms from 1868-1944. Each platform plank and each Congressional hearing is coded for policy content using the Policy Agendas Project system. That system provides a set of databases relevant to public policy issues that are all coded to a standard coding system centering on the substance of public policies. It is explicitly designed to produce reliable time series information, allowing scholars to make valid comparisons on policy topics across time and among datasets (Jones 2016). Identical systems are available for 25 other countries as well (<https://www.comparativeagendas.net/>). The system includes 20 major topics and 220 subtopics arranged hierarchically below the major topics.

We collected national platforms issued by the Republican and Democratic parties as well as sixty-five platforms issued by 40 minor parties during the period. This new dataset extends existing datasets introduced by Wolbrecht and Hartney (2014) and Fagan (2019) that measure the policy agenda of U.S. political parties. It is the first U.S. agendas dataset to include non-major parties. For Congressional hearings, we collected all hearings from 1868-1944 from ProQuest Congressional. These data extend the existing hearings data released regularly by the U.S. Policy Agendas Project. All data are available on both the Comparative Agendas Project website and Harvard Dataverse.¹

We find that the party system agenda tended to lead the Congressional agenda, discussing more subtopics than the Congressional agenda. We also find significant variation in the policy topics emphasized by Congress, major and minor parties, both cross-sectionally and over time.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we explore the nature of agenda broadening in government, and the role of minor parties in that process. Second, we describe our data collection process and the

¹ Data available online at Harvard Dataverse, <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/UZERA>

parties included in the dataset. Third, we explore the data, examining both the overall scope of the Congressional and party system agendas and attention to individual major topic areas. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of how scholars might utilize these data in the future.

Theoretical Framework: Agenda Setting and The Great Broadening

The committee system is the major gatekeeping system for the legislative branch. It does so by acting as the institutional mechanism for examining problems and proposing initial solutions to the House and Senate. Policymaking in the earliest Congresses was largely done through ad hoc committees, but by the 1820s, both chambers maintained permanent standing committees (Adler and Wilkerson 2012). The number of standing committees in Congress has changed over time, but the gatekeeping role of the committee system has not.

How does any issue, especially an issue that has not previously been addressed by policymakers, successfully gain entry onto the policymaking agenda? Following Jones, Theriault, and Whyman (2019), a new issue is one that has never been addressed by government before, but recently appeared on the formal agenda. When an issue appears on the formal agenda, it tends to stay there, and the issue is incorporated into the broader policy agenda. When the government gets involved in these new issue areas, the scope of the policymaking agenda has broadened. The issues that become codified into law or result in the creation of a new agency is known as thickening.

Here we are especially interested in how the activities of third parties influence the broadening process. Interest groups can act to bring the demands of excluded groups into the governing process (Dahl 1961). But oftentimes powerful interest groups ally with government officials to exclude the broader public. In the Gilded Age, government was powerfully influenced by the new industrial, railroad, and banking companies. Bachrach and Baratz (1962), call this exclusion the second face of power. The ability to keep policy off the agenda effectively limits the scope of the agenda to old issues, and keeps new issues off. During the Gilded Age, the governing system acted to limit the access to power by

disadvantaged groups, including especially small farmers and urban laborers. That exclusionary power also had the effect of limiting the scope of the federal policymaking agenda.

Schattschneider (1960) thought that parties could act as mechanisms for breaking through the agenda monopolies engineered by interest groups. But, that works only if the party out of control incorporates unrepresented interests to challenge the prevailing status quo. If both parties collaborate to exclude unrepresented interests, then Schattschneider's model fails, at least in two-party systems.

The issues that affect people, particularly people excluded from government, may not appear on the formal agenda, because their preferences can differ from the elite preferences that regularly dominate the policy agenda. Organized interests representing these groups – interest groups, lobbyists – may act as policy entrepreneurs, attempting to influence policymakers to introduce an external issue onto the agenda to be a new priority. Policy entrepreneurs seek windows of opportunity, events that make ignoring the issue impossible, and increasing the likelihood their preferred policy solution will be implemented (Kingdon 1995). These moments are few and far between, however.

The total of these mechanisms is a trend of long periods of no policy change and short, abrupt moments when radical change is possible. Baumgartner and Jones recognize that social problems do not lead automatically to policy action (1993), noting friction that builds as problems proliferate without being attended to by policy. The political system's friction is a result from institutions, norms, and organizations of policymaking that are slow and difficult to change, and the rules that constrain policymakers' action (Jones and Baumgartner 2012). The system is resistant to change, until the pressure from outside forces it to do so (Jones et al. 2009). Minor parties may not have an advantage to become a policymaking majority but may exert influence in other ways to force the agenda to broaden by incorporating the issues they represent.

During the Great Broadening period of the 1950s-1970s (Jones, Theriault, and Whyman 2019), the U.S. federal government expanded the scope of its policy agenda. Concurrently, a series of social

movements elevated issues like civil rights, environmentalism, and women's rights to the policy agenda. Social movements mobilized large numbers of ordinary people to force previously suppressed issues onto the agenda. During this period, the government broadened by incorporating new issues onto the agenda where it had not before, and these issues remained there. Changes in scope of government, through bureaucratic size and policy output in most measures, occurred at the same time. For instance, the number of reports issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) expanded after the 1960s, following the expansion of policy areas addressed in hearings. By the end of this period in the late 1970s, most of these issues elevated to the congressional agenda via hearings post-war have remained on the policymaking agenda instead of dropping off as the problems were solved (Jones, Theriault, and Whyman 2019). The broadening of government reflects the increasing capacity of all branches in government to address more issues concurrently. This period of rapid broadening of the federal government changed the scope of policymaking, but whether it was the only era of its kind has not been explored, owing likely to the dearth of reliable data.

Why Minor Parties Matter(ed)

Minor parties rarely affect political change through elections; single-member, simple plurality systems rarely see more than two effective political parties compete to control government in any geographic area (Riker 1982). However, minor parties frequently recruit and run candidates in their own name, hold party conventions, issue platforms or manifestos, and perform other party-like activities. In some rare cases, minor parties may have some long shot hope to supplant one of the major political parties. However, most minor parties in the United States have had no plausible electoral path to power.

If they are largely absent from elections, what role can minor parties play in policymaking? The dataset analyzed in *The Great Broadening* (2019) used major party platforms from 1948 to 2008, and found parties led the government discussion of new issues; party platforms incorporated new issues first, congressional hearings followed. Minor parties may represent an important piece of this puzzle, by influencing the platforms of both major parties and the congressional hearing agenda. Scholars tend to

point to minor parties as important to representing issues and constituencies that are inadequately addressed by major parties (Hicks 1933). Major parties in two-party systems juggle diverse coalitions of interests and policy demanders (Bawn et al. 2012). If they fail to respond to changing contexts or are unable to incorporate certain social groups into their two coalitions, a third party may emerge to represent those that are left out. Minor parties can use electoral campaigns, and in rare cases, elect their own members to government, to highlight issues they care about (Berg 1999; Gilbert et al. 1999). As minor parties become more successful, major parties may respond by coopting their most salient issues (Russell 2008). Thus, minor parties provide representation to the poorly represented, even if they rarely realize formal power in government.

But minor parties are not the only vehicle for carrying new policy ideas into the broader political system. Social movements and the associations that are the institutional manifestations of movements can also serve in a manner similar to the role that minor parties play. During the agrarian revolt of the 1880s and 1890s, many of agricultural associations did not initially think of themselves as political parties, but over time many became increasingly party-like. The Grange remained non-political throughout its active life. Others were active in electoral politics, such as the Agricultural Wheel and the National Farmers' Alliance, endorsed candidates but did not run candidates themselves. In 1892, after enormous successes in endorsing candidates, the Alliance transformed itself into the Peoples' (Populist) Party and fielded a slate of candidates nationally and in many states. Because of these ambiguities, we've included such "non-party parties" where we could find platforms or policy demands in our tabulations of minor parties.

An oft-repeated claim about minor parties is that their policy ideas are at times adopted by major parties. In a first-past-the-post electoral system coalitions are constructed before elections, and social movements can be key in such coalition-building. Major parties are often influenced by social movements, as Schlozman (2015) eloquently shows. Consequently, similar dynamics may describe both minor parties and social movements. These uptakes of minor party policy ideas are not confined to the U.S.; Quaglia (2022) finds such policy uptakes in European parliamentary systems.

The classic case of policy uptakes from a minor party to a major one is that of the 1896 election when the Democratic platform and its nominee, William Jennings Bryan, adopted many of the Populist (Peoples') Party policy ideas and candidates. As Jeff Davis, Governor of Arkansas put it, "We stole all the Populists had; we stole their platform, we stole their candidate, we stole them lock, stock, and barrel" (quoted in Sanders 1999, p. 154).

This wholesale adoption of policy ideas as well as shifts in the party affiliations of party members has led to debates about the extent to which this election was a "realigning" election. Key (1955), Burnham (1970) and Stonecash and Silina use election changes to identify critical elections, Key and Burnham find evidence for shifts in 1896 while Stonecash and Silina (2005) find none. Changes in electoral structure, however, are not the key to the changing issue universe and its broadening. The extent of different policy demands included in the policy platform of the adopting party is key. Sanders' careful analysis of the historical record points to a permanent effect of the action, with the issues adopted by the agrarian parties continuing into the Progressive era, suggesting a change in the policymaking agenda space. Our data allow us to examine changes in the policy agendas of major and minor parties as well as that of Congress, comparing the trends in all three measures. In this paper we compare the policy topics mentioned in all three, allowing us to examine the uptake of new issues.

The period known as the Progressive Era, and the years that immediately proceeded and followed it, was a vibrant time for minor party activity, with dozens of parties emerging. Some of these parties, such as the Populist Party of the late 19th century, were large national organizations which ran candidates across the country and won seats in legislatures across the country, and even won electoral votes in presidential elections. Others, such as numerous small agricultural parties or the Prohibition Party, were never more than a footnote in national elections. To examine the relationship between these minor parties and the formal agenda, we collected a large dataset of minor party platforms, as well as major party platforms and congressional hearings from 1868 to 1944.

Data Collection

We collected two new datasets of political activity between 1868 and 1944: Congressional hearings and platforms from minor and major parties. Each dataset was coded using the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) topic coding system. The CAP system assigns policy documents to one of twenty major topic areas, such as health care, defense or energy and 220 subtopic areas, such as pharmaceutical regulation, military procurement or nuclear energy. Originally started in the United States, the CAP system is now used by dozens of country projects to compare policy agendas. It is designed to allow for internally valid comparisons across long time periods and types of policy outputs. The CAP system has been used to measure the policy content of political outputs in hundreds of articles, including on U.S. party platforms (Benefiel and Williams 2019; Fagan 2018; Wolbrecht and Hartney 2014).

Party Platforms

Existing datasets measure the policy content of the Republican and Democratic party platforms from 1948-2020 (Fagan 2018; Wolbrecht 2016). We extended these data backwards to 1868. To collect the major party platforms, we began with documents from the American Presidency Project, housed at University of California Santa Barbara, which contained all Republican and Democratic Party platforms during the period. We then parsed each platform to divide it into individual quasi-sentences. This process yielded 4,335 quasi-sentences over the period. Two coders then read each quasi-sentence and assigned it to one major and subtopic. Where they disagreed, a third coder broke the tie.

The process to collect minor party platforms was more complex. In addition to the major parties, the American Presidency Project archived the platforms of the Progressive Party in 1912 and 1928 and the Populist Party in 1892. We collected these and coded them using the same procedure as the major party platforms. Next, we used internet searches to create a list of all minor parties that ran presidential candidates during the period (Appendix Table 1). For parties that did not run presidential candidates, we used historical texts covering the era to identify other minor parties (Browne 1921; Frederick 2008; Keller 1977; Lynch 2002). We then conducted internet searches to collect the text of platforms for each minor

party.² We removed any parties for whom we were unable to locate a written platform. We then performed the same parsing and coding process as with the major party platforms. This process yielded 41 minor party platforms totaling 2,002 quasi-sentences. From here forward, we refer to each quasi-sentence as one “plank.”

We assigned minor parties to five categories (Table 1). While not all groups fit cleanly into one category, we observed five clusters of minor parties based on their constituencies and history. The first category consisted of three nationalist parties, beginning with the 1888 American Party, which was an anti-Masonic party focused on opposing civil rights and immigration. These parties’ platforms focused on immigration and immigrants, and race. Unlike the nationalist parties formed after the Second World War, these parties were primarily focused on immigration issues in response to new waves of migration from European countries like Ireland and Italy.

The second category included the many agricultural parties that sprung up during the period. Agricultural parties represented the interests of farmers in policy areas including a wide range of agricultural issues, such as import and export costs, subsidies, and farm credits, but the parties also railed against monopolization and price gauging in railroad freight rates. We found overlap between some labor and agriculture groups; in certain agricultural trades groups such as loggers’ unions, tobacco workers’ organization and others, issues and membership had a common area of interest and similar missions (Browne 1921). We assigned agricultural labor parties to this category, as their platforms tended to bring up issues that were like those of the agricultural parties rather than the more industrial labor parties that formed during the latter half of the period.

The third category included the monetary and anti-monopolist parties of the late 19th century that eventually grew into the People’s Party, which represents the core tenets of the populist movement. The Greenback Party was a formal political party that solidified the aims of other non-electoral groups like

² Some minor parties released platforms in between presidential election years. We assigned these platforms to the next presidential election.

The Grange (Martin 1927). The Greenbacks' central issue was a national paper tender for American currency and represented anti-monopolist interests such as regulation of the railroad, to democratize the profits of trade and commerce. The Peoples' or Populist Party is the most well-known of these parties; the Populist platforms of 1892 and 1896 were among the most disruptive to the major parties in presidential elections. James B. Weaver, Populist candidate of 1892, was the first minor party candidate to win electoral votes since 1860, largely credited to him being the lone candidate who "ran" for president by visiting states around the country to give speeches, whereas his opponents preferred to depend on partisan press, speaking with reporters and voters from their own front porches (Mitchell 2008). This act, traveling to make speeches and talk with voters throughout the country, symbolizes the populist connection to the people's issues, and criticism of the ruling classes of the industrial North and agrarian South.

The fourth was a broad group of prohibition, progressive and women's rights parties that grew during the period. This group was more heterogenous than the others. All three are linked to the suffrage movement, as well as the problems created in newly industrialized American cities.

The final group included all socialist, communist, and labor parties that largely emerged during the latter half of the period, which critique the American political and capitalist economic system. These platforms largely focus on economic inequality and labor conditions.

Table 1: Minor Parties Platforms Included

Nationalist	Agricultural	Populist/Monetary	Progressive/ Prohibition	Socialist/Labor
American (1888)	National Farmers' Union (1880, 1902)	People's Party (1896-1908)	Prohibition (1884-1916)	Socialist (1904-1916, 1932)
National Party (1896)	National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (1879)	Greenbacks (1880-1884)	Progressive (1912, 1924)	Socialist Labor (1892-1912)
Southern Commercial Congress (1908)	Agricultural Wheel (1882)	Populist (1892-1896)	American Prohibition National (1884)	Socialist Party of America (1912)
	Farmer's Mutual Benefit Association (1883)	Silver Republican (1896-1900)	National Equal Rights Party (1888)	Communist (1920)
	Colored Farmers' National Alliance (1886)	Anti-Monopoly (1884)	Independence Party (1908)	Cooperative Workers (1912)

Cotton Pickers' Union (1891)	Gold Democrats (1896)	National Women's Party (1916)	Union Labor (1888)
American Society of Equity (1902)	People's Party Fusionist Faction (1900)		
American Society of Equity (1904)			Independent People's Labor (1892)
Agricultural Workers' Organization (1915)			Social Democratic (1900)
American Farm Labor Federation (1919)			Nonpartisan League (1915)
Farmer Labor Party of the US (1920)			Union (1936)
Corn Belt Committee (1925)			
Cannery and Agricultural Workers (1929)			
Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (1934)			

Notes: We also include the Democratic and Republican platforms from 1868-1944

Congressional Hearings

Congressional hearings after the Second World War have been studied extensively by political scientists (Baumgartner and Jones 1991; Fagan 2018; Fagan and McGee 2022; Jones and Baumgartner 2005). The U.S. Comparative Agendas Project maintains an updated dataset of 102,150 hearings from 1946-2020, coded for their policy topics and metadata.³ To extend this dataset, we collected additional hearings from multiple sources. We began from the set of already collected congressional hearings from 1870 to 1945 published by ProQuest Congressional.⁴ This dataset included 18,895 published hearings. With help from graduate student coders and undergraduate students helping to collect information for each hearing, our group improved upon the previously collected hearings to include those “unpublished” by ProQuest and relabeled reports by committees⁵. Ultimately, we added 11,563 hearings for a complete dataset of 30,458 hearings.

³ *Hearings*. The Policy Agendas Project at the University of Texas at Austin, 2023. www.comparativeagendas.net. Accessed May 1, 2023.

⁴ Many thanks to Dr. Charles Seguin of Penn State University.

⁵ <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/search/basic/basicsearch>

The process of collecting these early hearings was unexpectedly formidable. First, institutional memory for committee hearings began in 1881 with the advent of shorthand in transcripts by stenographers in Congress, who provided summaries of daily proceedings⁶. The *Annals of Congress*, accounts of debates and proceedings of Congress compiled by Gales and Seaton were no longer published by 1870, having culminated in 1856 (Tinling 1961). Rather than a centralized mechanism for housing institutional archives in a single place, the keeping of early transcripts was decentralized in committee or chairman papers.

In 1934, the National Archives was established to house the federal government's records, including congressional hearings (Coren et al. 1989). It wasn't until the Legislative Reorganization Act was passed in 1946⁷ that the transcripts of hearings were required to be archived, and professional capacity in the legislative branch was built, to maintain more effective records and transcripts of proceedings (Baker 1978). In lieu of a single repository for these data and lacking hearing numbers for the unpublished observations, researchers collected as much information as possible, including date, Congress year, chamber, committee, title, and description of each hearing. Additionally, some hearings were declassified since they were held, and although they remain unpublished in ProQuest's system, were made available by the National Archives, Congressional Information Service, Congressional Quarterly, and ProQuest. Finally we coded each hearing for its policy topic using the procedures specified by Comparative Agendas Project Codebook (Bevan 2019).

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⁶ US House of Representatives archive. <https://history.house.gov/Blog/2019/July/7-23-stenotype/>

⁷ Library of Congress. <https://guides.loc.gov/legislative-history/unpublished-congressional-hearings>

As we explained above, we distinguish between the policymaking agendas of Congress (assessed by congressional hearings) and the political party system agenda (the number and diversity of platform planks

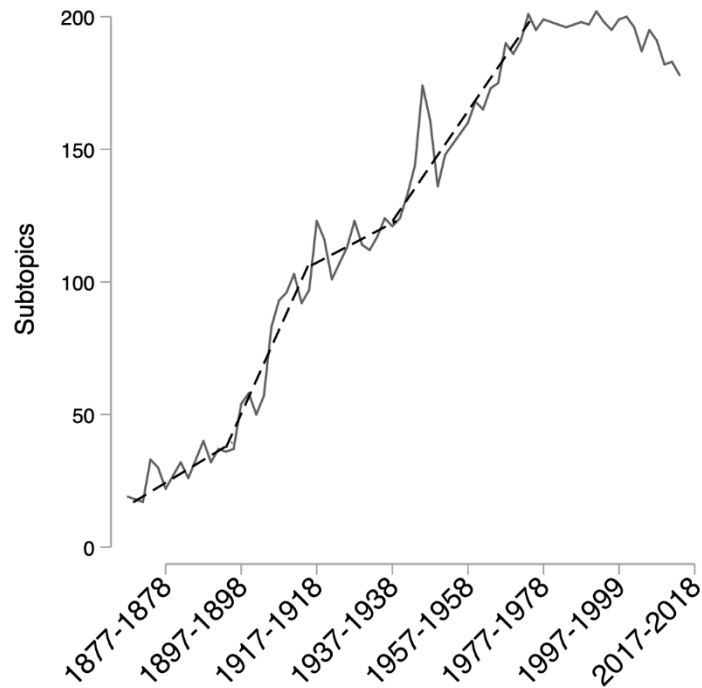
The Scope of the Congressional Agenda

First, we examine the scope of the Congressional agenda. (Jones, Theriault and Whyman (2019) documented the increase in the scope of the Congressional agenda during the 1950s-1970s, a period that they call the “Great Broadening.” During this period, the number of subtopics addressed regularly by Congress increased dramatically, before leveling off in subsequent decades. Using the extended dataset, we can explore the scope of the congressional agenda a century earlier.

Using our data congressional hearings, we graphed the number of subtopics that experienced at least one hearing (Figure 1). We observe an earlier period of rapid agenda expansion, beginning in the late 1890s. At times, the scope of the congressional agenda moves upward at a steady but more leisurely pace. In the two periods, the growth in the scope of policymaking shifts to a much steeper slope.

In the mid-1870s, the scope of the Congressional agenda was stable, reflecting the closed policymaking system of the period. Congress addressed on average 32 subtopics per Congress. The 55th Congress (1897-1898), which coincided with the Spanish American War, saw a huge increase in the agenda to 54 subtopics, continuing its upward trajectory until the early 1920s, doubling the number of topics to over a hundred, then reverting to a less frenetic trend. Between the end of the 1890s and the beginning of the 1920s—roughly corresponding to the Progressive Era, the number of issues that Congress held hearings on tripled.

Figure 1: Total subtopics receiving at least one hearing per Congress



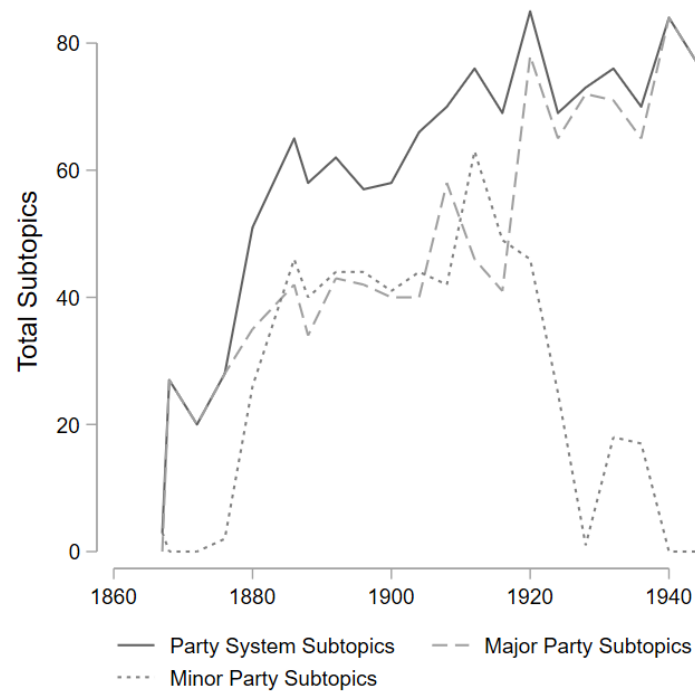
Next, we address the role of party system, comprised of both the two major parties and the plethora of minor parties, in this trend. While the policy agenda of the federal government was smaller in scope than during the modern period, both parties and Congress addressed a wide range of issues during the period. We use a variety of tools to describe the issues on the agenda. First, we examine the sum of subtopics with at least one plank in any platform (Figure 2). The total number of subtopics per platform allows us to analyze the scope of the agenda during a given election. We find three different eras within the data. The first era, the period between the 1868 and 1876 elections, is dominated by the Republican and Democratic parties. Few minor parties released platforms during the immediate postbellum period; The Grange (1867) advocated for agricultural issues, a “square deal” for farmers and beneficial legislation, The Greenbacks’ platform of 1876 was purely on economic issues, namely the monetary supply, the Treasury, and what would much later become The Federal Reserve. The National Farmers’ Alliance (1879, 1880) had a more general and wide-ranging platform, focused on policy issues

like education for farmers, but also law and order and civil rights for Americans. During this first era, the major parties only addressed about 20 subtopics each, mostly concentrated in macroeconomics, civil rights and defense (See Appendix Table 2).

Beginning in 1880, the issues addressed by the major parties moved sharply upward. The emergence of agricultural parties such as the National Farmers Alliance, the Industrial Union and the Greenbacks corresponded to a widened scope in major party platforms. For the next three decades, the American party system reached a new equilibrium, with about sixty subtopics on party platforms. Importantly, minor, and major parties' planks shared only about half of their subtopics. Minor parties were thus addressing issues that were not represented by the major parties. The divergence between the number of distinct subtopics addressed by the major party and the total number of subtopics addressed by the whole party system is an indicator of the number of distinct issues that the minority parties added to the public debate.

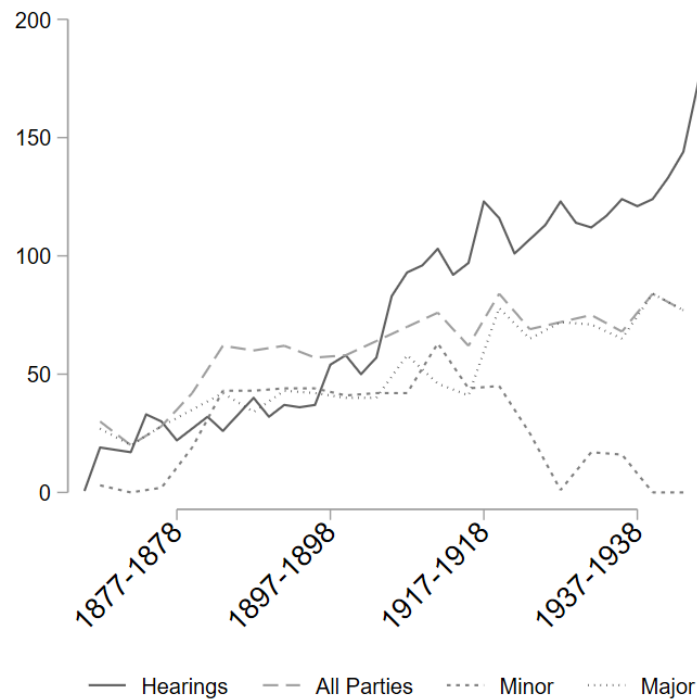
The total number of issues addressed by the party system levels off in the 1880s, but the minority parties pick up the slack to occupy a larger proportion of the issues raised. In 1920 the minority party system collapses, and it is clear why: the major parties picked up the issues that the minority parties represented independently throughout the Progressive Period.

Figure 2: Annual Party System Agenda, Total Subtopics, 1868-1944



Finally, we compare the scope of the policy agenda of parties to that of Congressional hearings during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era (Figure 3). Here, we see that the vast expansion of the agenda that began in the late 1890s was preceded by a large increase in the scope of issues on the agenda of political parties. Between and inclusive of the 1884 and 1904 presidential elections, political party platforms discussed more subtopics than did Congressional hearings. Minor parties were core to this advantage, discussing on average 21 subtopics that major parties did not.

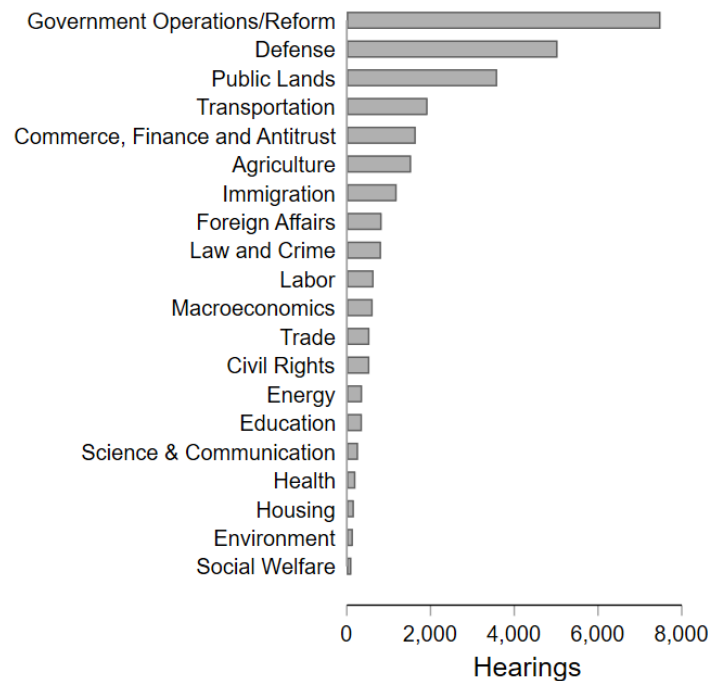
Figure 3: Scope of the Party Agenda, Compared to Congressional Hearings



Distribution of Topics

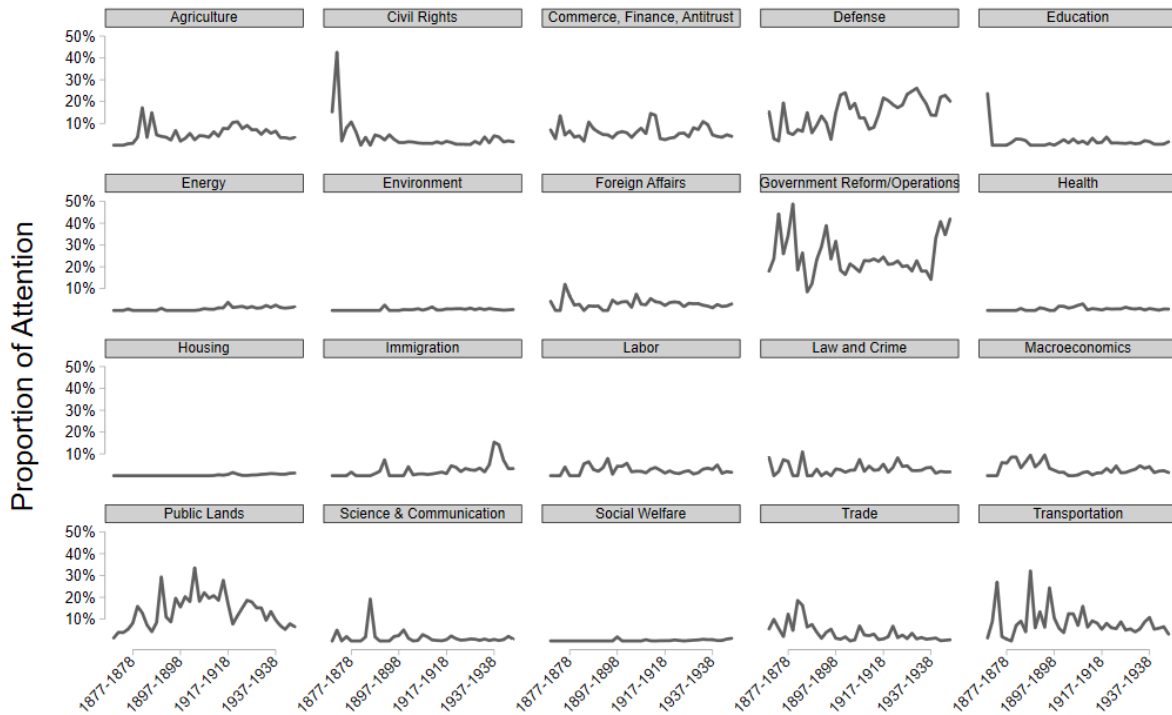
Next, we examine the broad major topic areas across parties and Congress. We begin by examining the Congressional agenda (Figure 4). Here, we see the total number of hearings coded under each major topic during the 1870-1944 period. We see that, relative to a modern agenda, the Congress of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era paid close attention to only a handful of issues. Government operations, a broad category that includes managing the civil service, campaign finance regulation, broad appropriations and the post office receives the most attention from Congress. We also see considerable activity on core areas of federal policymaking, such as defense, public lands and territorial management. We do not see any significant level of policymaking on many of the issues that defined the 1950s-1970s Great Broadening period, such as health care, housing, the environment and education.

Figure 4: Distribution of Policy Topics in Congressional Hearings, 1870-1944



There is significant variation in the policy topics addressed in Congressional hearings over time (Figure 5). Several issues see their activity peak as a percentage of hearings early in the period, including macroeconomics, transportation trade and civil rights. The public lands topic displays a u-shaped curve with a peak during the middle period, after the U.S. built up an empire of overseas territories after the Spanish American War, admitted new states and created the National Parks system. Some topics see repeated punctuations, indicating periods of intense policymaking attentions, such as agriculture, commerce, finance and antitrust, defense and government operations. Even the topics that do not expand onto the government agenda until the 1950s-1970s have occasional punctuations, such as the science and communication topic after the telephone began to be adopted in the 1870s. Each of these series tells their own story that future researchers should explore.

Figure 5: Distribution of Policy Topics Across Time, Congressional Hearings

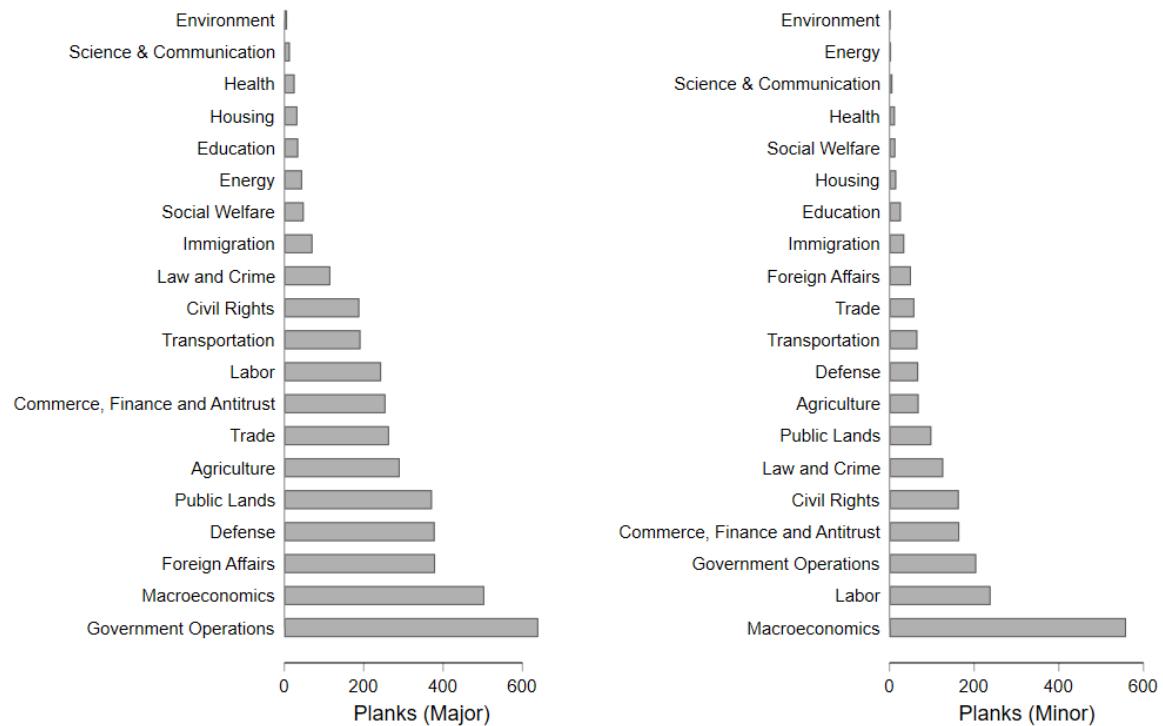


Graphs by topicname

Next, we move on to the agenda political parties during the period. We see significant differences when comparing the overall distribution of policy topics in major and minor party platforms during the period (Figure 6). Here, we see both commonalities and differences between the major topic areas addressed by minor and major parties. The set of major topics that did not see significant federal action until the Great Broadening period of the 1950s-1970s (Jones, Theriault, and Whyman 2019), including housing, space, science and communication, housing, education, health care and energy, received little attention. However, there were broad differences in the distribution of attention to issues that did receive significant attention in platforms. Major parties allocated a significantly higher proportion of their planks to foreign policy, such as trade, defense and foreign affairs, as well as toward public lands and territorial issues and government operations. Minor parties intensely focused on macroeconomics, ranging from monetary issues to taxes to inflation. The second and fourth highest area, labor and commerce, finance

and anti-trust, reflects the prioritization of issues related to the inequality of the era, from the railroad trusts to the growing mobilization of organized labor.

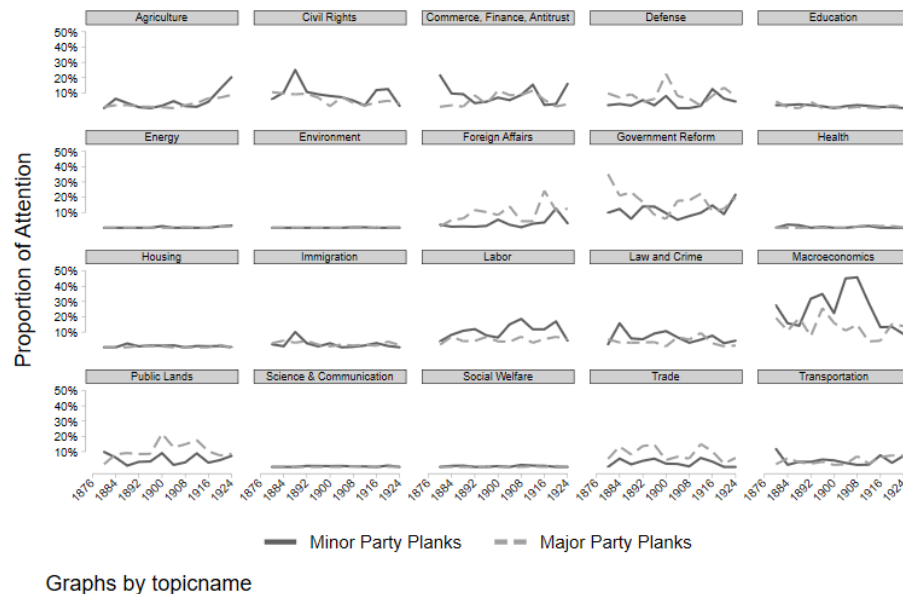
Figure 6: Distribution of Planks by Major Topic and Party Type



We can also compare their attention to policy topics over time, limiting the series to the 1876-1924 period where we have more than a handful of platforms (Figure 7). While there are similarities in the average level of attention to issues across, there is no correlation between change in issue attention from election-to-election between minor and major parties ($\rho = 0.04$, $p = 0.81$). Minor parties made decisions about what issues to emphasize independent of major parties. Thus, they added new information to the party system rather than duplicating or just responding to the content of major party platforms. They consistently spent more attention on labor and macroeconomics issues, reflecting the grievances of those left out by the new industrial revolution and Gilded Age. They also sporadically emphasized civil rights, commerce, finance and anti-trust and law and crime issues. Major parties consistently gave

increased emphasis to all three foreign policy topics, defense, foreign affairs and trade, as well as public lands.

Figure 7: Distribution of Policy Topics Across Time, Congressional Hearings, 1876-1924



The more established of the minor parties enjoyed support around the country, building support based on shared issues against the major parties. The Populists built a coalition from farmers and working-class interests, disillusioned with the small differences between Democrats and Republicans on economic policies. While the Republicans were known as the industrialists and northeastern businessmen, the Democrats reflected similar class interests in the gold-backed money system and policies friendly to big businesses taking over the country such as railroad companies and resource-extraction monopolies concentrating wealth in a small number of people while creating vast inequality throughout the country between worker and owner. Populists were united in criticizing economic policies that disadvantaged the many to benefit a small number. These issues become associated more closely with cooptation by the Democrats, and many were eventually incorporated onto the Democratic platform.

Progressives, the historical foil to the Populists, are more associated with the Republican Party. However, unlike the parties under the Populist umbrella (including the early People's Party and its later Fusionist and Moderate factions), the Progressive Party issued three total platforms in 1912, 1924, and 1948. Progressive issues adopted onto major party agendas were different than the Populists. First, the novel issues brought onto the national policy agenda were largely social problems, unlike the economic inequality problems wrought by capitalism of the Populists. The Progressive agenda reflects the good governance and reform vigor of the larger movement and was championed by former president Theodore Roosevelt. The support from a former president as its central figure certainly helped the party gain national momentum, but progressives had a broad base of support throughout the country due to the issues on its platform with general appeal like prohibition, women's suffrage, and antitrust regulations.

The Populists and Progressives were in a category of their own in terms of national prominence and salience. Smaller parties vary in endurance, measured in how many platforms they issued. The strongest indicator of the longevity or endurance of the minor party however is how many platforms the party created. Most of the parties during this era were a "flash in the pan," existing for a single election cycle. Thirty-one of the 45 minor parties during this era had one platform. Although they existed for a short time, these platforms were not necessarily more concentrated than those from more established minor parties. For example, the Agricultural Wheel published a platform in 1882 with 22 planks that covered 13 distinct policy issues. The platform ranged from demanding that "laws bear equally upon capital and labor," to joining the chorus in support of a federal paper currency, prohibiting the use of penal labor, and reserving public land ownership to "settlers" as opposed to railroad companies, speculators, or "aliens⁸."

Parties that issued more than one platform range in purpose and type. The People's/Populist Party, Prohibition, and Socialist Labor parties created at least five platforms from 1884 to 1916. The three

⁸ The plank itself is against the ownership of land by non-American citizens and reads, "Prohibition on alien land ownership; expropriation of alien-owned land."

parties' platforms vary in size and distribution of attention across policy areas, but all are cumulative; each platform builds on its predecessors by adding new issues for the party to address (see Appendix Table 2). The Populist platforms address 46 total policy subtopics, with 25 added after the first platform issued in 1892. The first Socialist Labor platform of 1892 addressed 22 policy subtopics and added only 7 in its five subsequent platforms. The issues moving from potential to novel for the party were elementary education, urban economic development, transportation, inflation, unemployment rates, law enforcement, and anti-trust. These policy problems built on the Socialist Labor foundation of macroeconomics, civil rights, labor, and critiques of the government system established in the 1892 platform.

Table 3: Minor Parties by Number of Platforms Issued

<i># Issued Platforms</i>	<i>Party Name</i>
1	Agricultural Wheel Agricultural Workers' Org American American Farm Bureau Fed American Prohibition National American Society of Equity Anti-Monopoly Cannery & Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union Colored Farmers' National Alliance Communist Cooperative Workers of America Corn Belt Committee of Farmers Cotton Pickers' League Equal Rights Farmer Labor Farmers' Mutual Benefit Assn Independence Independent People's Labor National Democrats National Farmers' Union National National Women's Social Democrat Socialist Labor Southern Commercial Congress Southern Tenant Farmers' Union States' Rights The Grange Union Labor Union United Labor
2	National Farmers' Alliance Nonpartisan League

	Silver (incl. Silver Republicans)
3	Greenbacks Progressive
4	Socialist (incl. Socialist Party of America)
5+	People's (incl. Populist Party, Fusionist and Moderate factions) Prohibition Socialist Labor

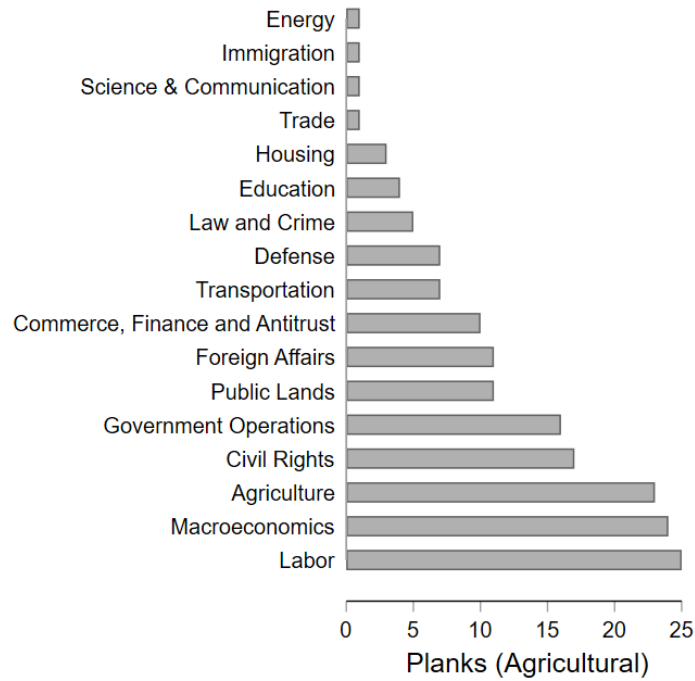
Finally in this section, we look at the agendas of groups of political parties. We begin with our largest subgroup of minor parties, the thirteen agricultural parties with platforms in our dataset (Figure 8). Agricultural parties existed to advance the interest of farmers and their families in government; the platforms of agricultural parties are diverse in policy issue codes, but these planks are in relation to benefiting the agricultural class in some way. For example, the 1879 National Farmers' Alliance party platform begins with a plank supporting caring for widows and educating orphans of deceased farmers. In its 1920 platform, The Farmer Labor Party of the US promoted a "labor's bill of rights," a 12-plank platform including the right for all workers to collectively bargain through unions, an 8-hour workday, government programs to ensure employment during depression for public works, and the abolition of exploitation of children, immigrants, and other vulnerable workers. Agricultural parties first and foremost advanced the interest of farmers and farmworkers, but their platforms promoted sweeping labor policies that would benefit farmers as well as all workers.

As a category, agricultural parties were unique in that autonomous or analogous organizations of Black farmworkers were created in addition to the larger groups that only allowed white members. The largest of these was the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Co-operative Union. Formed in 1886 in Houston County, Texas, at its height the group boasted more than one million members (Humphrey 1891). Like their later counterparts in Alabama mining communities, the Colored Farmers' Alliance had to maintain a reputation and outward appearance of apolitical organizing to protect its members from the racist violence it was sure to attract with overt political messaging (Kelley 1990; Sieber 2023). The "Colored Alliance" as it was known had seven planks in its 1886 platform (Humphrey 1891):

- (1) To promote agriculture and horticulture*
- (2) To educate the agricultural classes in the science of economic government, in a strictly non-partisan spirit, and to bring about a more perfect union of said classes*
- (3) To develop a better state mentally, morally, socially, and financially*
- (4) To create a better understanding for sustaining our civil officers in maintaining law and order*
- (5) To constantly strive to secure entire harmony and good will to all mankind, and brotherly love among ourselves*
- (6) To suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, and all unhealthful rivalry and selfish ambition*
- (7) To aid its members to become more skillful and efficient workers, promote their general intelligence, elevate their character, protect their individual rights; the raising of funds for the benefit of sick or disabled members, or their distressed families; the forming a closer union among all colored people who may be eligible for membership in this association*

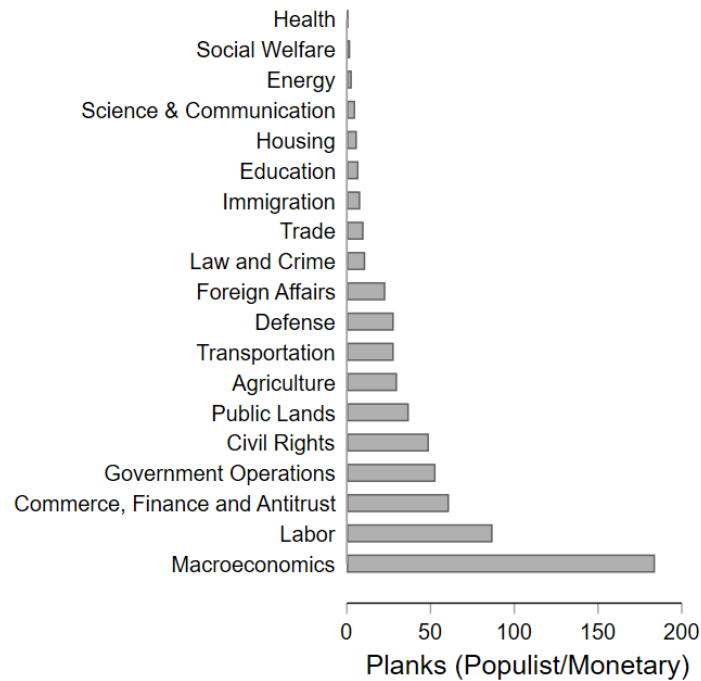
The overwhelming focus of the Colored Alliance platform was about racial self-sufficiency and education. Its primary mission was to organize Black farmers against high supply costs and low profits, educate with more modern tools for farming, and generally connect them for solidarity and safety. The group was largely secret in its time, and members used passwords to communicate, and even published a weekly newspaper called *The National Alliance* (Humphrey 1891). Like agricultural parties in general, Black agricultural parties advocated for various policies united in the direct benefit to its membership but did not maintain a single substantive agricultural focus in its platform.

Figure 8: Distribution of Policy Topics in Agricultural Party Platforms



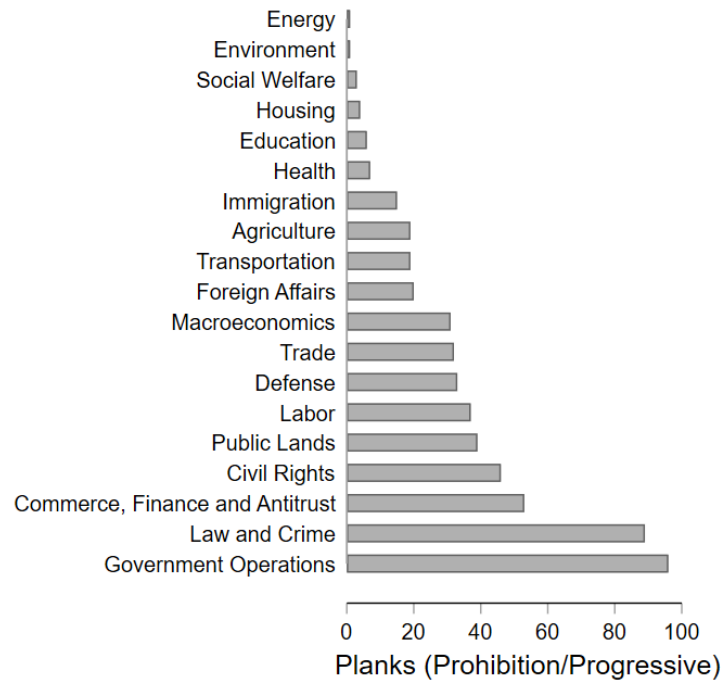
The seven populist and monetary parties are the close cousins of the agricultural parties but have a slightly different distribution of issues (Figure 9). The platforms' planks reflect this; the 1892 platform begins by railing against corruption in the federal government, declaring, "The people are demoralized." Half of the 1892 platform is about economics and monetary policy. The second half contains planks on civil rights and voting, labor issues, railroads, defense, and the expansion of government capacity.

Figure 9: Distribution of Policy Topics in Populist and Monetary Party Platforms



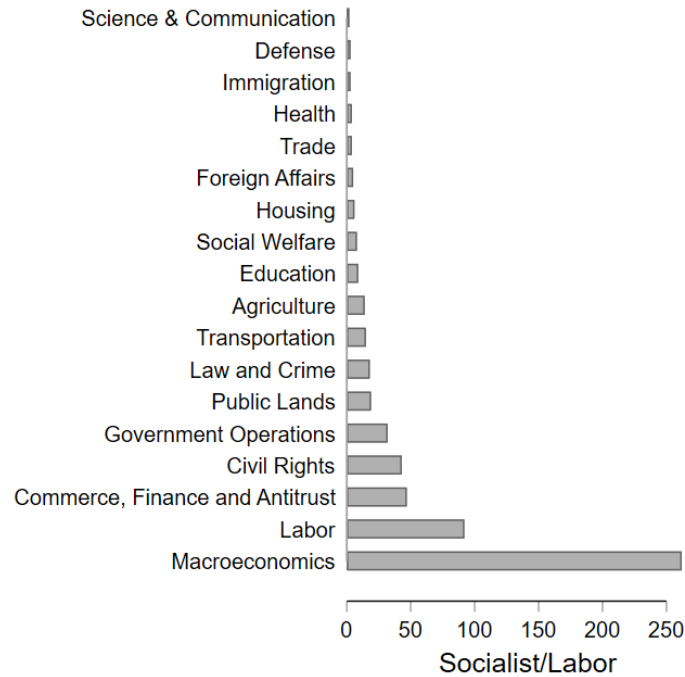
The subgroup of six prohibition, progressive and suffrage parties focused on a very different set of issues when compared with the previous two subgroups (Figure 10). Unsurprisingly, the Prohibition Party platforms had a dominant focus on prohibition of alcohol. 40% of all Prohibition Party planks are coded 1203, the subtopic code for crimes in importing or exporting alcohol/drugs. The party's platforms in 1896 and 1900 are 100% focused on their namesake issue, and its later platforms include the issue in at least 20% of its planks. The Progressive Party, founded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, took up the era's mantle to represent the various issues of the movement, including women's suffrage, income tax, and railroads.

Figure 10: Distribution of Policy Topics in Progressive, Prohibition and Suffrage Party Platforms



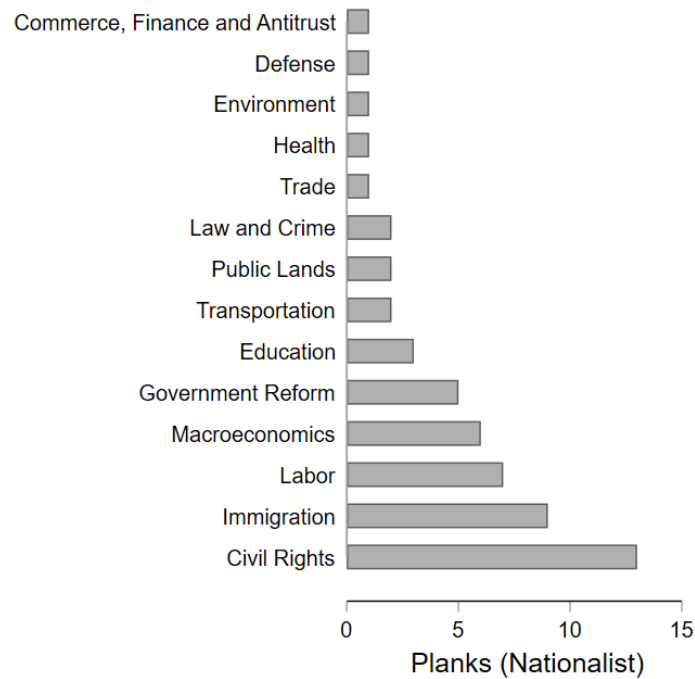
The socialist and labor party subgroup focused intensely on economic issues [Figure 11]. These parties' platform planks have three dominant areas of focus: economics, labor, and government operations. These platforms criticize the American system at large; economic inequality that disadvantaged the large working classes was the main target of these parties, categorized as socialist and labor parties. The Communist Party's 1920 platform begins, "We are committed to the overthrow of the presently existing, oppressive Republic and all of its economic and social institutions," indicating the unique political position of these parties. The systemic issues these parties pointed to were intertwined and supported by the major parties. The 1908 Socialist Party platform charges, "The Republican, the Democratic, and the so-called 'Independence' parties and all parties other than the Socialist party, are financed, directed and controlled by the representatives of different groups of the ruling class." The grievances of these parties included the political system and its major parties, while the socialist parties proposed economic and political overhaul to privilege the working classes.

Figure 11: Distribution of Policy Topics in Socialist and Labor Party Platforms



Finally, three nationalist parties each released one platform, focused on opposition to civil rights policies and immigration (Figure 12). These parties' platforms focused on immigration and immigrants, and race. The platforms include other policy issues that reflect other minor party issues such as labor, prohibition of alcohol, and land ownership, but these issues are discussed contrasting the deservingness of American citizens and immigrants, or white versus Black Americans. Most planks in the American and National parties were primarily focused on regulations on immigration and restricting actions and rights of immigrants, protecting American workers, ensuring Americans kept government jobs, while the Southern Commercial Congress party issued a single platform in 1908 that had three planks. The platform's purpose was to maintain "possessions" of the South, through commerce and conserving resources. These parties are distinct for their primary focus being nationalistic, though the American and National party platforms both feature popular minor party issues of the Progressive Era, such as prohibition, and the popular election of Senators.

Figure 12: Distribution of Policy Topics in Nationalist Party Platforms



Discussion

We introduced two new rich datasets covering politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries of American politics. Our descriptive exploration of the data shows significant and interesting variation in the policy topics emphasized across political parties and Congressional agendas, as well as across time. We show that the national policymaking agenda, assessed by the number of separate issues addressed by congressional committees, displays two periods of strong increases—the Progressive period and the post-World War “Great Broadening” period. As Jones, Theriault, and Whyman show, the latter increase was influenced by several interlocking social movements. Here we find that the increase during the Progressive period was affected in various ways by minor political parties, seemingly as generators of issues later adopted by major parties.

In this final section, we offer both suggestions for new scholars who would like to contribute to this corpus of new data, as well as ways that the data could be used to answer core questions about the politics of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

There are good opportunities to bring additional CAP-coded datasets online during the period. Future scholars might explore how presidents tried to control a growing executive branch using executive orders, or how they tried to push issues onto the Congressional agenda using state of the union addresses. They might also explore the relationship between the agenda of the president and the media, such as the close relationship that Theodore Roosevelt built with an energized press (Goodwin 2013). Scholars could add additional Congressional datasets, such as roll call votes and public laws. Finally, they might explore how state ballot initiatives played a role in bringing up issues that elected officials and parties refused to attend to.

Even without new data, there are many interesting hypotheses to test using the data as-is. Scholars working at the issue-year unit of analysis could test the movement of attention to topic areas between major and minor parties and Congressional hearings, as is common in the agenda setting literature (Bevan and Jennings 2014; Fagan and Furnas 2023; Fagan and McGee 2022; Fagan and Shannon 2020; Froio, Bevan, and Jennings 2017; Lovett, Bevan, and Baumgartner 2015). Our descriptive analysis suggests that minor parties may play a role in shaping the agenda, but we did not test any hypotheses. Next, scholars working at the subtopic unit of analysis could examine which subtopics appeared on Congressional and party agendas first to examine how government enters an issue for the first time. Finally, scholars could use these data for case studies, borrowing their richness to dive deep into the politics of individual issues.

Possible future directions for these new data abound beyond the scope of this paper. First, issues on the policy agenda appear from different sources, as we have shown. The typology of those issues, from systemic to novel, established to potential issues, ought to be analyzed for a more robust understanding of how parties may choose policy issues on which to focus, and how the party system at large functions.

Studying the issues parties propose and adopt on their platforms supports a temporal exploration of political parties, and the influence of minor parties. Cooptation of issues to neutralize minor party influence and incorporate their membership has long been pointed to as the dominant major party technique (Frank 2020; Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus 1996).

Next, the parties themselves offer an opportunity to study the development of power during a critical time in American history for party politics. The Progressive Era's parties reflect the tumult and technological advancements of the time; short-lived "flash in the pan" parties offer a glimpse into the flash point issues that these groups felt needed immediate attention. For example, the Anti-Monopoly party issued just one platform in 1884. The platform contained planks on the issues that would later come to be associated with populism, like popular election of US senators, agricultural and labor organizing issues, and assorted anti-trust commercial policy issues. Whether supporters and members of parties like Anti-Monopoly were incorporated into other minor parties over time is an open question, adding to the discussion of cooptation. These new datasets offer a more exhaustive substantive look into the process.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Minor Parties with Presidential Candidates 1868-1944

1868	1872	1876	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1904
None	Liberal Rep.	Prohibition	Greenback	Anti-Monopoly	Prohibition	Prohibition	Prohibition	Fusion Pop.	Socialist
	Labor Reform	Greenback	Prohibition	Greenback	Union Labor	Socialist Labor	National	Middle-of-the Road Pop.	Continental
	Straight-Out Dem.	American National		American Prohibition	Greenback	Woman Suffragists	Socialist Labor	Social Dem.	Prohibition
	Equal Rights			Prohibition	American		Silver	Prohibition	Socialist Labor
				Equal Rights	Equal Rights		National Dem.	Lincoln Rep.	National Liberty
					Industrial Reform			Anti-Imperialist	
								National	
								Union Reform	
								United Christian	
1908	1912	1916	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936	1940	1944
Socialist	Progressive	Progressive	Socialist	Progressive	Socialist	Socialist	Union	Socialist	Texas Regulars
Socialist Labor	Socialist	Socialist	Farmer-Labor		Socialist Labor	Communist	Socialist	Prohibition	Socialist
Prohibition		Prohibition	Prohibition		Prohibition	Farmer-Labor	Communist	Communist	Prohibition
Independence			American		Farmer-Labor	Liberal	Prohibition	Socialist Labor	Socialist Labor
							Socialist Labor		

Appendix Table 2: Policy Subtopic Typology Upon Issue Introduction (Year and Parties Introducing)

Systemic		Established	
300 – Socialist, Independence, & Democrat (1908)		100 – Democrat (1868)	1407 – Democrat (1920)
498 – Farmer Labor & Republican (1920)		104 – Democrat & Republican (1868)	1409 – Democrat (1940)
501 – Socialist Labor & Republican (1892)		105 – Democrat & Republican (1868)	1500 – Republican (1880)
803 – Democrat & Farmer Labor (1920)		107 – Democrat & Republican (1868)	1504 – Democrat (1936)
1524 – Prohibition & Democrat/ Republican (1892)		110 – Republican (1936)	1505 – Democrat (1940)
1606 – Farmer Labor & Republican (1920)		200 – Democrat (1868)	1523 – Republican (1928)
		201 – Democrat (1868)	1525 – Democrat (1932)
		202 – Republican (1872)	1600 – Democrat (1868)
		206 – Republican (1868)	1602 – Republican (1884)
		207 – Democrat (1868)	1603 – Democrat (1868)
		208 – Democrat (1868)	1608 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		209 – Republican (1868)	1609 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		302 – Republican (1940)	1611 – Republican (1908)
		322 – Democrat (1940)	1612 – Democrat (1900)
		331 – Republican (1908)	1616 – Republican (1944)
		332 – Democrat (1920)	1619 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		401 – Democrat & Republican (1884)	1620 – Republican (1928)
		404 – Democrat (1916)	1699 – Democrat (1904)
		405 – Republican (1884)	1800 – Republican (1880)
		408 – Republican (1892)	1802 – Republican (1884)
		500 – Democrat (1868)	1803 – Republican (1892)
		501 – Republican (1920)	1806 – Democrat (1876)
		600 – Democrat (1876)	1807 – Democrat (1868)
		602 – Democrat (1876)	1808 – Republican (1932)
		604 – Democrat (1908)	1900 – Democrat & Republican (1872)
		709 – Democrat (1924)	1901 – Democrat (1920)
		802 – Republican (1928)	1902 – Republican (1932)
		805 – Republican (1908)	1906 – Republican (1884)
		900 – Republican (1868)	1910 – Republican (1876)
		1000 – Republican (1884)	1915 – Democrat & Republican (1892)
		1003 – Democrat & Republican (1924)	1921 – Democrat (1876)
		1005 – Republican (1872)	1925 – Republican (1868)
		1006 – Democrat (1920)	1926 – Republican (1884)
		1007 – Republican (1872)	1929 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		1200 – Republican (1880)	2001 – Democrat (1868)
		1201 – Republican (1880)	2002 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		1202 – Democrat (1876)	2003 – Republican (1872)
		1204 – Democrat (1868)	2004 – Democrat & Republican (1872)
		1208 – Republican (1880)	2005 – Republican (1876)
		1210 – Democrat (1868)	2010 – Democrat & Republican (1868)
		1211 – Democrat (1936)	2011 – Democrat (1868)
		1301 – Democrat (1940)	2012 – Democrat (1876)
		1302 – Republican (1936)	2014 – Republican (1908)
		1304 – Democrat (1936)	2099 – Republican (1884)
		1308 – Republican (1932)	2101 – Republican (1944)
		1400 – Democrat (1940)	2102 – Republican (1872)
		1401 – Republican (1896)	2103 – Democrat (1868)
		1404 – Democrat (1892)	2104 – Republican (1880)
			2105 – Republican (1876)
Novel		Potential*	
101 – Populist (1892)	1205 – Agricultural Wheel (1882)	204 – Age discrimination	806 – Alternative and renewable energy
103 – American (1888)	1209 – National Farmers' Alliance (1879)	205 – Disability or disease discrimination	807 – Energy conservation
108 – Socialist Labor (1892)	1300 – United Labor (1888)	324 – Medical liability, fraud and abuse	1001 – Mass transportation and safety
301 – Progressive (1912)	1303 – Progressive (1912)	325 – Health workforce, licensing & training	1206 – Juvenile crime
321 – National Labor (1896)	1305 – American Prohibition National (1884)	333 – Mental health and cognitive capacities	1207 – Child abuse
342 – Prohibition; American Prohibition National (1884)	1403 – United Labor (1888)	334 – Long-term care, home health, and rehabilitation centers	1408 – Elderly and disabled housing
400 – The Grange (1867)	1405 – American Society of Equity (1902)	335 – Prescription drug coverage and costs	1507 – Bankruptcy
402 – Union Labor (1888)	1406 – Agricultural Workers' Organization (1915)	341 – Tobacco abuse, treatment, and education	1526 – Sports and gambling regulation
403 – American Society of Equity (1902)	1410 – United Labor (1888)	606 – Special education	1615 – Civil defense and homeland security
499 – Farmers' Mutual Benefit Assn (1883)	1501 – National Farmers' Alliance (1879)	609 – Arts and humanities	1700 – Space, science, and communication (general)
502 – Prohibition (1884)	1502 – Greenbacks (1880)	701 – Drinking water safety	1705 – Science technology transfer, international scientific cooperation
503 – Populist (1892)	1520 – National Farmers' Alliance (1879)	703 – Waste disposal	1708 – Weather forecasting, spatial information systems, including geological and oceanography
504 – The Grange (1867)	1521 – Socialist Party of America (1912)	704 – Hazardous waste and toxic chemical regulation, treatment, and disposal	1804 – International private business investments
505 – Greenbacks (1880)	1522 – American Prohibition National (1884)	705 – Air pollution, climate change, and noise pollution	1905 – Developing countries issues
506 – American; Union Labor (1888)	1525 – Agricultural Wheel (1882)	707 – Recycling	1927 – International terrorism, hijacking
529 – Anti-Monopoly; Greenbacks (1884)	1604 – Populist (1892)	708 – Indoor environmental hazards	2007 – Government procurement, procurement fraud and contractor management
601 – The Grange (1867)	1605 – Progressive (1912)	710 – Pollution and conservation in coastal and other navigable waterways	2013 – Census
603 – American Society of Equity (1902)	1610 – Progressive (1912)	711 – Land and water conservation	2015 – Relief of claims against the US government
607 – Progressive (1912)	1617 – Prohibition (1916)		2030 – Federal holidays
699 – National Farmers' Alliance (1879)	1706 – Populist (1892)		
700 – Southern Commercial Congress (1908)	1707 – Socialist Party of America (1912)		
711 – Progressive (1912)	2000 – Anti-Monopoly; Prohibition (1884)		
800 – Silver Republican (1896)	2006 – Progressive (2006)		
1002 – Agricultural Wheel (1882)	2008 – American (1888)		
1010 – People's Party (1896)	2009 – Agricultural Wheel (1882)		
1203 – Prohibition (1884)	2100 – National Farmers' Alliance (1879)		

*Note: Removed for historical context, codebook subtopic continuity

199 – Other macroeconomics	1299 – Other law and crime
299 – Other civil rights	1399 – Other social
323 – [Health care] Provider and insurer payment and regulation	1499 – Other housing
398 – [Health care] Research and development	1599 – Other business and commerce
399 – Other health care	1614 – Military nuclear and hazardous waste disposal, military environmental compliance
599 – Other labor	1698 – [Defense] Research and development
698 – [Education] Research and development	1701 – NASA, US government use of space, space exploration agreements
699 – Other education	1704 – Commercial use of space, satellites
798 – [Environmental] Research and development	1709 – Computer industry, cyber security, and the internet
799 – Other environmental	1798 – [Science and tech] Research and development
801 – Nuclear energy	1799 – Other science and tech
898 – [Energy] Research and development	1999 – Other foreign policy
899 – Other energy	2199 – Other public lands
1098 – [Transportation] Research and development	
1099 – Other transportation	

Appendix Table 3: Enduring Parties with 5+ Platforms

	Year	Subtopics (PAP)	New subtopics (PAP)	New subtopics (%)
Populist	1892	100 101 104 105 107 200 206 207 401 500 503 504 1005 1501 1600 1604 1706 1807 2002 2012 2103		
	1896	100 104 107 206 1000 1002 1005 1010 1204 1410 1501 1520 1609 1706 1921 2010 2012 2105	1000 1002 1010 1204 1410 1520 1609 1921 2010 2105	10/18 (56%)
	1900	100 104 107 206 504 800 900 1000 1005 1200 1410 1501 1520 1600 1608 1609 1619 1807 1921 2012 2100 2105	800 900 1200 1608 1619 2100	6/22 (27%)
	1904	100 104 206 500 504 505 1005 1204 1500 1501 1520 1706 1900 2011 2012 2100	505 1500 1900 2011	4/16 (25%)
	1908	104 206 400 501 502 503 504 505 506 900 1005 1204 1500 1501 1502 1520 1706 2011 2012 2100	400 501 502 506 1502	5/20 (25%)
Prohibition	1884	107 206 207 342 502 602 900 1201 1203 1205 1208 1609 1807 2000 2002 2012 2100		
	1888	202 206 207 342 502 504 900 1201 1208 1210 1520 1807 2004 2009 2100	202 504 1210 1520 2004 2009	6/15 (40%)
	1892	104 107 202 206 505 602 900 1005 1203 1204 1403 1520 1524 1609 1807 2004 2012	104 505 1005 1204 1403 1524	6/17 (35%)
	1896	1203		0/1 (0%)
	1900	1203 1520 1619 1803 2010 2012 2105	1619 1803 2010 2105	4/7 (57%)
	1904	200 206 504 1200 1203 1208 1807 1900 2004 2012	200 1200 1900	3/10 (30%)
	1908	107 206 501 506 1203 1208 1500 1501 1807 2003 2100	501 506 1500 1501 2003	5/11 (45%)
1916	100 200 206 207 402 501 504 505 506 900 1000 1005 1007 1010 1203 1208 1300 1302 1502 1520 1600 1602 1605 1610 1617 1800 1802 1806 1807 1900 1921 1926 2000 2002 2004 2011 2012 2103 2105	100 402 506 1000 1007 1010 1300 1302 1502 1600 1602 1605 1610 1617 1800 1802 1806 1921 1926 2011 2103	21/39 (54%)	
				Total = 62 New = 45 (73% after 1884)
Socialist Labor	1892	100 104 107 108 200 202 206 207 500 501 502 504 505 1005 1200 1210 1522 2001 2011 2012 2100 2103		
	1896	100 104 107 108 200 202 206 500 501 502 504 505 602 1000 1200 1210 1403 1522 2011 2012 2100 2103	602 1000 1403	3/22 (14%)
	1900	100 500 504		0/1 (0%)
	1904	100 500 504		0/1 (0%)
	1908	100 200 2012		0/1 (0%)
	1912	100 101 103 505 1201 1520	101 103 1201 1520	4/6 (67%)
				Total = 29 New = 7 (24% after 1892)