

8-1-2023

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Recommended Citation

Scala, Dante J. and Scacchi, J. Mitchell (2023) "All Politics, No Longer Local? A Study of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, 2001-2021," *New England Journal of Political Science*: Vol. 13: No. 1, Article 7.

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**All Politics, No Longer Local?
A Study of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, 2001-2021**

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Abstract

New Hampshire's state legislature is at the heart of its political culture. The Granite State prides itself on the legislature's intensely local brand of politics, in which representatives remain highly attuned and accountable to their constituents. In this article, we explore whether state representatives still possess strong local ties.

We use biographical data to examine whether legislators build robust local public service experience before joining the legislature. We conclude that the latest generations of New Hampshire state legislators were less likely over the past decade to bring significant local experience with them to the legislature. This decline occurred among both women and men, and Democrats and Republicans.

A recent New Hampshire Public Radio profile of the Majority Leader of the state's House of Representatives, Jason Osborne, noted that he had been a key donor to Make Liberty Win, a PAC that sought to support libertarian-minded lawmakers across the country (Rogers 2021). In New Hampshire's 2020 elections, Make Liberty Win supported 76 state representative candidates, 53 of whom won seats. Greg Moore, the head of the state chapter of Americans for Prosperity, noted that the Make Liberty Win legislators had a collective profile that differed from the traditional Granite State legislator: They possessed less experience in local government, and they tended to be more ideological. "You'll find a lot fewer people who were school board members or city councilors or aldermen," he said, "and a lot more folks for whom this is their first entree into politics." These remarks from a longtime operative and observer of New Hampshire politics led us to wonder: Are politics still local in New Hampshire? More formally, we formulated the following research question: *Has the public service background of newly elected Granite State legislators changed over the past two decades?*

New Hampshire is the ideal case for the phrase, "All politics is local." Although New Hampshire is best known nationally for its first-in-the-nation presidential primary, its state legislature is at the heart of its political culture. New Hampshire's legislature, the General Court, consists of 424 members. New Hampshire's House of Representatives alone holds 400 members—"the third largest legislative body in the English-speaking world," the state proudly proclaims. "Only the US House of Representatives and the British Parliament have more representatives than New Hampshire. We pride ourselves on our 'citizen' legislature," in which legislators receive \$100 a year as their state's elected officials (State of New Hampshire Executive Council n.d.). Theoretically, New Hampshire state legislators are drafted straight from the citizenry and are directly connected to their localities, as the House is composed of "one

representative for every 3,300 to 3,500 people in a state with a population of about 1.3 million” (Capachi 2016). Historically, this creates an intensely local brand of politics, in which legislators are quite close to their constituents and held accountable to a correspondingly high degree. Campaigns for the House of Representatives historically possess very low budgets, which puts a premium on local figures who are well known in their communities. The localism of the legislature has a deep effect on the state’s politics, especially given its considerable power compared to a governor with weak institutional powers. The result is a prevailing belief that “anyone” in New Hampshire can become a state representative. Our research asks whether that conventional wisdom still holds true in the twenty-first-century New Hampshire House. However, recent elections call the existence of these defining characteristics into question.

Factors in the Composition of State Legislatures

Legislatures across the United States are often defined by their level of professionalism. Scholars typically measure legislative professionalism by legislator compensation, staff, and length of sessions (Moncrief 1988; Squire 1992). How does being a citizen legislature affect the professionalism of the New Hampshire General Court? Of all 50 state legislatures, New Hampshire ranks last in professionalism (Squire 1992; King 2000; Squire 2007). According to Squire (2007), “New Hampshire places last in every time period from 1979 to 2003, and more importantly, its scores drop with each succeeding period” (222). Although evidence shows that state legislatures are generally becoming similar to the U.S. House of Representatives professionally (Rosenthal 1993; King 2000), this does not appear to be true for New Hampshire.

Beyond the institutional characteristics that define a legislature’s level of professionalism, a legislature’s composition—the actual legislators themselves and their backgrounds—plays a critical role in defining a legislature. Political socialization—the process

by which people become interested in politics—is one way to measure a legislature’s makeup. Eulau et al. (1959) find that the political socialization of state legislators is not confined to the early years of their lives but can also occur in later years. This has implications for New Hampshire, given that the average age of the General Court in 2015 was 64 years old (National Conference of State Legislatures 2020). Regardless of when political socialization occurs, often state legislators first become interested in politics from political work or working for political parties (Eulau et al. 1959). Additionally, involvement in civic affairs, community activity, and occupational and professional groups, as well as holding politically connected jobs, are all cited by legislators as influencing their political socialization (Eulau et al. 1959).

Members’ professional backgrounds affect a legislature’s composition, as certain experiences may influence or predispose people to run for public office. Examining all 50 state legislatures from 1993 to 2012, Makse (2019) finds that the most common occupations among state legislators “are attorneys, business owners, politicians, teachers, and farmers,” (316) (also see Kurtz 2015). Over these 20 years, more legislators had business-related professions as well as public safety, medical, and construction backgrounds, while farmers, teachers, politicians, attorneys, and insurance agents declined in number (Kurtz 2015; Makse 2019). Furthermore, a significant difference exists between Democratic and Republican legislators, as Democrats are more often teachers and politicians and Republicans are more commonly business executives, farmers, insurance agents, and real-estate agents (Makse 2019). As one of the least professionalized legislatures, these findings (Makse 2019) relate directly to the New Hampshire General Court because a legislature’s level of professionalism may appeal to certain occupations rather than others. Politicians and attorneys are more often drawn to the most professionalized

legislatures, while business-related professions and farmers are more often attracted to the least professionalized bodies (Squire 1992; Makse 2019).

These occupational contrasts are connected to gender differences among legislators as well. Attorneys, business executives, farmers, insurance agents, and public safety professionals are more commonly men, while politicians and teachers are more often women (Makse 2019). Half a century ago, Werner (1968) documented that most women in state legislatures came from backgrounds in business and public relations and teaching. The most common political experiences among these women prior to joining state legislatures was membership in local or state party organizations, service in municipal government, and membership in advocacy groups (Werner 1968; Kirkpatrick 1974). These female state legislators often entered politics at a later age than their male counterparts and with different backgrounds. They joined because of moral commitment, success in a previous political experience, political activities offering a productive use of their time, and an academic interest in democratic government (Werner 1968; Kirkpatrick 1974). In later decades, female legislators became younger and better educated, and had more professional jobs as well as more diverse political backgrounds prior to joining state legislatures (Dolan and Ford 1997). Furthermore, although female state legislators have typically been just as likely as male legislators to have held political office prior to joining the state legislature, the actual political experience with which they enter the state legislature has become more similar to that of male legislators over time (Diamond 1977; Dolan and Ford 1997).

Although professionalism and members' backgrounds influence the makeup of legislatures, the effects of partisanship and political parties are also quite significant. Political parties are influential in recruiting and supporting candidates to run for state legislatures, often in collaboration with interest groups and nonprofit organizations; in particular, recruiting

challengers to run against incumbents can require appeals to party loyalty (Squire and Moncrief 2019). Many scholars agree that political parties are necessary for coherence and accountability in democratically elected legislatures (Schattschneider 1942; Wright and Schaffner 2002). In fact, nonpartisan state elections disturb the policy connection between state legislators and their constituents (Wright and Schaffner 2002). The ideal behind a citizen legislature is that, although they may run for office under a party title, most of the members are not hyper-partisans while serving in the state house because they are home-grown volunteers. While there is evidence that state political parties are heterogeneous and that state legislatures' ideological median points are substantially in line with voters' ideologies, state legislatures are following the national trend of rising partisan polarization (Shor and McCarty 2011). With heightened national polarization, state parties may find it increasingly difficult to differentiate themselves from their national counterparts, leading to a rise in uniform party coalitions as party actors become more ideologically similar (Wright and Birkhead 2014; Zingher and Richman 2019).

Coupled with trends showing increasing partisanship and polarization in national politics (Dimock et al. 2014; DeSilver 2022), a significant body of work depicts the decline in American community and civic life (Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003). After rising levels of civic involvement throughout most of the twentieth century, Americans became less likely to participate in face-to-face organizations, membership in community associations, local clubs and volunteer groups in the last third of the century (Putnam 2000). These measures of 'social capital' all fell between 25 and 50 percent (Putnam and Feldstein 2003). Despite America's rise as a civic nation – one whose democratic form of government was built upon and strengthened by the voluntarism that characterized local communities—this appetite to participate in civic organizations has been steadily declining among recent generations of Americans (Skocpol

2003). One might expect these national trends to affect citizen legislatures with strong local ties. Social capital is a local product (Putnam and Feldstein 2003), so its general decline may affect the backgrounds of citizen legislators over time.

The research on legislative professionalism, members' professional backgrounds, and trends in partisanship and civic life bring us to overall trends in state legislators' prior experiences at the local level as a factor in legislature composition. There is research on the effects of previous state legislative service on recruitment and fundraising to run for the U.S. Congress (Berkman and Eisenstein 1999), but there is little on the effects of prior local-level service on running for state legislatures. Lovrich and Newman (2004) find that state legislators without prior experience in local government are less likely to advocate for local government interests than those who previously served in local government. The issue of the changing makeup of state legislators' local-level backgrounds is certainly salient to New Hampshire's citizen legislature—one theoretically composed primarily of members with strong local ties. Our research examines whether local ties have held over time in the Granite State, defying the national trends of increasing partisan polarization and diminishing civic communities.

Hypotheses

In testing our research question—*Has the public service background of newly elected Granite State legislators changed over the past two decades?*—we understood “public service” to mean any prior involvement in local government or charitable, civic, or community organizations. We wanted to test the overall, topline changes in the proportion of legislators with these experiences across two decades of the New Hampshire House. We also were curious about changes in legislators' backgrounds in party activism, as opposed to public service experience. We tested the following three hypotheses with the data we collected:

Hypothesis 1. In a comparison of new state legislators, those legislators elected more recently are less likely to have previous local governing experience than legislators elected earlier.

Hypothesis 2. In a comparison of new state legislators, those legislators elected more recently are less likely to have previous local charitable, civic, or community experience than legislators elected earlier.

Hypothesis 3. In a comparison of new state legislators, those legislators elected more recently are more likely to have previous partisan activist experience than legislators elected earlier.

Additionally, we wanted to explore changes in legislators' prior experiences across key demographics, namely sex and party identification. We used our data to test four additional hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4. In a comparison of new state legislators, female legislators are more likely to have previous local governing experience than male legislators.

Hypothesis 5. In a comparison of new state legislators, female legislators are more likely to have previous local charitable, civic, or community experience than male legislators.

Hypothesis 6. In a comparison of new state legislators, Democratic legislators are more likely to have previous local governing experience than Republican legislators.

Hypothesis 7. In a comparison of new state legislators, Democratic legislators are more likely to have previous local charitable, civic, or community experience than Republican legislators.

Methodology

To build our dataset, we relied on biographical accounts of new House members' previous experiences from the 2001-2002 New Hampshire House to the 2021-2022 New Hampshire House collected in *The Handbook of New Hampshire Elected Officials: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to New Hampshire Government and Politics*, also known as the "Blue Book." With one volume per legislature since 1987, the Blue Book compiles profiles of the state's elected officials.¹ These profiles—which include, at a minimum, the legislator's contact information and, at the most, a list of the legislator's experiences prior to joining the New Hampshire legislature—are submitted by the members themselves for inclusion. These handbooks represent a comprehensive source of biographical information about New Hampshire legislators, past and present.

With the help of four undergraduate research assistants,² we examined each legislator's listed biography throughout the most recent 11 volumes, spanning a total of 20 years. The handbooks clearly denote the legislator's term in office and status as a "New Representative" where applicable, helping us to identify new legislators for consideration. Our assistants were instructed to record legislators' relevant biographical experiences prior to their service in the New Hampshire legislature. If biographical data was lacking in a given volume, we mainly turned to the New Hampshire General Court's website, and occasionally to local media sources, for available biographies to supplement the handbook. In addition to collecting demographic information—name, legislative year, year of birth, sex, and political party—our research assistants classified individual biographical experiences in one of nine categories: advocacy groups; business associations; charitable, civic, or community organizations; local government; local or statewide sports organizations; partisan groups; religious organizations; state

government; and unions. When collecting data from the handbooks and from complementary sources, we added the data under the assumption that new House members' listed background experiences occurred prior to their service in the New Hampshire state legislature.

Advocacy groups are any organizations that have stated agendas and policy goals that they explicitly promote (e.g., NH Liberty Alliance, Sierra Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars), while business associations are those with stated business interests (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, New Hampshire Bar Association). Charitable, civic, or community organizations include volunteer and community-service groups at the local level (e.g., Lions Club, Odd Fellows, Rotary Club). Local government service constitutes all elected or appointed municipal positions (e.g., alderman, budget committee, library trustee, school board, select board, supervisor of the checklist). Local or statewide sports organizations include involvement in organized sports leagues and groups (e.g., Little League, New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association, Special Olympics). Partisan activism encompasses positions or groups that expressly identify with a political party (e.g., Hillsborough County Democrats, party delegate, Republican women's groups). Religious organizations include membership in a religious group, not merely the legislator's religious affiliation (e.g., church membership, St. Joseph Parish Finance Committee). Lastly, state government service represents all elected or appointed positions at the state level (e.g., governor's commission, New Hampshire Highway Layout Commission, New Hampshire Workers' Compensation Advisory Council). Lastly, unions are organizations that identify as associations of workers (e.g., AFL-CIO Firefighter's Union, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers).

Data for sex, political party, and relevant biographical experiences were then coded for quantitative analysis, creating a series of dummy variables. If a member's listed experience did

not fit in a category, the experience was entered as “other.” Over the two-decade span, 1,309 legislators joined the New Hampshire House for the first time. Over the first decade of study (2001-2011), about two new legislators (1.8) per New Hampshire House did not have biographical information listed about their prior experiences, compared to about 24 (23.8) per House over the second decade (2013-2021). After removing the 130 legislators who lacked substantive biographies, we analyzed data from 1,179 legislators.

Findings and Analysis

First, we looked at the “topline” cumulative data (Table 1) for these new legislators over the past two decades in order to produce an overall profile of their background and to provide a baseline against which to measure changes in that background. We found that while a majority of new legislators did not possess local government experience, 47 percent did. In fact, new legislators were slightly more likely to have local governing experience than any other kind of experience we examined. Second, nearly the same proportion (42 percent) of new legislators had some sort of experience in charitable, civic, or community organizations. Third, about a fourth (27 percent) had participated in an advocacy group prior to entering the House.

Other types of experience were relatively scarce. For instance, new legislators generally had not been party activists prior to joining the legislature. Only one in eight (12 percent) listed some type of party activism in their biographies. Prior activity in religious groups was only occasionally listed (9 percent), which is not very surprising given that New Hampshire’s citizens are among the least likely in the nation to attend religious services regularly (Lipka and Wormald 2016). Union membership also was rarely mentioned (6 percent), as well as prior participation in business or professional groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce or lawyers’ associations, was also rare (7 percent). Experience in state government, which included participation in

councils and commissions, also was low (5 percent). Activity in youth sports, such as Little League, high school athletics, or the Special Olympics, was sparsely mentioned (3 percent).

Table 1. New House Legislators' Prior Experiences in State and Local Affairs

| Types of Experience | Percentage of New Legislators with Prior Experience |
|--|--|
| Advocacy Groups | 27 |
| Business Associations | 7 |
| Charitable/Civic/Community Organizations | 42 |
| Local Government | 47 |
| Local Sports Organizations | 3 |
| Partisan Activism | 12 |
| Religious Organizations | 9 |
| State Government | 5 |
| Unions | 6 |
| | |
| Indices of Involvement | |
| Local participation | 66 |
| Government participation | 49 |
| Any type of participation | 80 |

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of new legislators' degree of engagement (and in order to obtain a better understanding of how many became legislators without any sort of engagement), we built three indices: an index of local engagement, in which we combined experience in local government with charitable, civic, or community experience; an index of government experience, in which we combined experience at the local or state levels of government; and an index comprised of all nine categories of participation, to determine how often legislators joined the House without any prior involvement. Two-thirds of new legislators (66 percent) during our 20-year period of study possessed some type of local experience; about one-quarter (23 percent) had experience in both local government and community groups. About half of the new legislators (49 percent) had worked in government before joining the House, mainly at the local level. A very small proportion (3 percent) had prior activity in both local and

state government. Finally, four in five new legislators (80 percent) had some kind of experience before their terms in the House, and about half had experience in multiple categories.

In summary, the data gleaned from the biographical sketches of new state legislators corresponds to a significant degree with the traditional profile of the New Hampshire state legislature. While a majority of new legislators lacked local governing experience, new legislators were more likely to have that sort of experience than any other type of experience we examined. A large minority also had experience in civic, charitable, or community organizations. We now turn to whether new legislators' prior experiences have changed over the past two decades.

Change in Legislators' Backgrounds, 2001-2021

Our first three hypotheses are focused on whether the prior experiences of new state legislators have shifted over time. Specifically, we wanted to test whether, over the past two decades, new state legislators are

- Less likely than their predecessors to have previous governing experience at the local level.
- Less likely than their predecessors to have previous experience with charitable, civic, or community groups.
- More likely than their predecessors to have partisan activist experience.

To test these hypotheses, we broke down our dataset by each legislature and examined the background of new legislators for each one.

Local government experience. The legislative biographies reveal a marked decrease in local governing and civic experience among new legislators over time, although these types of experience do remain most prevalent. For the first decade we examined from the 2001 to 2011

legislatures, local governing experience was quite common among new legislators. A new legislator was as likely as not to have such experience: The average proportion of new legislators with local governing experience in a given year equaled 50 percent. That figure never dipped below 40 percent, and often surpassed 50 percent. The percentage of new legislators with this type of experience dropped significantly in the second decade from the 2013 to 2021 legislatures. Granted, local governing experience still tended to be more common among new legislators than other types of experience. But in the past decade, the percentage of new legislators with local governing experience never surpassed 50 percent; the average proportion was 43 percent, a 14 percent decrease from the previous decade.

Civic and advocacy experience. Civic experience among new legislators also declined from the first decade to the second decade of our study. From 2001 to 2011, legislators were as likely as not to come to the state capitol with experience in charitable, civic, or community organizations: the average proportion of new legislators with this experience in a given House was 49 percent. During the second decade (2013-2021), the percentage of new legislators with this type of experience gyrated from House to House, but overall dropped significantly. The average proportion was just 35 percent, a 29 percent decrease from the previous decade.

We also noted another decline in legislators' experience in a field related to civic and local governance: advocacy groups. Advocacy group experience was one of the "big three" for new state legislators from 2001 to 2011, along with civic and local governing experience. The average proportion of first-year legislators with advocacy experience during this decade was 37 percent. In certain Houses, almost half of legislators noted this type of experience in their biographies. But over the past decade (2013-2021), experience in advocacy groups dropped

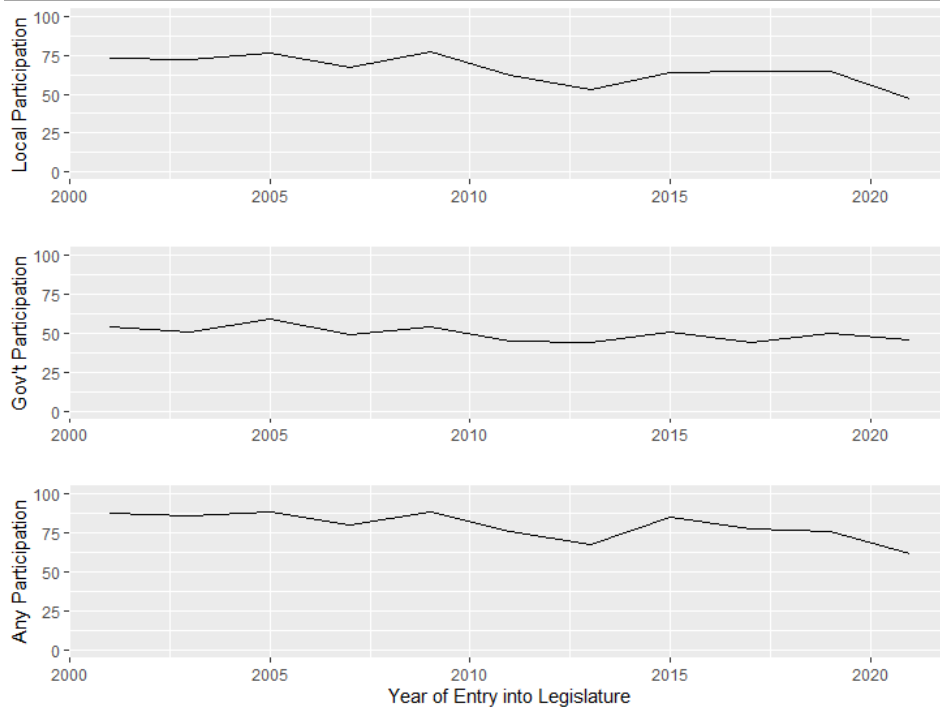
dramatically. The proportion of new legislators with this experience only surpassed 20 percent once in any House and the average proportion was just 14 percent, a 62 percent decline.

Partisan activism. We speculated in our hypotheses that as civic and local involvement declined for new state legislators, partisan activism would have increased, especially given our era of ever-growing partisan polarization. This, however, did not turn out to be the case. During the first decade of our study (2001-2011), party activism was a middle-tier type of experience: less often cited than civic and local experience, but more often than the rest. The average proportion of first-year legislators with partisan experience during this decade was 13 percent. During the last decade (2013-2021), the proportion of first-year legislators with partisan activist experience ranged from 5 percent to 16 percent, with an average proportion of 10 percent. Thus, rather than partisan activity replacing a decline in local governing and civic activity in new legislators' backgrounds, it also became slightly less likely to be part of their prior experiences.

Indices of involvement. An examination of our three indices of involvement (participation in one's local community, whether in government or civic organizations; participation in local or state government; or participation in any group or organization) presents a general picture of decline in prior activity among new legislators (Figure 1). Experience in government (local or state) remained relatively stable over the last two decades, hovering around half of new legislators each year. Local participation, however, dwindled. In the 2000s, the participation rate was typically above 70 percent; in the last decade, however, the rate fell into the 60s and in some cases even lower. Our broadest measure of prior involvement, in which we count participation in all types of activities, also displays waning levels of involvement, albeit from a very high rate. During the 2000s, it was not unusual for close to 90 percent of new legislators to cite some sort

of involvement; in the most recent decade, strong majorities of new House members still did so, but rarely did they approach their previous levels from the first decade of study.

Figure 1. Prior Participation Among New Legislators, 2001-2021

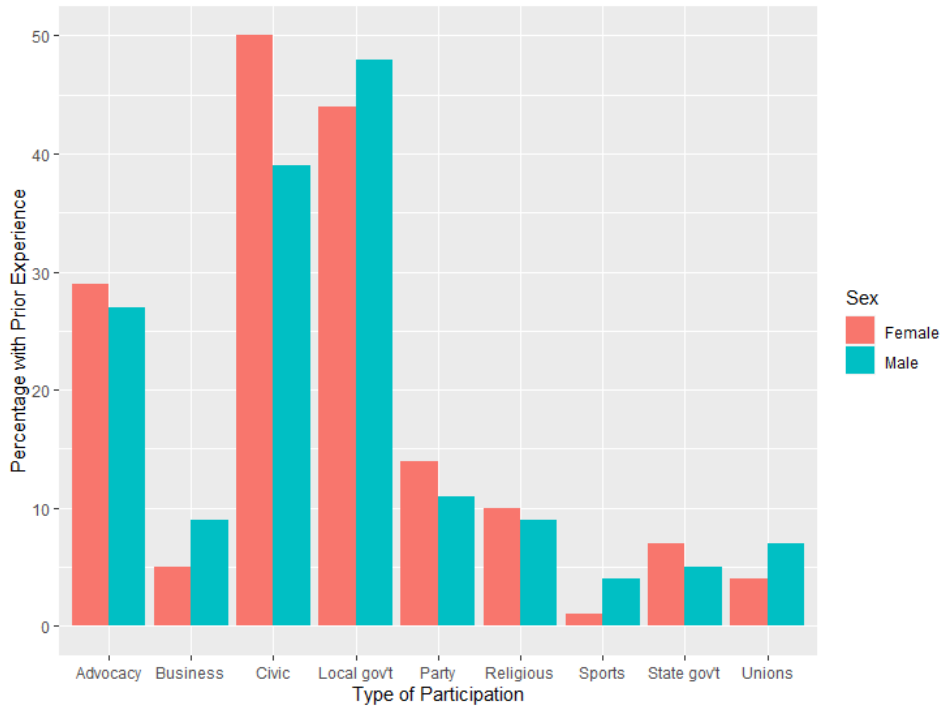


Sex of Legislator and Legislators' Backgrounds

We now turn to our fourth and fifth hypotheses, that women were more likely than men to possess local governing experience, as well as civic and community experience, before entering the state legislature. Reviewing the topline aggregate data over the entire 20-year period (Figure 2), we typically found very small differences between the types of experience men and women accumulated before entering the legislature. Men were slightly more likely than women (48 percent to 44 percent) to have prior local governing experience. Women, however, were modestly more likely to have prior civic and community experience: 50 percent of new female legislators reported such experience, compared to just 39 percent of new male legislators. New female legislators were about as likely to participate in advocacy organizations as their male

counterparts (29 percent versus 27 percent). Men and women also displayed only small differences in our broader indices of engagement.

Figure 2. Legislators’ Prior Experiences by Sex of Legislator



Over the past two decades, men’s likelihood of possessing some type of government experience before entering the New Hampshire House has remained consistent (Figure 3). Half had such experience from 2001 to 2011 and just a little less than half in the past decade. What has decreased, however, is their involvement in civic and community organizations and advocacy work. From 2001 to 2011, almost half had experience in civic groups; during the most recent decade, that proportion dropped to just under a third. Participation in advocacy groups tumbled more steeply: a third had such prior experience from 2001 to 2011, compared to just one in seven (14 percent, on average) during the past decade. The drop in civic and advocacy participation drove the decrease in overall engagement over the past decade. Although some

form of engagement remained quite common before entering the legislature (72 percent, on average, from 2013 to 2021), it was not as ubiquitous as during the previous decade (83 percent).

Figure 3. Changes Over Time by Sex of Legislator, 2001-2021

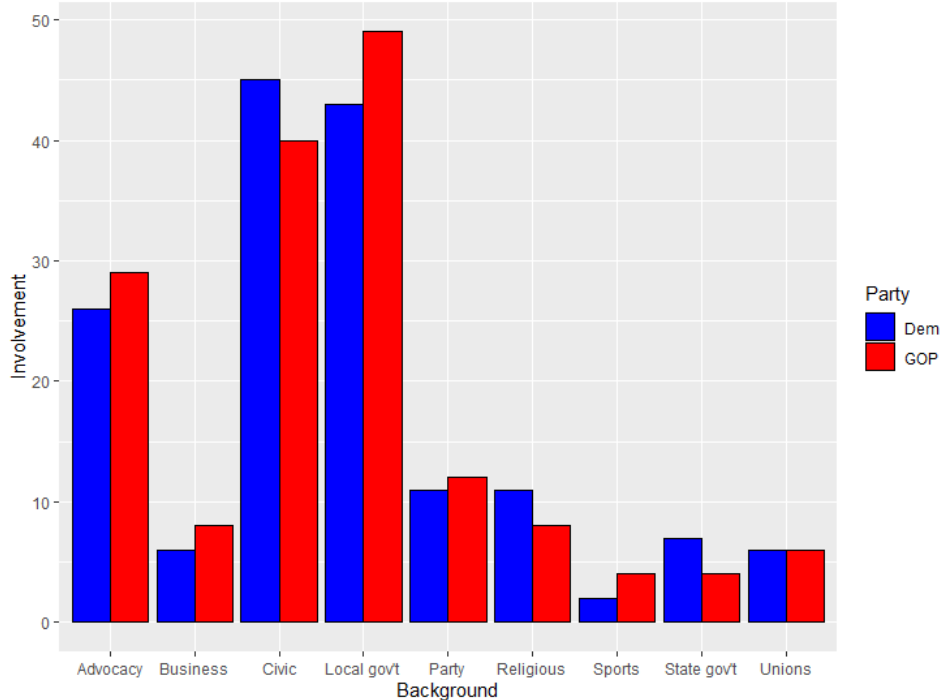


The level of prior involvement also has dropped off for new female legislators, and the decrease was more broadly based than for men. Their likelihood of possessing local government experience, almost equal to that of men from 2001 to 2011, fell 20 percent in the last decade. In addition, fewer female legislators have had civic and community experience, although they remained more likely to have it than their male counterparts. Their participation in advocacy groups, once more prevalent than men, plummeted in the last decade, as did their experiences as partisan activists. Overall, like men, their likelihood of possessing any experience remained high over the last decade (77 percent) but not as pervasive as in the previous decade (89 percent).

Partisanship and Legislators' Backgrounds

Our last set of hypotheses posed whether partisan affiliation had a general effect on new legislators' backgrounds. As Figure 4 demonstrates, all partisan differences were small-to-modest in the aggregate over the 20-year period we examined. Democrats were slightly more likely than Republicans to have civic experience, and Republicans were slightly more likely to have participated in local government. But regardless of party, the great majority of new legislators (almost 80 percent) had some sort of involvement prior to joining the House.

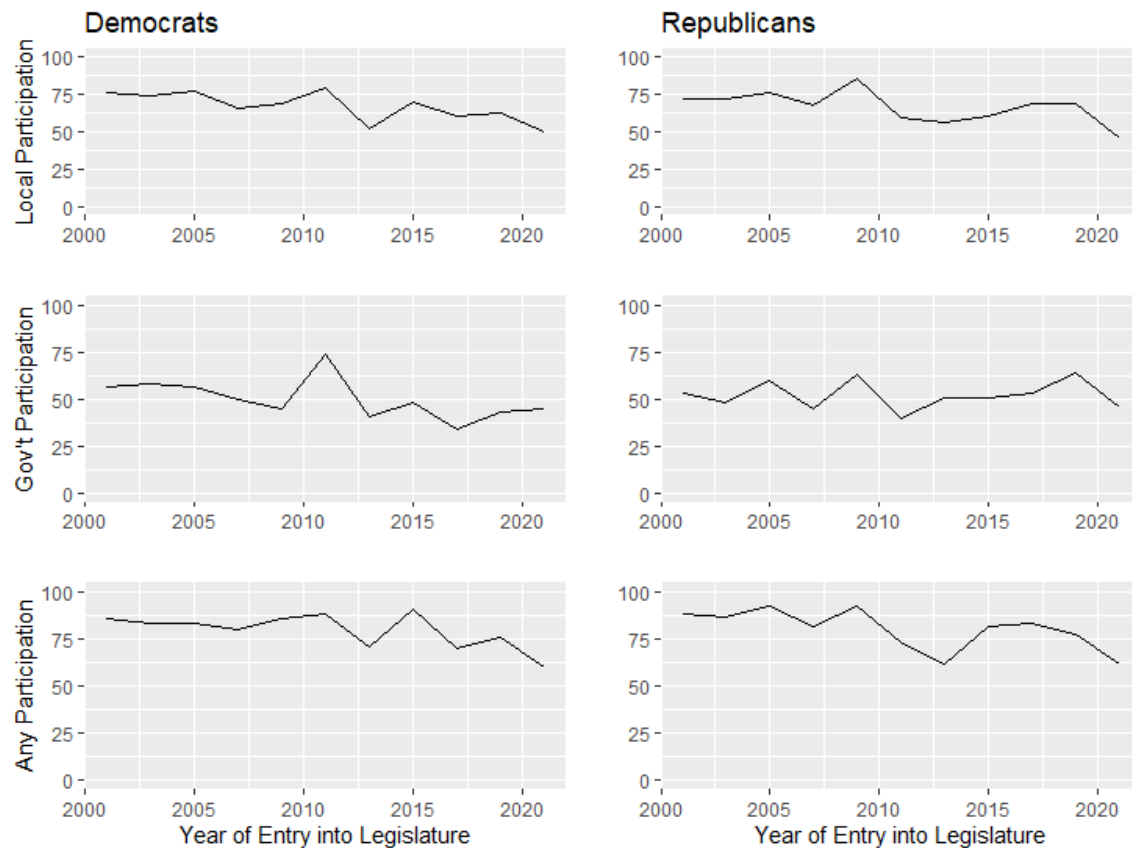
Figure 4. Legislators' Prior Experiences by Partisan Affiliation



Over time, however, partisan differences did emerge (Figure 5). During the first decade we examined, differences by party were remarkably small among new legislators; on average, almost seven of eight of both parties had some type of experience. No partisan disparity reached even 10 percent. Over the most recent decade, these partisan differences accentuated as the overall level of engagement dropped to 74 percent for both Democrats and Republicans. While

the level of prior local governing experience remained steady for new Republican legislators, fewer new Democrats had such experience. On the other hand, while participation in civic and community groups dropped for new legislators of both parties, the decrease was less precipitous for Democrats.

Figure 5. Changes Over Time by Partisan Affiliation, 2001-2021



Conclusion

In brief, we conclude that while the latest generations of New Hampshire state legislators still often have significant local governing and civic experience prior to their service in the General Court, they have been less likely over the past decade to bring that type of experience with them to the legislature. This decline occurred among both women and men and Democrats and Republicans. These findings are worth monitoring in future years, given the nature of New

Hampshire's volunteer citizen legislature. Historically, members of the New Hampshire legislature were often the people who volunteered at local food pantries and served on town committees. But the significant declines we detect in both local governing and civic experience among new members of the New Hampshire House suggest the composition of the New Hampshire legislature may be in the midst of important changes. More specifically, while it is still safe to say that the typical Granite State legislator still has local roots, it is fair to point out that the root structure of the legislature is not as strong as it once was. If we take it that legislators' backgrounds, at least in part, inform their political opinions and policy preferences, then the general decline in local governing and civic experience among new members of the New Hampshire House may have had an effect on the type of legislation coming out of the New Hampshire General Court.

Moreover, future researchers might explore what caused the declines in local governing and civic experience among New Hampshire state legislators over the last decade in particular. One such factor that could help explain these observed trends is party recruitment of state legislative candidates. Do the parties prefer particular candidate biographies and backgrounds when recruiting? If so, how have these preferences changed over the past two decades? Answers to these questions could clarify changes in the composition of the New Hampshire General Court. Lastly, although this study is limited to New Hampshire, our research question can be applied to other state legislatures, as well. This could determine whether the trends observed in this study are unique to New Hampshire or common across the United States.

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¹ From 1983 to 1986, it was known as *New Hampshire Elected Officials*, and before that it was *The New Hampshire Political Almanac*.

² This research would not have been possible without the assistance of our four undergraduate research assistants at the University of New Hampshire: Isabel Conners, Rachel Dalai, Olivia Dill, and Madison Ferrie. It was because of their hard work that we were able to collect a significant amount of data in a timely manner. We would also like to thank UNH Librarian Louise Buckley, as well as Morgan Wilson and the staff at the UNH Special Collections, Archives & Museum for making available the volumes of *The Handbook of New Hampshire Elected Officials*; Greg Moore for inspiring this project and providing feedback on a draft; and the UNH Department of Political Science for supporting this project.