

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Rather than engage the scholarly literature after data collection and analysis as inductive approaches advise, or enter the field in a deductive mode to confirm or falsify existing theories, I employed an “abductive” coding strategy, a qualitative data analysis approach that “rests on the cultivation of anomalous and surprising empirical findings against a background of multiple existing sociological theories.” I approached the case of the U.S. Civil War by layering pre-existing theoretical tools (e.g., class formation, economic theories of political crisis) with other codes that were capacious enough to capture my own suspicion that the war had partisan origins. These theoretical codes consisted in “party formation,” “class formation,” “economic change,” and “political discourse.” From the archival data, I developed codes with these theoretical constructs in mind. For example, with respect to party formation, “Free Soil” and “Southern Rights” emerged organically from the data, as did “dependency,” “wage slavery,” and “slave power conspiracy” for political discourse. The theoretical tools did not always line up with the data, however. For instance, neither economic crises (e.g., the panic of 1837) nor oppositional class politics (e.g., yeoman farmers versus the Second Bank of the United States) lined up with the disruption of the party system. These disagreements between theoretical expectations and data led to “alternative casings” that reframed the class-based populism of the Jacksonian Era as a period of political incorporation into the slaveholding republic. Further, as Timmermans and Tavory note, there is in this approach, “a recursive cascading of possible abductions.” This happens in part because “sharing research among a community of inquiry stimulates the articulation and refinement of theoretical constructs.” Over the years, readers of my work have discerned a palpable demophobia in the speeches and writing of antebellum politicians. This

led to still another alternative casing, namely, the emergence, absorption, and resurgence of different forms of population discourse (Timmermans and Tavory 2012: 169, 173, 177, 179).