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## ***Effects of the Interaction Between Race and Urbanization On Votes of Southern Congressmen***

The urbanization and racial composition of congressional districts have often been used separately to explain southern members' voting behavior. This study, however, examines the possibility that these sociodemographic forces may interact to induce southern legislators to cast their roll-call votes in a more liberal direction. Using ordinary least squares regression, the author finds that this joint effect is a powerful predictor of liberal voting. Further analysis of districts in the deep South alone also supports the hypothesis of interaction. The findings suggest that southern Democrats representing urban districts with a sizable or diversified minority population tend to be the most liberal of the southern congressional delegation.

Much has been written about changes in southern congressional politics since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The implication is that after 1965 at least some members representing congressional districts in southern states cast their roll-call votes in a more liberal direction. But what accounts for any liberality in their voting behavior? The primary objective of this research was to answer that question.

Scholarship on changes in southern members' voting behavior has focused on two explanatory factors: the proportion of blacks residing in a district and the percentage of the district that is urban. One of the major conditions of this transformation in voting behavior has been the end of formal and informal barriers to black suffrage. Several studies have suggested that some southern members have become more responsive to blacks (Keech, 1968; Feagin, 1972; Black, 1978; Stern, 1979; Bullock, 1981). Examining roll-call votes on civil rights legislation, Feagin (1972), Black (1978), and Stern (1979) all found southern members increasingly supportive of such legislation. Bullock (1978) found southern members to be less conservative in those districts where a high percentage of blacks resided.

Studies have also shown that urbanization is associated with members' responsiveness to blacks (Key, 1949; Lerche, 1964; Feagin, 1972). The frequent suggestion is that as the South has become more industrial and urban in recent decades many southern whites have become less preoccupied with racial matters (Key, 1949, p. 673; Feagin, 1972). As a result, many

legislators representing urban constituents have toned down their conservative policies and supported liberal policies to alleviate problems in cities (Feagin, 1972, p. 485).

Most of the aforementioned studies have assumed that the effect of both urbanization and race is additive—that is, that each factor has played an independent role in changing the voting behavior of southern members of Congress. Although the additive approach has some merit, this paper argues that liberal roll-call voting is a function of forces interacting simultaneously to induce more liberal voting among southern members. All things being equal, liberal southern members are more likely to come from districts where urbanization is high and where there is a sizable black population.

There are reasons to suspect that an additive explanation of liberal voting is less appropriate than an interactive one. For example, some researchers recommend cautious interpretations of the effect of urbanization alone. Studies have shown that many urban districts now act as incubators for white collar workers who prefer the economic conservatism of the Republican party (Cosman, 1967; Strong, 1971; Seagull, 1975). The modernization of the South's economy has increased the number of white collar workers residing in urban areas (Seagull, 1975). Concerned about inflation and high taxes, many urban, white, middle- and upper-income voters have embraced the philosophy of Republican congressional candidates who oppose government spending (Strong, 1971, p. 239). As a consequence of growing Republican support in many urban areas, especially in the suburbs, the effect of urbanization on liberal voting may have declined.

Furthermore, although scholars generally agree that some southern members have become more responsive to their black constituents, they are less sure about the relationship. On the one hand, some studies suggest that the form of the relationship is curvilinear, meaning that southern members' support for civil rights bills is relative to the proportion of blacks in a district (Keech, 1968; Black, 1978; Stern, 1979).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Robeck (1974) reports that legislator responsiveness increases linearly—that is, as the proportion of blacks increases from district to district, support for civil rights bills increases. Thus, the actual effect of an enlarged black electorate is still somewhat questionable. It may be that its impact depends on the extent of urbanization.

Blacks (and other minorities) have made most of their political gains in urban settings (see for example Ladd, 1969, p. 6; Conyers and Wallace, 1976, p. 3), where they could achieve political unity and elect sympathetic candidates to office (Conyers and Wallace, 1976, p. 3). Thus, it would be logical to assume that liberal roll-call voting is in part caused by urbanization and race interacting.

The assumptions behind interaction are well documented in the social science literature (see Lewis-Beck, 1980, p. 54). One study (Coombs,

Hibbing, and Welch, 1984) examining the relationship between the percentage of blacks in a district and congressional roll-call behavior noted that the curvilinear pattern found in previous research does not wholly explain the relationship. The authors proposed that some kind of interaction between urbanization and race might affect the voting behavior of southern House members. This article will report on the first stringent test of that proposition.

### Study Design

To determine whether an interaction effect exists, this study constructs two models—one with additive terms only and one with both additive and interactive terms. If the effects of urbanization and race are additive, as previous research suggests, then the additive model should suffice to explain southern members' voting behavior in the House. However, if the effects interact, the interactive behavior model should explain that result better.

The models include several control variables: the member's political party, the generational replacement of members, and the median education in the district. Following past research findings (Black, 1978; Bullock, 1981; Sinclair, 1982), this study predicts that, on the average, Democrats will be more liberal in their roll-call voting than Republicans. Party is coded as a dummy variable: 1 if the member is a Democrat, 0 if a Republican. Previous research also suggests that, if southern members are less conservative overall, it is because more liberal junior members have replaced more conservative members. Clausen (1973) found replacement was a better explanation of more liberal voting than was change in members' policy stance during their careers. Black (1978) and Bullock (1981) concluded that recently elected southern Democrats were more likely to support progressive legislation than were more senior Democrats. This study predicts that freshmen southern Democrats will be most likely to have liberal voting records. Generational replacement is dichotomized for each Congress, taking the value 1 if the newly elected member was a Democrat, 0 if not.

The level of education of the district's population is measured as the median number of years spent in school. On the whole, the effect of education has received very little attention. Stern (1979) found that legislators representing better educated districts were more apt to support civil rights bills. However, further work is needed to discover the actual effect of education. By including a measure of education in the equation we can more accurately assess its impact.

In the additive model we have constructed,

$$\hat{Y} = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 + e$$

where  $a$  = constant;

$\hat{Y}$  = roll-call votes of southern members of the House;

- $X_1$  = proportion of blacks in a district;  
 $X_2$  = percentage of a district's population in urban areas;  
 $X_3$  = party;  
 $X_4$  = median years of education of the district electorate;  
 $X_5$  = generational replacement; and  
 $e$  = error term.

However, this study hypothesizes that the effect of race and urbanization on southern members' voting behavior is interactive, not additive. The key independent variable then is the interactive term, created by multiplying scores on one predictor variable (percentage urban) by corresponding scores on another (percentage black). The newly created variable represents the joint effect of the district's racial composition and urbanization on the member's voting behavior. The nonadditive and additive effects of race and urbanization, along with the other independent variables, can be modelled parsimoniously in the following regression equation:

$$\hat{Y} = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 + b_{(12)} X_1 X_2 + e$$

where  $X_1 X_2$  = a cross-product term representing interaction between proportion of blacks ( $X_1$ ) and urbanization ( $X_2$ ), and all other variables defined before remain the same.

House roll-call data will be used to gauge the extent of liberalism in southern members' voting behavior and to test for interaction. The measure of roll-call voting is the proportion of roll calls on which legislators have supported positions endorsed by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR). This index was chosen because its ratings reflect explicitly liberal values on issues ranging from civil rights legislation to government spending for various social programs. Moreover, other research (Bullock, 1981) has shown the LCCR index to be an appropriate measure of liberal voting.

A longitudinal analysis makes it possible to determine whether the impact of the independent variables has changed over time. In this analysis, southern House members' roll-call votes for the 91st through 97th Congresses were examined. Since the LCCR index was not computed before the 91st Congress, the analysis could not be extended further. However, past research has shown that virtually all southern legislators were conservative in their roll-call voting before the late 1960s (see for example Keech, 1968; Black, 1978).

The data for percentage black, percentage urban, and median education were taken from the appropriate volumes of the *Congressional District Data Book*. Generational replacement data were taken from the relevant editions of the *Almanac of American Politics*. The unit of analysis for this study is the congressional district. In each Congress under study, all districts in the South were analyzed.<sup>2</sup> Ordinary least squares regression tests and evaluates the impact of the interactive term and of the other independent variables.

### Findings

Table 1 summarizes results of the regression analysis from the additive model. Unstandardized regression coefficients will be used to compare the strength of a particular variable across congresses. Standardized regression coefficients (beta weights) will be used to evaluate the relative importance of the independent variables within a single congress.

The results from the regression reveal that a district's racial composition does not have an independent positive effect on the voting behavior of southern members. In fact, in the 91st and 92d Congresses, the variable has a significant effect but one inversely related to liberal roll-call voting. In other words, as the percentage of blacks increased across districts, southern members voted more conservatively, a continuation of the pattern researchers observed before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Key, 1949; Shannon, 1972). In more recent congresses, the signs of this correlation are no longer negative, suggesting that southern members who now represent sizable black constituencies are no longer the most conservative. Although the signs for more recent congresses are in the expected direction, race still is not a statistically significant factor. The findings suggest that some southern members support less conservative policies, but that the impact of race alone has not been sufficient to cause southern legislators to vote more liberally.

Unlike race, urbanization is statistically significant in each of the congresses analyzed, and the signs are in the expected direction. The unstandardized regression coefficients show that urbanization was a stronger influence in the earlier congresses, gradually weakening in the more recent ones. Moreover as the standardized regression coefficients indicate, in each congress before the 95th Congress urbanization carried more weight than any other explanatory variable in the model. Since then the weight of urbanization has declined, a finding which suggests that other factors are now important in determining whether southern members will support liberal legislation.

One variable that has grown in importance over time is political party. It is always statistically significant and is the most important variable (beta weight) in the last three congresses under study. As the unstandardized regression coefficients indicate, party becomes increasingly influential in the more recent congresses. The findings indicate that southern Democrats are more liberal than southern Republicans. More important, southern Democrats have become more liberal with the passage of time.

The explanatory power of median education is surprisingly strong, while that of generational replacement is minimal. The coefficients of median education is statistically significant in all the congresses examined, but the signs of its coefficients are negative, suggesting that legislators with less well-educated constituents are less conservative in their voting behavior.

TABLE 1  
 An Additive Model of Factors Accounting for Liberal Voting<sup>a</sup>  
 By Members Representing Districts in the South<sup>b</sup>

| Variables   | Unstandardized       | Standardized | T-ratio |
|---|----------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>Percentage of Blacks<br/>in District's Population</b>      |                      |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | -.405 <sup>c</sup>   | .230         | 2.645   |
| 92d Congress  | -.158                | .087         | .961    |
| 93d Congress  | -.346 <sup>c</sup>   | .149         | 1.923   |
| 94th Congress   | -.059                | .025         | .315    |
| 95th Congress   | .152                 | .061         | .753    |
| 96th Congress   | .132                 | .048         | .590    |
| 97th Congress   | .046                 | .022         | .294    |
| <b>Percentage of District's<br/>Population in Urban Areas</b> |                      |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | .667 <sup>c</sup>    | .684         | 5.735   |
| 92d Congress  | .415 <sup>c</sup>    | .439         | 4.123   |
| 93d Congress  | .715 <sup>c</sup>    | .608         | 8.062   |
| 94th Congress   | .755 <sup>c</sup>    | .607         | 5.669   |
| 95th Congress   | .674 <sup>c</sup>    | .464         | 4.785   |
| 96th Congress   | .539 <sup>c</sup>    | .409         | 4.115   |
| 97th Congress   | .442 <sup>c</sup>    | .379         | 4.011   |
| <b>Members' Political Party</b>                               |                      |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | 14.431 <sup>c</sup>  | .274         | 3.146   |
| 92d Congress  | 15.231 <sup>c</sup>  | .313         | 3.224   |
| 93d Congress  | 29.905 <sup>c</sup>  | .587         | 6.164   |
| 94th Congress   | 30.089 <sup>c</sup>  | .454         | 5.846   |
| 95th Congress   | 31.785 <sup>c</sup>  | .518         | 5.793   |
| 96th Congress   | 30.656 <sup>c</sup>  | .567         | 5.184   |
| 97th Congress   | 31.498 <sup>c</sup>  | .563         | 7.342   |
| <b>Median Education of<br/>District's Population</b>          |                      |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | - 9.476 <sup>c</sup> | .525         | 4.301   |
| 92d Congress  | - 4.007 <sup>c</sup> | .249         | 2.268   |
| 93d Congress  | -13.082 <sup>c</sup> | .448         | 4.358   |
| 94th Congress   | - 9.697 <sup>c</sup> | .330         | 2.949   |
| 95th Congress   | - 8.130 <sup>c</sup> | .264         | 2.330   |
| 96th Congress   | -12.161 <sup>c</sup> | .353         | 3.096   |
| 97th Congress   | - 5.560 <sup>c</sup> | .200         | 2.024   |
| <b>Generational Replacement<br/>of Members</b>                |                      |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | 1.712                | .022         | .268    |
| 92d Congress  | 1.739                | .087         | .141    |
| 93d Congress  | 6.861                | .095         | 1.303   |
| 94th Congress   | 12.608 <sup>c</sup>  | .147         | 1.870   |
| 95th Congress   | 1.263                | .014         | .178    |
| 96th Congress   | - 9.919              | .116         | 1.483   |
| 97th Congress   | .087                 | .072         | .974    |

<sup>a</sup>As measured by the member's rating from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

<sup>b</sup>Number of cases for the 91st Congress is 106, for the 92d Congress, 105; and for each of the Congresses afterward, 108.

<sup>c</sup> $p \leq .05$ .

TABLE 2  
Test for Significance of Interaction between Race and Urbanization

| Congress | R <sup>2</sup> of all Factors<br>in the<br>Additive Model | R <sup>2</sup> of all Factors<br>in the<br>Interactive Model | Significance Level<br>of the<br>Interactive Term |
|----------|---|--|--|
| 91st     | .33   | .34  | 1.515 <sup>b</sup>                               |
| 92d      | .23   | .26  | 4.000 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 93d      | .50   | .52  | 4.255 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 94th     | .41   | .44  | 5.454 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 95th     | .38   | .39  | 1.667  |
| 96th     | .41   | .43  | 3.570 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 97th     | .48   | .51  | 6.250 <sup>a</sup>                               |

<sup>a</sup>p ≤ .05.

<sup>b</sup>The coefficient sign of the interactive term is negative for the 91st Congress.

Only in the 94th Congress was generational replacement statistically significant, when voters—perhaps disenchanted with the Nixon administration—elected 36 new Democratic members. Statistical insignificance in other congresses may be due indirectly to the incumbency factor. That is, since incumbents are rarely defeated in their reelection bids, relatively few freshmen legislators will enter any one particular Congress. A small number of cases can cause a parameter estimate to be insignificant.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, the additive model shows that the member's party, the district's urbanization and median education, and (to a lesser extent) generational replacement of members are predictors of southern members' voting behavior. The racial composition of the district does not contribute to the explanation. If race is a predictor of liberal voting, then some other factor must condition its effect. According to the hypothesis stated earlier, urbanization should be that factor. The standard statistical test of interaction, the hierarchical F test,<sup>4</sup> determines whether the interactive term predicts liberal voting over and beyond all the other independent variables combined. If the interactive term is significant after this stringent test is applied, then the interactive model is preferable to the additive model in explaining liberal voting.

The results of the interactive model can be found in Table 2. The table shows the variance explained by all the independent variables before the interactive variable was included, the variance explained after the inclusion of the interactive term, and most importantly, the level of significance of the interactive term (F test). The findings presented in Table 2 show that in five of the seven congresses (92d, 93d, 94th, 96th, and 97th) the interactive term is indeed a predictor of liberal roll-call voting. Even after the hierarchical F test, in which all other independent variables are permitted to explain as much of liberal voting as they can, the interactive term is still a significant predictor.

The findings suggest that the sociodemographic composition of a district heavily influences how southern congressmen will cast their roll-call ballots. More specifically, the joint effect of urbanization and race increases the probability that southern members will vote in a liberal direction. The findings also suggest that a strictly additive model does not sufficiently explain southern members' voting behavior. The results from Table 2 offer strong support for the hypothesis of interactive effects.

### Refinements

As is always the case in research, there could be alternative ways of explaining these members' voting behavior. To understand better the dynamics of southern congressional politics, we can examine the possibility that the effect differs by region within the South. Key (1949, p. 5) says succinctly that "the degree to which the race issue influences political life varies almost directly with the Negro proportion of the population." His observation has led many scholars to conclude that the politics of the deep South (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) tend to be more racially oriented and thus more conservative than the politics of the South as a whole (see Black, 1978; Bullock, 1981).

If this is the case, then the findings for the entire region may mask some important and interesting differences. The rest of this study investigates whether different patterns exist in the deep South and in the South as a whole. Have blacks in the deep South been able to influence the members representing their districts to moderate their conservative policy stands? Are the factors associated with any such change in the deep South the same as those associated with change throughout the South?

The additive and interactive models already tested on data for 11 Southern states can be retested with data for the 5 states of the deep South only. Again, the primary objective is to determine whether the model using an interactive term explains liberal voting behavior significantly better than the model using only additive terms. A secondary objective is to see if the independent variables have different explanatory powers for the deep South and for the entire South. Table 3 presents the results of the regression analysis for the additive model and Table 4 for the interactive model.

Table 3 shows that urbanization, a significant predictor of liberal voting in each congress for the entire South, reached statistical significance in the deep South only in the first five congresses examined. The unstandardized regression coefficients reveal that urbanization has steadily declined in influence in the deep South. As more whites move from urban to suburban areas and associate themselves with the conservatism of the Republican party, the influence of urbanization on liberal voting may decrease. Clearly, if southern legislators from the deep South have moderated their conservative policy views in recent years, factors other than urbanization have been the cause.

TABLE 3  
 An Additive Model of Factors Accounting for Liberal Voting<sup>a</sup>  
 By Members Representing Districts in the Deep South<sup>b</sup>

| Variables   | Unstandardized      | Standardized | T-ratio |
|---|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>Percentage of Blacks<br/>in District's Population</b>      |                     |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | -.275 <sup>c</sup>  | .367         | 2.017   |
| 92d Congress  | -.268               | .162         | .990    |
| 93d Congress  | -.287               | .127         | .863    |
| 94th Congress   | -.688               | .242         | 1.457   |
| 95th Congress   | .704                | .306         | 1.623   |
| 96th Congress   | .376                | .136         | .795    |
| 97th Congress   | .774                | .300         | 1.600   |
| <b>Percentage of District's<br/>Population in Urban Areas</b> |                     |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | .592 <sup>c</sup>   | .494         | 2.402   |
| 92d Congress  | .530 <sup>c</sup>   | .431         | 1.981   |
| 93d Congress  | .485 <sup>c</sup>   | .240         | 1.702   |
| 94th Congress   | .522 <sup>c</sup>   | .331         | 1.721   |
| 95th Congress   | .477                | .286         | 1.378   |
| 96th Congress   | .469                | .279         | 1.135   |
| 97th Congress   | .109                | .089         | .296    |
| <b>Members' Political Party</b>                               |                     |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | 10.436              | .213         | .990    |
| 92d Congress  | 5.861               | .130         | .556    |
| 93d Congress  | 44.890 <sup>c</sup> | .778         | 4.582   |
| 94th Congress   | 26.651 <sup>c</sup> | .476         | 2.772   |
| 95th Congress   | 13.891              | .227         | 1.095   |
| 96th Congress   | 17.089              | .261         | 1.378   |
| 97th Congress   | 22.377 <sup>c</sup> | .477         | 2.996   |
| <b>Median Education of<br/>District's Population</b>          |                     |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | - 7.243             | .161         | 1.556   |
| 92d Congress  | - 7.289             | .439         | 1.673   |
| 93d Congress  | 6.942               | .127         | 1.037   |
| 94th Congress   | 3.931               | .145         | .566    |
| 95th Congress   | - 8.875             | .221         | 1.048   |
| 96th Congress   | - 7.667             | .179         | .830    |
| 97th Congress   | 1.699               | .064         | .291    |
| <b>Generational Replacement<br/>of Members</b>                |                     |              |         |
| 91st Congress   | - 9.403             | .142         | .867    |
| 92d Congress  | 14.187              | .220         | 1.303   |
| 93d Congress  | 7.567               | .131         | .876    |
| 94th Congress   | 11.471              | .183         | 1.124   |
| 95th Congress   | - 6.463             | .090         | .532    |
| 96th Congress   | -15.175             | .218         | 1.049   |
| 97th Congress   | .536                | .009         | .055    |

<sup>a</sup>As measured by the member's rating from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

<sup>b</sup>See Table 1 for number of cases.

<sup>c</sup> $p \leq .05$ .

Table 3 also shows that the party variable reached statistical significance in only three of the congresses analyzed (93d, 94th, and 97th Congresses), whereas for the entire South it was significant in all seven congresses. Apparently southern Democrats outside the deep South have been less hesitant about supporting liberal legislation, probably because the race issue has been less of a factor. The standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients show that Democrats from the deep South were more liberal under the Nixon administration (93d and 94th Congress) than at any other time. Newly elected Democrats, along with some of their more senior colleagues, may have read a mandate for liberal roll-call voting into the 1974 election. The finding indicates that although Democrats in the deep South are more likely than Republicans to support liberal legislation, that support has not been consistent over time.

Neither median education nor generational replacement reached statistical significance in the deep South. This is somewhat surprising, in view of the fact that median education was statistically significant in each of the congresses for the entire South. Members representing districts outside the deep South may support whatever legislation improves their constituents' standard of living. Race being less a concern than in the deep South, members may support liberal programs in housing or education that would benefit their constituents.

Turning to the effect of race, we can see from a perusal of Table 3 that the percentage of blacks in a district has had no impact on southern members' LCCR ratings in the subregion. Although the signs are in the expected direction after the 93d Congress, the relationship between race and liberal voting is not significant. The findings here are quite similar to those for the whole region—that is, the race factor alone is not a predictor of liberal roll-call voting.

The hierarchical F test can again reveal whether urbanization conditions the effect of race. The findings for the deep South (Table 4) show that the combined effect of race and urbanization is statistically significant in four of seven congresses. In the additive model for the deep South, neither urbanization nor race were significant in the more recent congresses. In the findings for the nonadditive model for the deep South, the interactive term is significant in the 96th and 97th Congresses. The findings suggest that a sizable black population and a largely urban constituency together can predict liberal roll-call voting in a member from the deep South. In other urban districts the influence of urbanization has declined, probably reflecting growing Republican support in those areas.

Overall, the interactive term is a predictor of liberal voting even after the demanding hierarchical F test has been applied, confirming the hypothesis that there are forces interacting to produce liberal voting.

TABLE 4  
 Test for Significance of Interaction  
 Between Urbanization and Race in the Deep South

| Congress | R <sup>2</sup> of all Factors<br>in the<br>Additive Model | R <sup>2</sup> of all Factors<br>in the<br>Interactive Model | Significance Level<br>of the<br>Interactive Term |
|----------|---|--|--|
| 91st     | .22   | .27  | 2.000 <sup>b</sup>                               |
| 92d      | .20   | .24  | 1.600  |
| 93d      | .42   | .48  | 3.500 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 94th     | .33   | .39  | 3.000 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 95th     | .22   | .26  | 1.600  |
| 96th     | .24   | .34  | 4.600 <sup>a</sup>                               |
| 97th     | .37   | .47  | 5.600 <sup>a</sup>                               |

<sup>a</sup> $p \leq .05$ .

<sup>b</sup>The coefficient sign of the interactive term is negative for the 91st Congress.

### Conclusions

When urbanism and race, the constituency variables often used separately to explain southern members' voting behavior, are combined into a single interactive term, it becomes a powerful predictor of liberal roll-call voting.

By comparing two models, we have discovered some interesting findings. First, the findings from the additive model show that urbanization is still a predictor of the way southern members in general cast their roll-call votes but that it has declined as a predictor in the deep South. In all probability, the increase in Republicanism in many urban areas within the subregion has been a primary factor. Second, southern members representing districts outside the deep South which have a lower median level of education are more likely to support liberal legislation than are those members representing similar districts in the deep South. Third, southern Democrats are more liberal than southern Republicans, especially those Democrats who served during the Nixon years and those from urban districts with large black populations. This holds true for the deep South as well as the entire region. Finally, the results from the additive model show that the racial composition of a district alone is not a predictor of its representative's liberal roll-call voting.

According to the findings from the interaction models, urbanization conditions the effect of race. If race is to be a predictor of liberal voting, then the district would have to be urban. Furthermore, the combined effect of both these sociodemographic variables is greater than the effect of other explanatory factors used in the analysis.

The findings can be interpreted to have some far-reaching policy consequences. On the one hand, as some southern districts become more like their northern cousins—that is, highly urban with a high percentage of blacks—we can expect to see more liberal southern members of Congress and perhaps more policies which benefit minorities. On the other hand, outside such districts, southern members—particularly southern Republicans—may continue to exhibit the traditional pattern of conservative roll-call voting.

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### NOTES

1. The curvilinear hypothesis is derived and stated best by Keech. He notes that legislators have a tendency to support civil rights legislation until about 30 percent of the district is black. Afterward, support starts to diminish because whites feel threatened where a higher percentage of blacks reside. Not until blacks control the decision-making apparatus (majority black districts) does the relationship become positive again.

2. The 11 Southern states analyzed here are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

3. A good explanation for the reasons why a parameter estimate may not be significant can be found in Lewis-Beck, 1980.

4. Multicolinearity plagues researchers when using interactive terms. The hierarchical F test can overcome this problem. For an understanding of how this statistical procedure works, see Kmenta, 1971.

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