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CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Impact of the Voting Rights Act on Minority Representation: Black Officeholding in Southern State Legislatures and Congressional Delegations

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THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT of 1965 has succeeded in eliminating most of the barriers blacks in the South previously faced in attempting to register and vote. But the act sought to do more than this. It was also designed to bring minority groups and their concerns into the halls of government. Progress in this direction has been much slower; years after the act had produced impressive gains in registration, blacks still held only a small fraction of the elected offices in the South. However, as table 11.1 illustrates, blacks have been winning office in increasing numbers since 1970, a phenomenon that has been particularly dramatic in the South. By 1985, the percentage of blacks serving at every level of government with the exception of Congress was higher in the South than elsewhere. The primary reason for the disproportionate increase in southern black officeholding, this essay will show, is the Voting Rights Act.

Our evidence demonstrates, moreover, that the currently popular argument that the Voting Rights Act has served its purpose and is no longer as necessary as it once was is misguided.[1] Proponents of this argument herald the election of prominent black politicians such as Virginia governor Douglas Wilder as examples of a new southern progressivism. But Wilder's 1989 election is the exception rather than the rule, our data show, and even that gubernatorial contest was not devoid of racial bloc voting.[2] In fact, there is little evidence for a widespread increase in the willingness of white voters to cast their ballots for black candidates.[3]

This investigation examines the possible reasons for the growth in the number of black elected officials from the passage of the act in 1965, when virtually no blacks held political office in the South, until 1985, when the election results of the previous round of redistricting were in. It focuses primarily on state legislatures in the South, but congressional level data are examined briefly at the close of the study in order to determine if the conclusions hold at the congressional level as well. We arrive at three basic conclusions. First, the increase in the number of blacks elected to office in the South is a product of the increase in the number of majority-black districts and not of blacks winning in majority-white districts. Second, even today black populations well above 50 percent appear necessary if blacks are to have a realistic opportunity to elect representatives of their choice in

the South. Third, the increase in the number of black districts in the South is primarily the result not of redistricting changes based on population shifts as reflected in the decennial census but, rather, of those required by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its 1982 amendments. Quite simply, had there been no federal intervention in the redistricting process in the South, it is unlikely that most southern states would have ceased their practice of diluting the black vote. The Justice Department forced many southern states to replace their multimember state legislative districts with single-member seats, especially in areas with black population concentrations, and also denied preclearance to single-member redistricting plans that appeared to fragment black voters unnecessarily. Federal intervention of this nature, as well as voting rights suits brought by private litigants, was primarily responsible for the significant increase in southern black officeholding, at least at the state legislative and congressional levels.

Are Whites Electing Blacks to Office in the South?

Table 11.1 shows that the number of southern black legislators increased sharply after 1965. In that year only 3 blacks were state legislators in the eleven states of the Old Confederacy; by 1985 that number had increased to 176—almost 10 percent of the legislative seats. Of course, because blacks comprise almost 20 percent of the southern population, they were still quite underrepresented proportionally.

To what can this substantial rise be attributed? A major cause was the increase in black voting made possible by the act. But black participation rates have leveled off since the early 1970s; thus the more recent increases must have been due to other factors. Some writers attribute it to a growing willingness among whites to vote for black candidates. If this were true, then we should see more blacks elected from majority-white jurisdictions. But as table 11.2 demonstrates, this is simply not the case. Majority-white legislative districts were no more likely to elect black legislators in the 1980s than in the previous decade. In the 1970s, approximately 1 percent of all state legislative districts that were less than 50 percent black elected black legislators. That did not change in the 1980s. Thus the need remained for districts with substantial black population percentages if blacks were to have a realistic opportunity to elect their candidates of choice.

What did change, however, was the number and percentage of majority-black districts that elected black legislators. As table 11.2 indicates, only 59 percent of the majority-black state house districts in the 1970s elected a black to office, but in the 1980s this increased to 77 percent. The rise was even greater in state senate districts: from 25 to 62 percent. Yet there was no increase in the percentage of blacks elected in majority-white districts. In fact, the proportion actually dropped in the lower houses. Thus the increase in black legislators observed in table 11.1 was due almost entirely to the increase in the number of blacks elected from majority-black districts and to the increase in the number of such districts. In the

1970s there were 126 majority-black state legislative districts in the seven southern states we analyzed; in those same states in the 1980s there were 182 such districts, an increase of over 44 percent.[4] Almost 84 percent of the southern black legislators in the 1970s represented majority-black districts; this figure rose to 90 percent in the 1980s.

How much of the increase in the number of black southern legislators is the result of black-majority districts voting more African Americans into office, and how much is it the result of the increase in the number of black-majority districts? Grofman and Jackson have independently developed a formula to answer this question. Called the *decompositional effects formula*, it assigns causal weights to a compositional effect (the number of majority-black districts); a behavioral effect (the ability of a majority-black district to elect a black); and an interaction effect (the interaction between composition and behavioral effects).[5] Using this formula, we determined that of the 5.1 percentage point gain in black representation between the 1970s and 1980s in the seven states analyzed, 55 percent was due to composition, 26 percent to behavior,[6] and 19 percent to the interaction of behavior and composition.[7] In other words, most of the black increase resulted from an increase in the number of majority-black districts. Moreover, black candidates actually fared worse in the 1980s in the majority-white districts than they had earlier.

The Color-Blind versus the Racial Polarization Model of Voting

Confronted with these facts, those with an optimistic view of southern race relations may say that the reason most black legislators get elected from black districts is that most blacks live in such districts. There are consequently not many blacks in other districts, which is why so few blacks get elected in them. This is the same reason, they might go on to say, that so few people of Scandinavian descent get elected to southern legislatures. It is not because of anti-Scandinavian voting, but because there simply are not very many Scandinavians there.

We call this *the color-blind hypothesis*, because it attributes the failure of blacks to get elected in white districts to the geography of residential dispersion rather than to whites' tendency to vote against blacks. (This hypothesis, as stated, obviously ignores the question of why blacks and whites tend to live in separate enclaves. But for the sake of argument, let us assume the answer has nothing to do with race.) The hypothesis could be tested, however, only if a significant number of blacks, albeit a minority, lived in majority-white districts. In that case, evidence for this hypothesis would be found in a correlation between the percentage of blacks in those districts and the percentage of black representatives elected from them. In a sample of majority-white districts whose mean black population was 10 percent, for example, one would expect about 10 percent of the elected representatives to be black as well; where the mean black population was 30 percent, one would expect about 30 percent of the representatives to be black, and so forth.

In contrast, *the racial polarization hypothesis* asserts the opposite. According to

this view, the size of the black population in majority-white districts will have little effect on the ability of black candidates to win in them, at least until some tipping point near 50 percent is reached. Evidence for this hypothesis would be a very low correlation between the proportion of black voters in the majority-white districts and the percentage of black representatives elected from them. At the extreme, no blacks would be elected from majority-white districts, and vice versa.

In point of fact, there was in the 1980s a sizable proportion of blacks in the South residing outside majority-black districts, allowing for a test of these contrary hypotheses. A significant majority of blacks lived outside of majority-black house and senate districts in every southern state. (The exceptions were Alabama and Mississippi, where only 50 percent resided outside majority-black house districts.)[8] In five states, over 80 percent of blacks lived outside majority-black senate districts; in three states, over 70 percent of blacks lived outside majority-black house districts.

Given these facts, we have examined the voting behavior of both majority-black and majority-white districts and compared the proportion of blacks one would expect these districts to elect in the 1980s, assuming the color-blind hypothesis were true, with the actual proportion of black legislators elected from them. The results of this test are seen in tables 11.3 and 11.4. They strongly support the racial polarization model at the expense of the color-blind one. In the majority of southern states, not a single majority-white district elected a black legislator. The most progressive state was North Carolina, where 4 percent of the 111 majority-white districts elected a black during the decade of the 1980s.

Racial polarization was also high in the majority-black districts, although not quite so high as in the white ones (see table 11.5). In districts 65 percent or more black, however, polarization was almost complete: nearly 100 percent of these districts elected blacks to office. The fact that black-majority districts were not quite as polarized as white ones probably stemmed from the relatively low black turnout in the black districts; when the actual electorate (as distinct from the total population) became majority black, the black voters were able and willing to elect a black candidate.

Table 11.6 indicates the numerical increase in these heavily black districts in the 1980s. Table 11.5 also shows the growth in the ability of such districts—those 60 percent black and over—to elect blacks to office. These two trends alone combined to boost the number of black legislators significantly in the 1980s. Contrary to the color-blind hypothesis, majority-white districts figured in this growth of black legislators hardly at all.

However, in looking at the black proportion needed to elect black legislative candidates, it is important to be sensitive to state and local variations.[9] In particular, Mississippi was anomalous in that the proportion of majority-black districts electing black candidates was much lower than in any other southern state (see table 11.4). This may in part have been due to lower rates of black participation in this state.[10] In contrast, virtually all majority-black districts in Alabama elected blacks to office.

The increase in the number of black districts between the 1970s and 1980s is presented in table 11.6. There was a 57 percent increase in the number of districts that were greater than 60 percent black. By contrast, the increase in the number of districts between 50 and 60 percent black was 26 percent, indicating an awareness by those drawing the districts of the need for heavy black majorities if black candidates were to have a fair chance of being elected.

In summary, although there was clearly an increase in the number of blacks elected to state legislative office, there is no evidence to indicate that this rise was the consequence of increasing white support for black candidates. Blacks were no more likely to be elected from majority-white jurisdictions in the 1980s than they were in the previous decade. Rather, states drew more majority-black districts, which had higher black concentrations than in the 1970s, as well as a higher likelihood of electing blacks.

This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized. There are basically three types of factors that might affect minority success. First, if black registration and turnout increased relative to whites, greater black success would have occurred in majority-black districts.[11] But this possibility can largely be ruled out because the racial differences in turnout rates remained relatively constant during this period.[12] Even more important, as has been shown using the Grofman-Jackson method described above, most of the increase in southern black representation over the past decade was due simply to an increase in the number of majority-black districts.

A second possible explanation for increased minority success is a growth in black population and/or a change in the black population concentration; that is, if the black population has shifted so as to allow for the creation of additional black-majority districts, then an increase in the number of blacks holding office might be anticipated. However, growth can be ruled out because the percentage of blacks in the South actually declined slightly over the past decade. This is true for the entire region and for nine of the eleven states; only in Georgia and North Carolina did the black ratio rise slightly. As for changes in black population concentrations, there is little evidence to suggest much change during the period in question. In fact, the majority-black counties in the Mississippi Delta area of the Deep South have been losing black population.[13]

A third factor that might have produced substantial gains in black representation in an area with racially polarized voting is an increase in the number of black-majority districts. This, finally, is the best answer, as table 11.6 shows. How did this come about?

Why Were More Black Districts Drawn?

Action by the Justice Department, as well as by private litigants (particularly in the 1980s, when civil rights and minority groups made use of the newly amended provisions of section 2 of the Voting Rights Act), accounts for most of the growth

in black legislative representation in the South. This action usually took one of two forms: the state was required to change its election system from multimember to single-member districts, at least in the areas of the state with large concentrations of blacks; or, if the state already employed single-member districts, the state was required to redraw its lines so as not to fragment black voters.

The Justice Department has expressed a decided preference for the use of single-member districts, refusing to preclear state legislative plans with multimember districts, especially in heavily black areas. For example, in the 1970s, section 5 preclearance denials reduced or eliminated multimember districts in the legislative chambers of Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.[14] Then in 1981 and 1982, a series of Justice Department objections also eliminated multimember legislative districts in the covered area of North Carolina.

Voting rights litigation also played a role in forcing states to adopt single-member districts. For example, in Texas in the early 1970s, multimember districts were eliminated as a result of a lawsuit brought by private litigants under the Fourteenth Amendment.[15] In North Carolina, multimember districts in a number of areas not covered by section 5 were eliminated as a result of a section 2 lawsuit brought by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.[16]

Table 11.7 lists the type of election system used in each of the eleven southern states in 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, and 1985. It shows that almost all of the states employed multimember districts in 1965; by 1985 no state had a pure multimember election system, although Arkansas still employed some multimember house districts. Many of the multimember districts in Arkansas were subsequently eliminated as the result of a section 2 suit, however.[17]

States already using only single-member districts have also been subjected to Justice Department intervention. For example, the Attorney General objected to several legislative plans in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi because of the fragmentation of black voting concentrations by district lines.

Recent critics of the act have claimed that, in many instances, department interference with the autonomy of state legislatures in drawing redistricting plans is unwarranted;[18] however, without such federal intervention, there is little evidence to suggest that white-dominated southern legislatures would have drawn majority-black districts. On the contrary, these legislatures have fought, often bitterly, to avoid such changes. For example, in the 1970s Mississippi used a variety of legal maneuvers that enabled them to avoid the creation of majority-black districts until 1979.

The Shift to Single-Member Districts

How has the adoption of single-member districts affected black legislative representation? Table 11.8 compares the percentage of blacks elected under multimember and single-member-district systems in three periods. It parallels and updates

analyses done by Jewell and by Grofman and his colleagues.[19] Blacks were obviously advantaged in single-member-district systems, and this advantage grew over time—a pattern that held both in the lower and upper houses.

This finding is further supported by a simple bivariate correlation between the dummy variable "use of single-member districts" and the variable "number of black legislators." We performed this analysis using forty-four data points—observations for each of the eleven southern states at four different times: 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985 (see table 11.7 for the raw data). For the lower chamber, $r =$ .80 and for the upper chamber, $r = .52$. There is obviously a strong relationship between the use of single-member districts and the election of blacks to state legislative office.

Of course, it might be argued that this relationship is misleading because there may be other reasons why states with multimember districts have a lower percentage of blacks serving in their legislatures: for instance, states with multimember district systems may have fewer blacks than states with single-member systems. We tested this hypothesis with before-and-after analyses in the states that changed election systems, comparing shifts in black representation in those jurisdictions that adopted new systems with shifts in those that did not.

The change in black representation in both chambers in all eleven states was identified for each of the three periods: 1970–75, 1975–80, and 1980–85, providing a total of thirty-three observation points for each legislative chamber (see table 11.7 for the raw data). A dummy variable indicated whether there had been a shift to single-member districts within the specified time period for each of the data points. Regressing change in black representation on the dummy variable ("shift to single-member districts") revealed the extent to which changes in black representation occurred in the period in which states switched to single-member districts. Data from states that did not change their system were included in the analysis as a control group. If black representation were to have increased as much in the unchanged systems as in the changed systems, then the increase would not be the result of system change.

The analysis for the lower chambers of the eleven states produced a bivariate correlation of .74 between a shift to single-member districts and change in black representation. A shift to single-member districts was associated with a mean gain of 6.3 black representatives in the state. In state senates, the corresponding correlation was .37, and the change to single-member districts was associated with a mean gain of 1.1 black senators in the state (see table 11.9, part [a]).[20]

As each of these analyses indicates, the switch to single-member districts was an important reason for the increase in black representation in southern legislatures.[21] And with very few exceptions, states did not make the switch voluntarily; Justice Department refusals to preclear state legislative plans that employed multimember districts and voting rights litigation challenging multimember districts as dilutive were the primary causes of the elimination of multimember districts. Tennessee and Florida—neither of which is subject to section 5—were the only states that

clearly shifted election systems voluntarily; every other southern state was required, either by courts or by the Justice Department, to adopt single-member districts in the election of at least one of their legislative chambers.

Section 5 Coverage

Initially, six southern states were entirely covered by the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia. North Carolina was only partially covered. Coverage was extended to the entire state of Texas in 1975. To ascertain the importance of section 5 on black officeholding, we regressed a dummy variable for section 5 coverage ("1" for all states covered in whole or in part) on the number of black legislators in the eleven southern states. The bivariate correlation was .43 for the lower chamber and .21 for the upper chamber. We conclude that the automatic trigger clearly made a difference in black representation (see table 11.9, part [b]). This difference, however, was not as important as that resulting from the substitution of single-member for multimember districts, as evidenced by a multivariate analysis that included the dummy variables "use of single-member districts" and "section 5 coverage." The multiple correlation coefficient was .82 for state houses, and both variables were statistically significant, although section 5 coverage was significant only at the .05 level. Use of single-member districts led to an average increase of 9.4 black representatives; section 5 coverage led to an average gain of 2.8 black representatives. The relationship was not as strong for state senates; the multiple correlation coefficient was .53 and only the dummy variable "use of single-member districts" was significant (see table 11.9, part [c]).

A time variable was also included in the analysis because time alone, we surmised, might have accounted for the increase in blacks elected in the South.[22] We thought it more likely, however, that the increase resulted from eventual black victories in new majority-black districts that did not initially elect a black to office.[23] The simple bivariate correlation between a time interval variable and the number of black legislators in state houses was .38 (see table 11.9, part [d]). When all three variables—time, use of single-member districts, and section 5 coverage—were included in a single multiple regression, only the latter two variables were significant, and the multiple correlation rose to .83. The use of single-member districts led to a mean increase of 8.8 black representatives; coverage led to a mean gain of 2.8 black representatives.

The bivariate correlation between the time variable and the number of black senators, however, was much higher than that between time and the number of black representatives: $r = .56$. Including all three variables within a single multiple regression produced a multiple r of .67, and the variables "use of single-member districts" and time were statistically significant, while section 5 coverage was not. The use of single-member districts accounted for an average increase of 1.2 black senators; and time, an average gain of 0.8 (see table 11.9, part [e]).

We now summarize this part of our analysis. First, the number of black legislators increased as states shifted to single-member districts. Second, the number of black legislators was higher in states covered in whole or in part by section 5, even controlling for the use of single-member districts. Third, there was a slight long-term gain in black representation due to time alone—especially in state senates—even controlling for the use of single-member districts and for whether jurisdictions were covered by section 5.

Black Success at the Congressional District Level

Our examination of black success at the congressional level is brief, primarily because there were so few blacks elected from southern districts and so few majority-black districts. The growth in the number and percentage of southern blacks in Congress was more erratic and less dramatic than in legislatures, as table 11.1 illustrates. In 1985, there were only two black representatives serving southern jurisdictions: Harold Ford from Tennessee and Mickey Leland from Texas. As a result of the 1986 and 1988 elections, there were four: Ford; Craig Washington, Leland's successor; John Lewis from Georgia; and Mike Espy from Mississippi. Only 3 percent of all southern U.S. representatives in 1990 were black, despite the fact that this region was almost 20 percent black in population. On the other hand, prior to 1973 there had been no black representatives from the South.

Black Success in Majority-White Congressional Districts

Three of the four black representatives serving in 1990 came from majority-black congressional districts. Only the Texas Eighteenth was not one; it was, however, a "majority-minority" district. Blacks were a plurality, and together with Hispanics made up 72 percent of the population. We therefore conclude that blacks recently have been far more likely to gain seats in majority-black districts than in majority-white ones.[24] This was not the case in the 1970s, however. There were then no majority-black districts in the South (although the Texas Eighteenth was already majority-minority), but three black representatives were elected: Andrew Young, Harold Ford, and Barbara Jordan. Therefore, as table 11.10 indicates, there has been a decrease in the percentage of majority-white jurisdictions electing blacks to office.

A test of the color-blind hypothesis indicates that the congressional data fit the racial polarization model almost perfectly, just as did the state legislative data. Table 11.11 presents the predicted percentage of black representatives elected from majority-white and majority-black districts, given the mean percentage of blacks in the population for each of the two groups, for those four southern states that actually had majority-black congressional districts: Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. In each of these states at least one of the majority-white congressional districts would have been represented by a black if voting was purely

color-blind. What table 11.11 makes quite evident is that there was not a single majority-white congressional district in any of these states that elected a black; conversely, in three of the four states, every majority-black district elected a black.

The size of the black population required to elect a black candidate appears to be only slightly less than the 60 percent required for a black state legislator. But as table 11.12 demonstrates, even in Mississippi a black population of 58 percent was sufficient to elect a black to Congress.[25] Harold Ford's district, the Tennessee Ninth, was only 57 percent black. However, the Louisiana Second, at 59 percent black, had not elected a black as of 1988.[26]

The Reason Majority-Black Congressional Districts Were Drawn

Three of the four majority-black districts created in the 1980s were the result of voting rights litigation: the Georgia Fifth,[27] the Mississippi Second,[28] and the Louisiana Second.[29] This is a clear indication of the importance of the Voting Rights Act for producing black officeholders in the South.

One might ask, if blacks can only be elected from such districts, why not draw more? The answer rests in part with electoral geography: it is much more difficult to draw majority-black congressional districts than state legislative ones.[30] The black population is simply not sufficiently concentrated for these much larger districts. There are also proportionally fewer state senate districts with majority-black populations than there are state house districts: they are larger than house districts.

In summary, the congressional data confirm our earlier conclusions about black legislative success in the South. The simple fact is that virtually all districts in which whites are a majority elect white candidates. This was just as true in the 1980s as in the 1970s. For blacks to win, it is therefore still necessary in the South to draw districts in which blacks are a majority or a supermajority of the population. Redistricting plans that have provided for an increase in the number of majority-black districts have invariably been the result either of a court order following voting rights litigation or a Justice Department preclearance denial. Therefore, the continuing importance of the Voting Rights Act for minority representation in the South simply cannot be denied.

TABLE 11.1
Percentage of Black Elected Officials in the South and Non-South, 1970–1985[a]

Year	% Black Population	U.S. Congress	State Legislature: Senate	State Legislature: House	County Councils	City Councils
			South			
1985	19.6	1.7 (2)	7.2 (33)	10.8 (143)	5.9 (425)	5.6 (1,330)
1980	19.6	1.8 (2)	3.1 (14)	8.3 (110)	6.8 (310)	4.4 (1,043)
1975	20.4	2.8 (3)	2.4 (11)	6.2 (83)	4.2 (192)	2.6 (605)
1970	20.4	0.0 (0)	1.3 (6)	1.9 (26)	0.6 (24)	1.2 (263)
			Non-South			
1985	8.5	5.3 (17)	3.2 (49)	3.8 (159)	1.0 (109)	1.1 (850)
1980	8.5	4.0 (13)	2.9 (44)	3.3 (137)	0.8 (84)	1.0 (756)
1975	7.7	4.0 (13)	2.7 (42)	3.3 (140)	0.7 (75)	0.8 (621)
1970	7.7	2.7 (9)	1.6 (25)	2.6 (111)	0.3 (40)	0.4 (289)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *N*s.
[a]The percentages for the South are for the eleven states of the Confederacy. The remaining thirty-nine states compose the Non-South.

TABLE 11.2
Southern Majority-White and Majority-Black Districts Electing Black Legislators[a]

Racial Composition of Districts	1970s %	1970s (N)	1980s %	1980s (N)
	Lower House			
Majority white	2	(637)	1	(1,144)
Majority black	59	(102)	77	(181)
	Upper House			
Majority white	1	(294)	1	(390)
Majority black	25	(24)	62	(52)

[a]Percentages for the 1970s are based on Bullock 1983, table 3. The base for the 1970 calculations include Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina (senate only), South Carolina, and Virginia. The figures for the 1980s are based on data for all eleven southern states provided by the Southern Regional Council, Atlanta.

TABLE 11.3
Majority-White and Majority-Black Districts Electing Black State Representatives in 1988: Actual Percentages and Percentages Predicted by the Color-Blind Model[a]

	Majority-White Districts			*Majority-Black Districts*		
	Actual	*Predicted*	(N)	*Actual*	*Predicted*	(N)
Alabama	0	16	(86)	100	71	(19)
Arkansas	0	11	(89)	55	59	(11)
Florida	3	11	(113)	100	60	(7)
Georgia	1	18	(149)	74	71	(31)
Louisiana	0	21	(87)	83	70	(18)
Mississippi	0	24	(89)	67	66	(33)
North Carolina	4	19	(111)	100	62	(9)
South Carolina	0	22	(97)	59	60	(27)
Tennessee	1	10	(91)	100	79	(8)
Texas	3	9	(141)	100	64	(9)
Virginia	0	15	(91)	78	63	(9)

[a]The actual percentages of majority-white and majority-black districts electing blacks to the upper houses were calculated from data provided by the Southern Regional Council and reflect the number of black representatives as of 1988.

TABLE 11.4
Majority-White and Majority-Black Districts Electing Black State Senators in 1988: Actual Percentages and Percentages Predicted by the Color-Blind Model[a]

	Majority-White Districts			*Majority-Black Districts*		
	Actual	*Predicted*	(N)	*Actual*	*Predicted*	(N)
Alabama	0	18	(29)	83	65	(6)
Arkansas	0	14	(33)	50	56	(2)
Florida	3	13	(39)	100	65	(1)
Georgia	0	19	(47)	78	66	(9)
Louisiana	0	25	(34)	100	63	(5)
Mississippi	0	27	(39)	15	62	(13)
North Carolina	3	22	(34)	100	61	(1)
South Carolina	0	23	(36)	50	56	(10)
Tennessee	0	10	(30)	100	73	(3)
Texas	3	11	(30)	100	53	(1)
Virginia	3	18	(39)	100	69	(1)

[a]The actual percentages of majority-white and majority-black districts electing blacks to the upper houses were calculated from data provided by the Southern Regional Council and reflect the number of black senators as of 1988.

TABLE 11.5
Southern Majority-Black Districts Electing a Black Legislator[a]

% Black	1970s		1980s	
	%	(N)	%	(N)
	Lower House			
50–54	11	(18)	30	(30)
55–59	42	(19)	57	(21)
60–64	36	(14)	76	(42)
65 or greater	88	(51)	98	(88)
	Upper House			
50–54	0	(6)	27	(14)
55–59	0	(7)	55	(11)
60–64	0	(3)	64	(11)
65 or greater	75	(8)	94	(16)

[a]The 1970s percentages are based on data reported in Bullock 1983. Included in calculations are Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina (senate only), South Carolina, and Virginia. The 1980s percentages are based on data provided by the Southern Regional Council and include all eleven states.

TABLE 11.6
Number of Southern Majority-Black Legislative Districts[a]

% Black	1970s	1980s
	Lower House	
50–54	18	25
55–59	19	15
60–64	14	28
65 or greater	51	69
TOTAL	102	137
	Upper House	
50–54	6	12
55–59	7	11
60–64	3	7
65 or greater	8	15
TOTAL	24	45

[a]Data are based on the seven states for which there are comparable data for the 1970s and 1980s: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina (senate only), South Carolina, and Virginia. The 1970s numbers are based on Bullock 1983, and the 1980s numbers are based on Southern Regional Council figures.

TABLE 11.7
Type of Election System and Number of Black State Representatives and State Senators in Southern States[a]

	1965		*1970*		*1975*		*1980*		*1985*	
	SYS	*#*	*SYS*	*#*	*SYS*	*#*	*SYS*	*#*	*SYS*	*#*
					State Representatives					
Alabama	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	2	SMD	2	SMD	5
Arkansas	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	1	MMD	1	MMD	1
Florida	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	2
Georgia	MMD	2	MMD	2	*SMD*	2	SMD	2	SMD	6
Louisiana	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	1	SMD	2	SMD	4
Mississippi	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	2	SMD	2
N. Carolina	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	2	MMD	1	*SMD*[b]	3
S. Carolina	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	4
Tennessee	MMD	0	*SMD*	2	SMD	2	SMD	3	SMD	3
Texas	SMD	0	SMD	1	SMD	0	SMD	0	SMD	1
Virginia	MMD	0	MMD	1	*SMD*[c]	1	SMD[c]	1	SMD	2
					State Senators					
Alabama	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	13	SMD	13	SMD	19
Arkansas	MMD	0	MMD	0	MMD[c]	3	MMD[c]	4	MMD[c]	4
Florida	MMD	0	MMD	1	MMD	3	MMD	4	*SMD*	10
Georgia	MMD	0	MMD	12	*SMD*[b]	19	SMD[b]	21	SMD[b]	21
Louisiana	MMD	0	MMD	1	*SMD*	8	SMD	10	SMD	14
Mississippi	MMD	0	MMD	1	MMD	1	*SMD*[d]	15	SMD[e]	18
N. Carolina	MMD	0	MMD	1	MMD	4	MMD	4	*SMD*[b]	13
S. Carolina	MMD	0	MMD	0	*SMD*	13	SMD	14	SMD	16
Tennessee	MMD	0	MMD	6	*SMD*	9	SMD	9	SMD	10
Texas	MMD	0	MMD	2	*SMD*[b]	9	SMD	13	SMD	13
Virginia	MMD	0	MMD	2	MMD	1	MMD	4	*SMD*	5

[a] Type of election system (SYS) is designated as follows: "MMD" is a multimember system; "SMD" is a single-member system. A state has been designated as having a multimember system if it has a combination of multimember and single-member districts or if the entire state is composed of multimember districts. An italicized election system type means there has been a change in election system since the last time period reported. The symbol # refers to the number of black legislators serving.

[b] Predominantly single-member districts in areas of black population, some multimember districts elsewhere in the state.

[c] Arkansas has one black-majority multimember district and one majority-black single-member district.

[d] Single-member-district system but with black fragmentation.

[e] Reduced black fragmentation in single-member-district system.

TABLE 11.8
Percentage of Blacks in Southern State Legislatures with Both Single-Member and Multimember Districts, 1975, 1980, and 1985

	Elected from Single-Member Districts	*Elected from Multimember Districts*
	Lower House	
1975	9.3	2.1
1980	10.7	3.4
1985	11.3	4.0
	Upper House	
1975	3.4	1.3
1980	4.2	1.2
1985	7.6	2.9

TABLE 11.9
Factors Predicting the Number of Black Representatives in Southern State Legislatures, 1970–1985

	Lower Chamber			*Upper Chamber*		
Variables	R	b	S.E.	R	b	S.E.
(a) Shift to SMDs	.74**	6.3**	1.0	.37**	1.7*	.5
(b) Sec. 5 coverage	.43**	5.4**	2.1	.21	0.7	.6
(c) Use of SMDs	—	9.4**	1.4	—	1.6**	.5
Sec. 5 coverage	—	2.8*	1.4	—	0.2	.5
Multiple *R*	.82**	—	—	.53**	—	—
(d) Time	.38*	2.7*	1.2	.56**	1.0**	.3
(e) Use of SMDs	—	8.8**	1.4	—	1.2*	.5
Sec. 5 coverage	—	2.8*	1.4	—	0.2	.5
Time	—	1.0	0.8	—	0.8**	.3
Multiple *R*	.83**	—	—	.67**	—	—

Note: $N = 33$ for all regression runs.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

TABLE 11.10
Southern Majority-White and Majority-Black Congressional Districts That Elected Black Representatives

	1970s		1980s	
	%	(N)	%	(N)
Majority-white districts	2	(108)	0[a]	(112)
Majority-black districts	—	(0)	75	(4)

[a]There was not a single majority-white district in the South that elected a black representative in the 1980s. The Texas Eighteenth, although not a majority-black district, was not majority white either; it was 41 percent black and 31 percent Hispanic.

TABLE 11.11
Majority-White and Majority-Black Districts Electing Black U.S. Representatives: Actual Percentages and Percentages Predicted by the Color-Blind Model[a]

	Majority-White Districts			Majority-Black Districts		
	Actual	Predicted	(N)	Actual	Predicted	(N)
Georgia	0	23	(9)	100	65	(1)
Louisiana	0	26	(7)	0	52	(1)
Mississippi	0	30	(4)	100	54	(1)
Tennessee	0	11	(8)	100	57	(1)

[a]The four states included in this chart are the only four states in which majority-black congressional districts have been drawn. The actual percentages were calculated from data provided by the Southern Regional Council and reflect the number of black representatives as of 1988.

TABLE 11.12
Majority-Black Congressional Districts in the South and the Election of Black Representatives in the 1980s

Congressional District	Percentage Black	Black Representative Elected		
		1984	1986	1988
Georgia 5th	65	No	Yes	Yes
Louisiana 2d	59	No	No	No
Mississippi 2d	58	No	Yes	Yes
Tennessee 9th	57	Yes	Yes	Yes
Texas 18th	41[a]	Yes	Yes	Yes

[a]Although the Eighteenth District in Texas was not a majority-black district, it was a majority-minority district, with Hispanics comprising 31 percent of the population.