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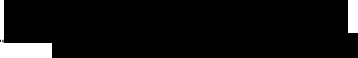
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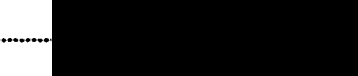
**"Taking Charge: Black Electoral Success and
the Redefinition of American Politics"**

presented by **Claudine Gay**

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and
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Date: 1 July 1997

**Taking Charge:
Black Electoral Success and the Redefinition of American Politics**

A thesis presented

by

Claudine Gay

to

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Abstract

Claudine Gay. Taking Charge: Black Electoral Success and the Redefinition of American Politics.

In the 32 years since the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the number of black elected officials in the United States has skyrocketed to nearly 8,000, including more than 400 black state legislators, more than 300 black mayors, and 37 black members of Congress. This book weighs the political significance of black electoral success, focusing on the most prominent class of black officeholders: black members of Congress. Looking past the policy activism of legislators, this book examines instead the impact of black congressional representation on the political behavior and political attitudes of constituents.

Using both aggregate and survey data, I demonstrate that the presence of black congressional representatives has reshaped the contours of mass politics. As a bridge connecting constituents to the political world, black congressmen have altered the substance of politics by changing the face of the participant community. Black congressional representation, where it exists, has precipitated a decline in white political engagement, as well as a realignment in the partisan preferences of white Americans who remain politically active. It has reinforced the partisan profile of black Americans, while not decisively influencing their levels of engagement. The behavioral response of constituents to black congressional representation is, in part, a function of black electoral styles. Black congressmen who eschew provocative rhetoric, and embrace coalition-building, can stem the tide of white political defection. Furthermore, such broad appeals

do not compromise their ability to inspire black political engagement. The behavioral response of constituents also reflects racial differences in the evaluation of minority political leadership: for white Americans, minority office-holding has jeopardized the quality of the representational experience, casting doubt on the utility of political involvement; for black constituents, minority office-holding has promoted more favorable impressions of the political landscape. As evidenced by their expressed opinions and attitudes, whites and African-Americans can be in the same environment, but in two different worlds. Where African-Americans enjoy political prominence, race becomes the primary lens through which blacks and whites, alike, interpret and experience politics. The end result is an electorate polarized in attitudes, in political preferences, and in political involvement.

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1

Introduction

In the 32 years since the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the number of black elected officials in the United States has skyrocketed to nearly 8,000, including more than 400 black state legislators, more than 300 black mayors, and 37 black members of Congress. From state assemblies to city councils, in major American cities like San Francisco and Detroit to Capitol Hill, African-Americans occupy positions of influence that once were inaccessible. What was at one time a political world of white lawmakers and black activists, has evolved into a world where black legislators and executives figure prominently. Black electoral success, the triumph of a post-civil rights era in which African-Americans opted for politics over protest, undoubtedly has transformed the *face* of politics. But what has black electoral success meant for the *substance* of politics? That is the central question in this research.

This book weighs the political significance of black electoral success, focusing on the most prominent class of black officeholders: black members of Congress. How has the fact of black congressional representation changed American politics? The emphasis in this research is not on policy outputs and refashioned legislative agendas. Rather, the point of reference is politics as experienced and practiced by citizens. How has black congressional representation altered the political lives of constituents: what they see in politics and how they behave politically?

The emergence of black political leadership, and the substitution of an “elected elite” for the “traditional protest elite” (Reed 1986; Tate 1994), provoked a flurry of research into the implications of minority office-holding. To date, social scientists have concentrated their analytical efforts on the ambiguous link between minority office-holding and minority public policy agendas, between descriptive representation (the statistical correspondence of demographic characteristics) and substantive representation (the correspondence of legislative goals and priorities) (Bullock 1975; Conyers and Wallace 1976; Welch and Karnig 1978; Preston 1978; Keller 1978; Karnig 1979; Welch and Karnig 1979; Karnig and Welch 1980; Dye and Renick 1981; Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Eisinger 1982; Meier and England 1984; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Whitby 1987; Mladenka 1989; Hall-Saltzstein 1989; Parker 1990; Morris 1992; Macchiarola 1993). For these scholars, black electoral success is significant only insofar as it serves as a unique guarantor of continued black influence on the legislative process. Such a relationship would speak directly to the utility of defining “communities of interest” (on the basis of race), and the legitimacy of assuming who can best serve those interests. The existence of white officeholders equally likely to support black policy interests would render black office-holding insignificant. Whether there are, in fact, qualitative differences in the agendas and priorities of black office-holders—with favorable implications for how effectively they serve the interests of black constituents—remains a point of contention. However, that policy consequences are the appropriate subject of inquiry has not been a matter of debate.

To limit the scope of investigation to policy consequences is to neglect the full dynamics of the relationship between constituents and elected officials. Were they strictly policy providers, the analytical approach that has dominated the research would be sufficient. However, elected officials not only determine whether constituents' interests and preferences are translated into policy outputs, but in a larger sense they connect their constituents to the political world. Whether it is through their achievements in office, or through the images they project, representatives affect the extent to which constituents view politics, more generally, as an instrument for progress. Representation can transform neighborhoods into precincts, communities into electorates. An elected official is as much a bridge as he is an advocate. As such, the political behavior of his constituents can be as revealing as his legislative agenda. Furthermore, black elected officials are particularly unique. Historically, politics has been an important vehicle in the mobility (and "mainstreaming") of racial and ethnic groups in the United States. As a consequence, minority office-holding should alter how people evaluate and relate to government and the political world. With that in mind, this research repositions the camera to place constituents--rather than legislators--squarely in the center of the frame. The significance of black electoral success may not rest in its implications for legislative priorities, but is visible in the political lives of constituents.

This book poses a series of questions to evaluate the impact of black congressional representation on the political lives of constituents, black and white: How has black congressional representation affected political engagement and political attitudes among African-Americans? Do black elected officials draw blacks into the participant

community? Do they redeem politics, or lead African-Americans to reconsider their political preferences? What are the implications of minority representation for non-minority participation? How do white constituents evaluate and react to black office-holding? As seen through their eyes, what does black congressional representation imply about politics, and about their role in political life? Does black congressional representation demobilize the white electorate, or compromise the appeal of politics?

Using both aggregate and survey data, I will demonstrate in this book that the presence of black elected officials has reshaped dramatically the contours of mass politics. As a bridge connecting constituents to the political world, black members of Congress have altered the substance of politics by changing the face of the participant community. Black congressional representation, where it exists, has precipitated a decline in white political engagement, as well as a realignment in the partisan preferences of white Americans who remain politically active. It has reinforced the partisan profile of black Americans, while not decisively influencing their levels of engagement. The behavioral response of constituents to black congressional representation reflects racial differences in the evaluation of minority political leadership: for white Americans, minority office-holding has jeopardized the quality of the representational experience, casting doubt on the utility of political involvement; for black constituents, minority office-holding has promoted more favorable impressions of the political landscape. As evidenced by their expressed opinions and attitudes, whites and African-Americans can be in the same environment, but in two different worlds. Where African-Americans enjoy political prominence, race becomes the primary lens through which blacks and whites, alike,

interpret politics. This use of race as a basis for judgments accounts for the political significance of black electoral success. The end result is an electorate polarized in their political attitudes, in their political preferences, and in their political involvement.

OUTLINE

In this Introduction I have argued for the relevance of studying the political behavior of constituents, rather than the policy activism of legislators. The remainder of this book will present evidence to support the argument that black electoral success has influenced political behavior and political attitudes, across several dimensions. Chapter 2 will present the context for this research, emphasizing both the academic literature which informs the project, as well as the practical debates which motivate it. Particular attention is directed towards a discussion of contextual theories of politics, and the influence of “environment” on the political behavior of individuals. Contextual analysis serves as the theoretical anchor for the series of questions posed over the course of the book.

Chapter 3 explores the first consequence of black congressional representation, its effect on political engagement. Using precinct-level voting returns from two midterm elections, I demonstrate that white and African-American residents living in congressional districts represented by black House members turn out to vote at rates which differ from those of their counterparts in districts with white incumbents. The chapter discusses the role of political style and district history in mediating the impact of black electoral success on political engagement.

Chapter 4 weighs the consequences of black congressional representation for racial polarization in vote choice. With most black congressmen elected as Democrats, the analysis traces the relationship between Democratic voting and black incumbency. The evidence reveals significant differences in the patterns of Democratic voting between districts with and without a history of black office-holding.

Both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 apply models of ecological inference to generate race-specific estimates of political participation and vote choice. (Subsequently, these estimates are analyzed to identify patterns related to black office-holding) The models are discussed in detail in each chapter; however, the discussion in Chapter 3 is more extensive, including a lengthy example to clarify the logic and the mechanics of the procedure.

Having demonstrated that the behavior of both black and white constituents is affected by black office-holding, Chapter 5 sheds light on the individual calculus that accounts for the patterns observed. Through an analysis of national public opinion data, I identify the attitudes (about Congress, Congressmen, and Political Parties) that animate electoral politics in districts with black congressional representatives. The findings reveal that black office-holders are agents of opinion change, leading constituents to reevaluate politics and the merits of various political actors.

Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the major findings. I discuss the implications of the findings for our understanding of race as a factor in political judgments, for the literature on minority political incorporation, and for contemporary debates over minority representation and the legal mechanisms that insure it.

Political Context and Political Behavior

The election of blacks to Congress presents an opportunity to track the link between political context and political behavior and, in doing so, to test the analytical limits of contextual theories of politics. Contextual models posit a causal relationship between environmental factors and individual behavior. Their aim is to “reconstruct a compelling account of political life” by recognizing that political choices are contingent on the surrounding environment, reflecting its existing constraints and available opportunities (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1993).¹ Rather than abstract individuals from time, place, and setting in an effort to make sense of their politics, contextual models argue for the necessity of multiple levels of analysis: In order to understand how people behave, we must understand where they live. The approach rejects the narrow emphasis on individual resources, choosing instead to highlight the presence and influence of social and political cues. In practice, these cues are as varied as registration laws that depress political participation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1978), court rulings (e.g. *Brown v. Board of Education*) that inspire social activism (McAdams 1982), or neighborhood characteristics that can encourage attention to and engagement in politics

¹ Contextual analysis departs significantly from the research in which social scientists emphasize individual level resources, such as income and education. See, for example: Conway 1991; Teixeira 1987; Verba, Nie, and Kin 1978; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Flanigan and Zingale 1975; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Brody 1978. Where the “SES” model falls short, researchers have introduced variables-- for example, racial group consciousness-- that complement the baseline model, and reinforce the focus on the individual. See Shingles 1981; Conover 1984; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981; Tate 1991; Tate 1994. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that the primary determinants of political behavior are internal, and largely unresponsive to external stimuli. At best, contextual effects are the residue of a poorly-specified individual relationship.

(Giles and Dantico 1982). As Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) concluded, to understand electoral behavior we need to place “individuals in society” and identify the “aspects of political life that make people accessible and amenable to the appeals of political leaders.”

Since V.O. Key Jr.’s seminal work, *Southern Politics*, contextual theories have held a place in the scholarship on race and American electoral politics. Key (1949), primarily concerned with understanding white political behavior, documented the effect of black population size on southern white support for racist politics and candidates. Inspiring an entire field of political research, the “black concentration hypothesis” has been tested across various electoral settings (from George Wallace for President in 1968 to David Duke for Louisiana Governor in 1991), and applied to the study of turnout, partisan voting, and party registration among whites (Wright 1977; Black 1973; Pettigrew and Campbell 1960; Matthews and Prothro 1964, 1966; Prothro 1972; Kuzenski, Bullock, and Gaddie 1995; Pettigrew 1957; Pettigrew and Cramer 1959; Schoenberger and Segal 1968; Giles and Buckner 1993; Keech 1968; Black and Black 1973; Lipset and Rabb 1969; Huckfeldt and Kohlfeld 1989; Hertzog 1994). The hypothesis articulates a model of racial group competition in which white Americans perceive their interests and the interests of African-Americans to be inherently incompatible. Under certain conditions, these group-related attitudes can have a decisive impact on white political behavior. One of those conditions, according to the “black concentration hypothesis,” is a large black community; the threat of black electoral dominance stimulates fear (Giles and Evans 1986), provokes intolerance (Fosset and Kiecolt 1989; Giles 1977), and leads whites to engage in behavior hostile to the interests

of their black neighbors. In a variant of the “black concentration hypothesis,” Citrin, Green, and Sears (1990) argue that the nomination of an African-American for political office (particularly one who makes racial solidarity a prominent theme) is yet another situational stimuli. Like a large black community, an African-American political candidate suggests to whites that their interests (*as whites*) are at stake. These stimulants can lead to increases in white registration and turnout, or decreases in white support for the Democrats who “aid and abet” the political aspirations of blacks.² Thus, context matters insofar as it is only the perception of racial threat that engages group-related attitudes and provokes negative reactions from whites.

Contextual analysis has also made inroads into the scholarship on black political behavior. In his address to the American Political Science Association, former-president Lucius Barker argued for the need to view the African-American political experience through a “systemic perspective,” emphasizing the contextual factors that dictate the choice of goals and strategies, making some more feasible than others (Barker 1994). Barker identifies the move from “protest to politics,” or more specifically, from litigation to direct action to electoral politics, as African-American’s strategic response to changing social and political realities:

Different strategies of resource or influence mobilization are substantially dictated by the rules and norms of particular institutions. If the votes are available to offer a hope of winning office, for example, then electoral politics makes sense. If not and appeal to constitutional-legal principles seems more promising (as it did in the 1950s),

² Prior to the Voting Rights Act, these stimulants led to the imposition of disenfranchisement mechanisms targeted at the black community. Either through racial violence or through literacy tests, African-Americans living in sizable black communities were driven away from the polls. As a consequence, Matthews and Prothro (1963) found that black concentration was negatively related to black political participation.

then the decision of Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP to resort to litigation, rather than electoral politics, appears altogether the sensible course to take (Barker 1994: 3).

Research has borne out the merits of this systemic perspective. Though emphasizing social structures, as opposed to political structures, Cohen and Dawson (1993) used the 1989 Detroit Area Study to demonstrate that neighborhood poverty (and the lack of social and political institutions it implies) has affected significantly black political attitudes and levels of participation, even after taking into account an individual's socioeconomic status. Looking more explicitly at political context, studies have found that electoral competition, campaign and party activity affect black political engagement and attention to politics (Lublin and Tate 1992; Vanderleeuw and Utter 1993; Bullock 1981; Berke 1994). In a twist on the "black concentration-racial threat hypothesis," scholars argue that the potential for black electoral dominance--a potential that causes concern among whites--contributes to "widespread feelings of new political optimism among blacks" (Tate 1992; Duncan 1990; Vanderleeuw 1990; Alt 1994; Brace, Handley, Niemi, Stanley 1995). Glaser and Hagen (1996) maintain that it is because blacks believe they have more at stake in politics--and see their livelihoods and fortunes as more closely tied to electoral outcomes and government actions than whites--that their behavior is particularly sensitive to questions of context.³ African-Americans use information about the environment to form judgments about the difference they can and do make in politics. The Voting Rights Act itself, through its abolition of

³ Glaser and Hagen (1996) cite several possible reasons for why politics might be particularly relevant to the lives of African-Americans: (1) black Americans benefit from considerable amount of government assistance; (2) the government provides legal protections from discrimination; and (3) the two political parties differ more on racial issues than on any other area.

disenfranchisement mechanisms such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses, acknowledged the impact of contextual factors on black political behavior. More recently, journalists have noted the success of a Republican strategy that uses local ballot challenges as a tactic to harass and demobilize minority voters (Smothers 1992).

However, with some notable exceptions (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gilliam 1996; Gilliam and Kaufmann 1996; Howell and Fagan 1988; Abney and Hutcheson 1981), neither journalists nor social scientists have considered how black elected officials (as opposed to black candidates and the mobilization around their campaigns) affect the political attitudes and political strategies adopted by the electorate. Yet the emergence of black elected officials is arguably one of the most important elements of the post-civil rights political environment. And the precedents established by prior research provide ample reason to believe that it is not only an important element, but also a relevant one. The black concentration hypothesis already has made clear white sensitivity to the perception of racial threat; black elected officials should be as much an indicator of black electoral dominance as population size. For black Americans sensitive to questions of context, the presence of black elected officials should send a strong signal about how much they can and do influence politics. In fact, Conyers and Wallace (1976) found that constituents tend to define black elected officials as “specialized representatives of Black people,” rather than as spokesman for the general population. Morris (1992) maintains that with the election of black politicians, the “black masses have tended to become politically quiescent, believing that their black elected official would realize their interests.” Morris (1992), however, offers up absolutely no evidence to support his claim.

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) stands as the most complete research to date in this area, focusing on black elected officials at the city-level. Using 1987 survey data, Bobo and Gilliam found that African-Americans in "high black-empowerment" areas--as indicated by control of the mayor's office--are more active than either African-Americans in low empowerment areas or their white counterparts of comparable socioeconomic status. Empowerment, they conclude, influences black participation by contributing to a more trusting and efficacious orientation towards politics and by greatly increasing black attentiveness to political affairs.⁴ In subsequent research, Gilliam and Kaufmann (1996) found that this relationship endures over time; black political engagement remains high throughout the tenure of black mayors. These findings depart from traditional interpretations of black political participation, which argued that it was race consciousness that compensated for the socioeconomic bias in political involvement (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981). Race consciousness, Shingles (1981) had argued, contributed to political mistrust and a sense of internal political efficacy which in turn encouraged policy-related participation. Thus, the most active segment, according to data from 1967, were the politically discontent, alienated, and distrustful. But in the post-civil rights era, where Blacks are no longer struggling for basic inclusion, it is context, not consciousness, and it is the politically engaged, not the disconnected. In this way, in fact, Blacks have become more like whites among whom political engagement contributes to greater participation.

As for whites, Bobo and Gilliam (1990) found that they pay less attention to local politics when blacks control local offices; however, they do not become generally less

⁴ These attitudinal changes, themselves, are said to result from black constituents' assumption of policy responsiveness on the part of the elected official.

trusting and efficacious as a result. There is some evidence (Gilliam 1996) to suggest that white response to black city officials is contingent on ideological compatibility: white city residents who might be considered members of the "governing coalition" (i.e. liberal Democrats in a city with a black Democratic mayor) react favorably, while those who are clearly members of the "outgroup" suffer greater alienation. Over time, the behavior of the "outgroup" exhibits a pattern of "surge and decline," with white residents reacting positively to any sign of weakening black political power, then retreating when blacks maintain (or regain) their electoral dominance (Gilliam and Kaufmann 1996).

The literature on minority-officeholding articulates what could be described as a "political reality" model of black political behavior. According to this theoretical framework, the tendency among African-Americans to be less trusting of government and public officials, and more alienated from political life, is the product of a political situation in which blacks are disadvantaged, and less favorably treated by political leaders. In the absence of "black faces" communicating a message of inclusion (at least in theory, if not, in fact), negative impressions of government prevail. However, "a black city administration [can] change black attitudes about their political situation" (Howell and Fagan 1988: 345). For example, Gilliam (1996) found that a black mayor contributed to more favorable impressions of the integrity and responsiveness of local government—but, notably, did not change impressions of state or federal government. In short, there is a link between objective conditions and subjective assessments. It is important to note, though, that by "objective conditions" the literature does not refer to the actual behavior of political leaders, but strictly to the race of leadership. Gilliam and

Kaufmann (1996) contend that the impact of black political leadership has little to do with actual behavior, and much to do with symbolic politics. Descriptive political representation builds group pride among blacks, providing "a reservoir of psychic benefits" that contribute to political engagement. As Abney and Hutcheson (1981) argue, "leaders may be significant agents of opinions change simply as a result of the images they project," regardless of the policies they pursue (Abney and Hutcheson 1981: 100). Were the response of African-Americans a product of the tangible gains associated with black political leadership, then long-term empowerment would most likely be associated with alienation; blacks would grow frustrated with the inability of most regimes to satisfy their enormous demands and high expectations.

The political reality model (or, the "racial threat hypothesis" as applied to black elected officials) is not as powerful a predictor of white Americans' political behavior, as it is African-Americans'. Whereas blacks are extremely responsive to racial cues, whites are not as sensitive to the messages communicated by the race of the city administration. Whites in New Orleans were no less trusting of their black mayor in 1985, than they were of the national government (Howell and Fagan 1988); and, the 1973 election of Maynard Jackson did not precipitate a decline in trust among white Atlantans (Abney and Hutcheson 1981). This differential response is due most likely to (1) blacks' perception of the stakes involved in political outcomes (discussed above), and (2) the more limited political significance of racial group membership among whites, as compared to blacks. African-Americans are likely to conceptualize politics and political alternatives in terms of their (perceived) positive and negative impact for blacks as a group (Dawson 1994; Conover 1984; Tate 1994). The ubiquity of race in American

politics simplifies this task. The prominence of racial concerns in the political discourse means that figuring out politics is not all that difficult for a person to whom racial concerns are important. Add to this focus on race African-Americans' great concern over political outcomes, and it is not surprising that they are especially attentive to racial cues about the political environment. White Americans, by comparison, are likely to conceptualize politics along multiple-dimensions--only one of which is their racial group membership. White Americans also do not see their fate as so closely tied to politics. This is not to say that white Americans are completely indifferent: as discussed earlier, there is evidence that whites pay less attention to local politics under minority administrations.

*

The finding that local level changes in the social and political status of blacks influence political behavior and political opinions, motivates me to ask whether a similar phenomenon exists at the district level. Or is congressional representation not equally salient? If congressional representation is politically salient, does it "color" perceptions of national politics and political actors, just as changes in city government affect attitudes about local politics?

To date, no one has explicitly considered the impact of black congressional representatives, though there are reasons to believe that the reaction to black congressmen could differ from that to black city officials. Unlike black mayors or predominantly-black city councils, whose activities can affect everything from neighborhood police patrols to the frequency of trash collection, black congressmen do not have the executive authority to make decisions which directly impact the daily lives

of constituents. It is likely that the response to elected city officials, at least in part, reflects this greater relevance.

Furthermore, the differing constraints imposed by the fixed, stable boundaries of a city versus those of a congressional district--a more fluid, less stable geographic entity that does not fit the conventional description of a neighborhood--may also generate different responses to black city and congressional officials. The distinction between these two jurisdictions gains political significance because of the possibility of "flight" or "exit" from one, but not the other. For example, Bobo and Gilliam (1990) found evidence of negative affect and defection from white residents in cities with black mayors. This finding may conceal the tendency among whites to abandon the city for the suburbs, thus saying more about the white residents who choose to remain in the city, than it does about white responses in general. Where "white flight" is not as feasible an alternative, as is the case from a congressional district, residents may respond differently to black empowerment. Just as the abolition of disenfranchisement mechanisms led white southerners to rely on countermobilization and partisan voting to do the job once done by poll taxes and literacy tests, the constraints posed by congressional district boundaries might contribute to the development of new political strategies.

There is one final reason why all the research on city empowerment might still leave you to wonder about black congressional representation. Nearly a generation has passed since African-Americans began claiming seats in the U.S. House in increasingly large numbers. Time itself may have already eroded the significance of black congressional representation. Furthermore, there is only limited evidence of racial differences in the representation and constituency service that members of Congress

provide. If it has been demonstrated to constituents for more than two decades that race is inconsequential to substantive representation, then one might suspect that the race of an elected House member would no longer influence political attitudes and political behavior.

The next three chapters will examine whether (and how) black congressional representation is as important and relevant a contextual variable as black city leadership, or black population size. Through an analysis of political participation, partisan voting, and political attitudes, this book will test the limits of the political reality model, and the “racial threat” hypothesis.

Black Representation and Voting Participation

This chapter uses precinct -level voting returns from the 1990 and 1994 Congressional elections to identify relationships between voting participation and black representation. Specifically, I assess whether white and African-American residents living in congressional districts represented by black House members turn out to vote at rates which differ from those of their counterparts in districts with white incumbents. I consider the absolute rates of turnout, taking into account the numerous socioeconomic factors which distinguish black-represented districts from white-represented districts, and contribute themselves to differences in observed rates of voting participation. The evidence reveals clear patterns of white demobilization and (more limited) black mobilization in the face of African-American incumbents. However, these patterns are not wholly determined by the race of the representative, but by the complex interplay of race, political style, and district history. Neither black representatives, nor the districts and constituents they represent, conform to a single mold. The degree to which behavior in black districts diverges from statewide norms is a function of the symbolic power of race, the moderation of new-style black representatives, and the ability of time to compound the sense of alienation or inclusion. These findings mark a significant departure not only from the conventional wisdom (among both critics and activist proponents of minority representation), but also from the earlier empirical work on this issue.

The analysis presented here differs from previous research in several respects. First, earlier work on the relationship between minority participation and minority office-holding has primarily focused on behavior at the city-level—for example, black and white responses to black mayors and predominantly black city councils (Bobo and Gilliam 1990, Gilliam 1996, Gilliam and Kaufmann 1996, Lublin and Tate 1992, Vanderleeuw and Utter 1993). To the extent that researchers have looked beyond the city, the emphasis has been less on the characteristics of the office-holder (House representative, state legislator, governor), and more on the characteristics of the districts from which s/he was elected (e.g. majority-minority, heterogeneous, majority-white) (Brace, Handley, Niemi, Stanley 1995; Donovan 1992, Duncan 1993a, Duncan 1993b, Hertzog 1994). Secondly, researchers, with some exceptions, have relied heavily on the use of survey data and *self-reported* measures of turnout. This chapter, in contrast, draws on a wealth of actual voting returns from the nation's congressional districts, and from the thousands of electoral precincts which constitute these districts.

Lastly, among those researchers who cite aggregate voting statistics (from congressional districts only) in their arguments about black congressional representation, their analyses are either largely anecdotal and descriptive (Swain 1995, Donovan 1992, Duncan 1993a, Duncan 1993b), or rely on more limited techniques of ecological inference such as “extreme case analysis” (Brace et al. 1995). Furthermore, in most of these cases, the arguments about black congressional representation (and minority districting) are based not on race-specific turnout rates, but rather on overall turnout for a given district. Racial differences in turnout, as well as variation at lower geographic levels, are always

ignored. Also ignored are the socioeconomic conditions which may cloud the true influence of black representation on voting behavior. In this chapter, I not only use King's method of ecological inference to reliably estimate race-specific turnout rates, but I also consider how behavior differs across different socioeconomic settings within one congressional district.

In the proceeding sections I will present the data and methodology for this analysis, examine voting behavior in one state and one election, Pennsylvania 1990, in detail, and then extend the approach to the other elections of interest.

2 THE DATA

The data for this analysis is drawn from 4 states in the November 1990 elections (Pennsylvania, Michigan, New Jersey, and Georgia) and 5 states in the November 1994 elections (Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia). Together these states were home to 14 districts represented by black members of congress at the time of the midterm election. The districts range from majority-black districts with a long tradition of black representation (e.g., Michigan's First) to districts newly created in the 1990 round of redistricting (e.g., Virginia's Third) to one of the few majority-white districts represented by a black incumbent (Missouri's Fifth). See Table 3.1.

The data for each of these state elections is organized at the precinct-level--the nation's smallest political unit--and consists of statewide turnout results and Census demographics. For both November 1990 and November 1994, the primary turnout measure is total ballots cast as a proportion of the total voting age population in a

Table 3.1
Sample of Black Congressional Representatives

Election Year	State	District	Representative	District History
November 1990	Pennsylvania	2	William Gray	Old
	New Jersey	10	Donald Payne	New
	Michigan	1	John Conyers	Old
		13	George Crockett	Old
	Georgia	5	John Lewis	New
November 1994	Maryland	4	Albert Wynn	New
		7	Kweisi Mfume	Old
	Tennessee	9	Harold Ford	Old
	Virginia	3	Robert Scott	New
	Missouri	1	William Clay	Old
		5	Alan Wheat	Old*
	Illinois	1	Bobby Rush	Old
		2	Mel Reynolds	Old
		7	Cardiss Collins	Old

"District History" refers to the tradition of black congressional representation. Districts which had experienced more than 10 years of uninterrupted black congressional representation (either in the tenure of the current incumbent or in that of his predecessors) are identified as "old." *Alan Wheat, who served from 1982-1994, was the first and only black Congressmen to represent the majority-white 5th district.

precinct. (Section 3 will discuss how this aggregate figure is used to derive race specific turnout rates). In addition, the data for each election year include information about the race of the precinct's congressional representative, as well as his party affiliation and tenure. Measures of electoral competitiveness are also included.

The specific demographic measures employed in these analyses differ by election year, but are similar enough to be considered comparable.¹ For November 1990 (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Michigan), the Census data used is extracted from the state's PL94-171 file, compiled by the Bureau of the Census (with the voluntary participation of the states) in preparation for the 1990 redistricting cycle. There is also data from the state's STF3A file, the principle Census database commonly known as the "long form." While PL94-171 provides information on the racial composition of precincts, it does not provide (at the precinct level) indicators of social and economic conditions. Instead, the analyses of the 1990 election cycle rely on socioeconomic data about the minor-civil division (MCD) in which the precinct is located. The loss of accuracy which results from this substitution is minor, given that in many cases MCDs consist of only one precinct. Using the MCD information as a surrogate allows for a sense of the socioeconomic context in which precinct residents live. From the data on the MCDs I extract several socioeconomic indicators. Education level is measured as the proportion of black residents (over the age of 25) in the minor civil division with at least some college education --including those who complete college and graduate work; a similar measure is calculated for white residents. Per capita incomes for whites and for black residents of the MCD are included. Finally, I include measures of home-ownership,

¹ See Appendix A for further discussion of data sources and limitations.

the proportions of white and black households that are renter-occupied, as an indication of neighborhood (in)stability.

Unlike the November 1990 data which was assembled by the author, the November 1994 data was provided by the National Committee for an Effective Congress. The NCEC assembles for political candidates political and demographic data at the precinct level. Whereas the socioeconomic indicators for 1990 are organized at the MCD, for 1994 the information is provided at the precinct. However, the precinct information is not disaggregated by racial group. Education level for the 1994 election cycle is measured as the proportion of the total (over 25) population in the precinct with at least some college education. Income is measured as median household income, rather than per capita income, in the precinct. Neighborhood stability is measured as the proportion of total precinct households that are renter-occupied. Though there are clear differences in the precise measures employed across these election years, there is no reason to believe that these differences should significantly alter our estimates of the primary relationship of interest--the relationship between black representation and voting participation.

3 THE MODEL

3.1 Two Stages of Analysis

Identifying the relationship between turnout and representation is a two-stage process. The first stage employs a model of ecological inference to estimate the rates of white and black turnout for each precinct, and congressional district. In the absence of individual-level data (e.g. survey data), these rates are calculated on the basis of

aggregate statistics on the voting age population for the area of interest. Table 3.2 illustrates what is involved in using these available aggregate statistics to infer back to our specific quantities of interest. In Table 3.2, X_i represents the proportion of the voting age population who are black, and T_i represents the proportion of the voting age population turning out to vote, in precinct i . The goal of ecological inference is to use these *marginals*, the only observed data, to estimate the quantities within the *body* of the table which are not observed directly. Specifically, the quantities of interest are B_i^b , the proportion of voting age blacks turning out to vote (top-left cell), and B_i^w , the proportion of voting age whites turning out to vote (bottom left cell).

Table 3.2
The Ecological Inference Problem

Race	Voting Decision		
	Vote	No Vote	
Black	B_i^b	$1 - B_i^b$	X_i
White	B_i^w	$1 - B_i^w$	$1 - X_i$
	T_i	$1 - T_i$	

During stage one, B_i^b and B_i^w are calculated for each precinct in a given state election. This procedure is then repeated for each of the remaining state elections, generating thousands of turnout estimates for the November 1990 and 1994 mid-term races.²

² See Appendix B for discussion of ecological inference procedure.

In the second stage of the analysis, the precinct measures of B_i^b and B_i^w are used as dependent variables in regressions predicting black turnout and white turnout as a function of black representation, controlling for the socioeconomic conditions in the area.³ This chapter will examine two hypotheses regarding the responses of white and African-American voters to black congressional representation in the November 1990 and 1994 elections. First, African-Americans residing in areas represented by Black House members were more likely to go to the polls in November, than were their black counterparts in other districts with white incumbents. Secondly, white constituents in these same areas, were less likely than their counterparts in white-represented districts to turnout for the elections. The hypotheses above, take the following mathematical form:

Hypothesis 1:

Black Turnout:

$$\hat{B}_i^b = \beta_0 + \beta_1^b * \text{Black Representation} + \beta_{2-5}^b * \text{SES}^b + \beta_6^b * \text{Black Density}$$

Hypothesis 2:

White Turnout:

$$\hat{B}_i^w = \beta_0 + \beta_1^w * \text{Black Representation} + \beta_{2-5}^w * \text{SES}^w + \beta_6^w * \text{Black Density}$$

where,

$\hat{B}_i^b$ = Proportion of voting age blacks turning out to vote in precinct i

$\hat{B}_i^w$ = Proportion of voting age whites turning out to vote in precinct i

SES^b = Measures of the socioeconomic conditions for Black residents of precinct i

SES^w = Measures of the socioeconomic conditions for White residents of precinct i

Black Density = Black Population Density in precinct i

³ This second stage employs a weighted least squares model which weights the regressions by the variance in the dependent variable (i.e. B_i^b or B_i^w) for each observation. See Appendix C for further discussion of model.

Black Representation = Presence of a Black congressional representative in precinct i

$\beta_{0-6}^{b,w}$ = Coefficients for the explanatory variables

For the purposes of this chapter, our attention is directed towards the β_1^b and β_1^w coefficients in each of these equations. β_1^b measures the extent to which turnout rates for black constituents in precincts with black congressional representatives differ from those in precincts with white congressional representatives. Similarly, β_1^w measures the difference in white turnout between each of these electoral settings.

In testing each of these hypotheses, I take into account the confounding effects of socioeconomic factors, a significant departure from previous research. The districts from which most black representatives come tend to be predominantly black (or, at the very least, majority-minority). Because of the extent to which race and socioeconomic status are correlated in the United States, on average the demographics of these districts set them apart from other (predominantly white) districts in a number of ways. These districts, for example, tend to include areas which suffer from high poverty and unemployment, as well as other elements of social and economic dislocation. Research on participation has demonstrated the role of factors such as these in both motivating and enabling participation. Education and income, for example, provide resources which enable participation. For that reason, I control for such influences, in an effort to determine whether black representation leads to participation rates which differ from what would be expected given the conditions. Without doing so, it would be impossible to determine whether, for example, low black turnout in black-represented districts reflects the socioeconomic circumstances or the deleterious effects of black representation.

3.2 What Stage Two is Not

Stage 2 of the model is simple aggregate data analysis. For those who might mistake it for a version of Goodman's regression, it is important to make clear that this second stage is not an extension of the ecological inference procedure employed in Stage 1. In that first stage the goal was to infer (racial) group attributes (i.e. turnout rates) from the summary information available for each precinct. In the second stage, these group attributes themselves are of interest. Further inferences about individual-level propensities are neither necessary nor useful; the goal in this stage is not to break down the contingency table any further but to make sense of the results in hand. Stage two uses regression analysis and data on community characteristics to explain statistically the pattern of differences in total black turnout and total white turnout across the aggregate units.

An example may make this distinction between the stages more clear. As discussed in Section 3.1, stage two incorporates measures of income as regression controls. If the objective of this stage were to estimate the differences in turnout among African-Americans--or White Americans--in poverty and those not in poverty, then ecological inference similar to that presented in Stage 1 would be appropriate. However, when the goal is to estimate whether Black turnout is greatest in areas of low poverty, the regression analysis of stage two is appropriate. Since the individual-level conditions that generate the group patterns are not at issue here, this second stage regression is only relevant at the aggregate level.

In order to better clarify the statistical methods involved in each of the two stages of estimation, I will first present one case, Pennsylvania 1990, in detail before extending the analysis to all the states of interest.

4 AN EXAMPLE: PENNSYLVANIA 1990

The data for this example consists of 1990 precinct-level turnout results and Census demographics for 8376 precincts in Pennsylvania. Not all of Pennsylvania's precincts are represented in this dataset, only those for which both Census and voting data were available.⁴ The dataset does, however, include precincts from each of Pennsylvania's 23 congressional districts. Table 3.3 presents, for each of Pennsylvania's congressional districts, the total number of precincts included in the dataset, as well as the size of the black population in the district.

4.1 Stage One: Estimating B_i^b and B_i^w

Recall that stage one involves the use of ecological inference to estimate the race-specific turnout rates in each of the 8376 precincts in Pennsylvania. These estimates are generated using the available aggregate statistics, X_i (proportion black) and T_i (total turnout rate), in each precinct. To control for electoral effects during this estimation procedure King (1997), in *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem*, suggests that the precincts in each analysis should not only come from the same state (in this case,

⁴ Of the 9507 voting precincts in Pennsylvania, 88% were matched with census data and included in this dataset. The gaps in the Pennsylvania data result from inconsistent naming schemes (e.g. spelling mistakes and abbreviations) which, at times, make it extremely difficult to track a precinct across multiple datasets. See the Appendix for a discussion of the merging procedure and issues of selection bias.

Table 3.3
Pennsylvania's Precincts, 1990

District	Number of Precincts	Black Population Density in the District (%)
1- Thomas Foglietta (D)	512	32
2- William Gray III (D)	505	80
3- Robert Borski (D)	516	8
4- Joe Kolter (D)	342	3
5- Dick Schulze (R)	201	11
6- Gus Yatron (D)	282	2
7- Curt Weldon (R)	358	6
8- Peter Kostmayer (D)	258	2
9- Bud Shuster (R)	374	1
10- Joseph M. McDade (R)	514	0.4
11- Paul Kanjorski (D)	411	1
12- John Murtha (D)	320	1
13- Lawrence Coughlin (R)	325	6
14- William Coyne (D)	480	22
15- Don Ritter (R)	217	2
16- Robert Walker (R)	187	2
17- George Gekas (R)	337	7
18- Doug Walgren (D)	468	2
19- Bill Goodling (R)	244	2
20- Joseph Gaydos (D)	404	6
21- Tom Ridge (R)	311	4
22- Austin Murphy (D)	417	4
23- William Clinger (R)	393	0.5

Pennsylvania), but also from the same congressional district. The reason for grouping the geographic units in such a way is fairly straightforward: In estimating the parameters of interest in precinct i , King's method of ecological inference uses not only the aggregate statistics available for precinct i itself (i.e. X_i and T_i), but also "borrows" from the information available in the other precincts. If the estimates of precinct i are partially determined by the information in the rest of the dataset, then that information should be made as relevant as possible. The more that all of these precincts have in common, the more relevant their information will be to estimating the quantities of interest in any one precinct. For that reason, I grouped the 8376 Pennsylvania precincts by congressional district, and performed stage one analysis separately on each group.

Take Pennsylvania's Second District as an example. In 1990, there were 505 precincts in Pennsylvania's Second, composed primarily of the city of Philadelphia. Figure 3.1 presents a map of the district with each of the 505 precincts shaded in accordance with the size of the black population. There is a fair amount of variability in X_i , though clearly the majority of precincts in the Second District are predominantly black. There are relatively few precincts which are either heterogeneous, or predominantly white in the Second.

Figure 3.1

**Black Population Density
Pennsylvania - District 2
Philadelphia**

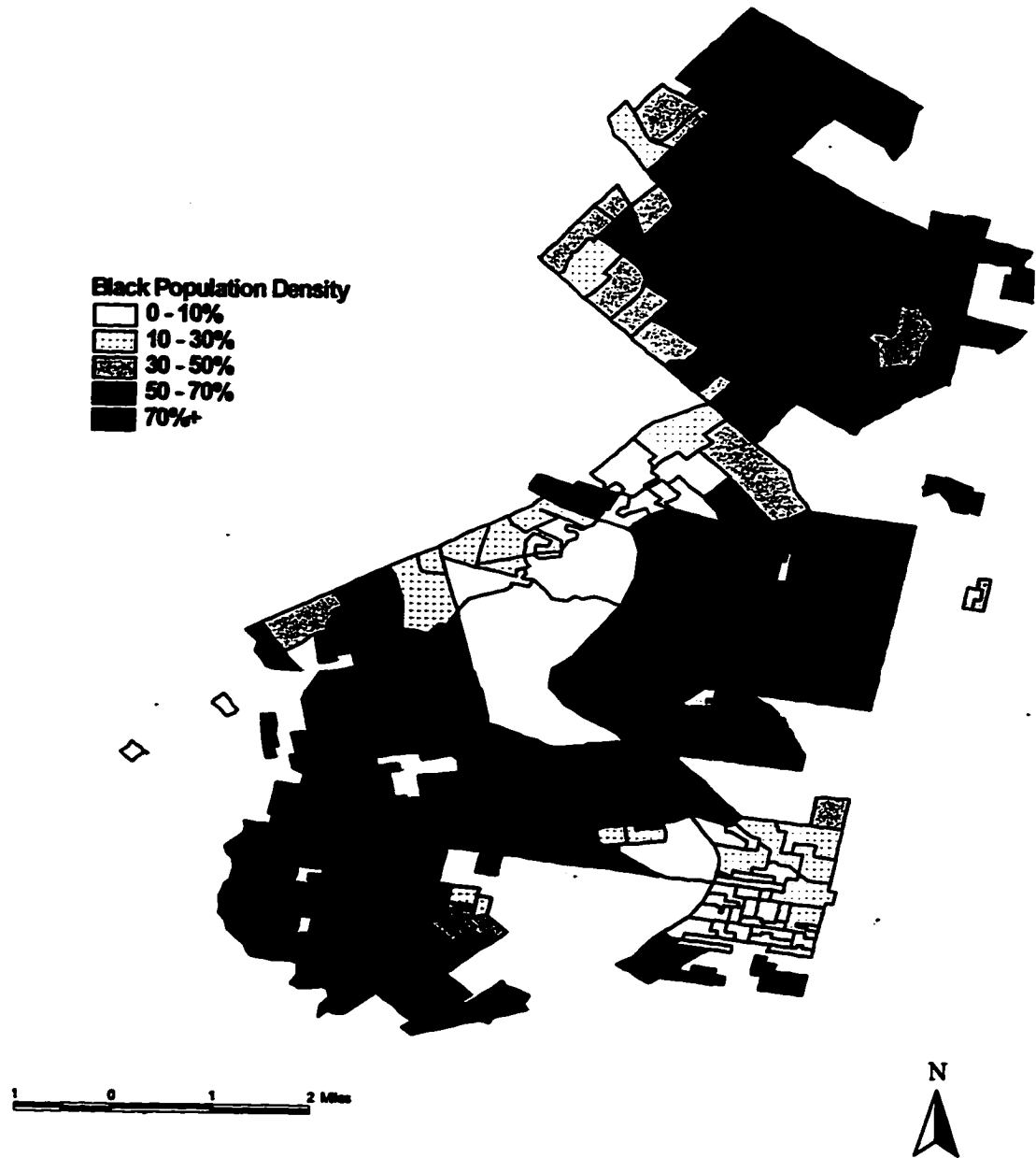


Figure 3.2 plots the proportion of each precinct's voting age population who are African-American (X_i) by the fraction of the voting age population who turned out to vote (T_i) in November 1990. Each precinct is represented by a circle proportional to the size of its voting age population. The variability in X_i reflects what was noticed above in the map. Those few precincts which are predominantly white tend to have a fairly sizable voting age population.

In addition to a scatterplot of the data, Figure 3.2 also plots the expected value line $E(T_i | X_i)$ and the conditional 80% confidence intervals. The confidence intervals capture roughly 80% of the precincts, indicating that the model fits the data. The greater variance in white turnout is easy to see from the wider confidence bands on the left, where black population density is low. To understand how to interpret the clusters of points at the extreme ends of the graph, note that at these points the populations are homogenous (all-black or all-white) and, therefore, the value of T_i is primarily attributable to one racial group. Thus, you can say with confidence that the narrow distribution of points to the far right reflects the smaller variance in black turnout. The average turnout rate seems to increase linearly as African-Americans become a larger proportion of the population. This is one sign that the data contain little aggregation bias. (If racial turnout rates changed depending upon a precinct's racial mix, which is one way to think about bias, a linear form would be unlikely in a simple scatter plot. A linear form would only result if the changes in one race's turnout were compensated by changes in the turnout of the other race across the graph. This kind of perfect symmetry is unlikely. Nonetheless, the method of ecological inference applied here is robust to aggregation bias. The expected value line

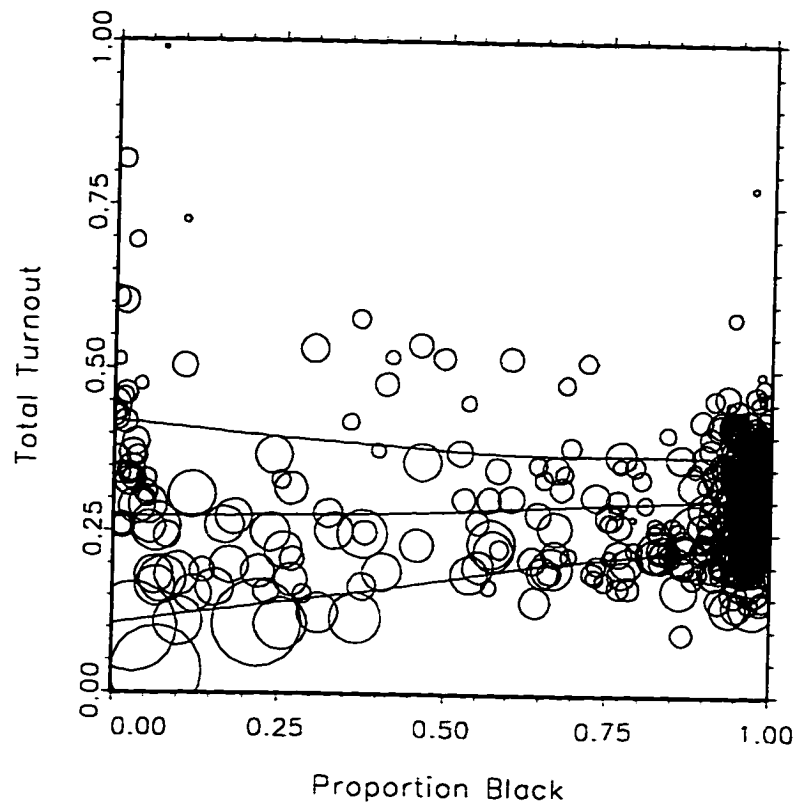


Figure 3.2: Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District. Scatterplot with Maximum Likelihood Results Superimposed: *The size of each circle is proportional to the size of the precinct population. The center line is the expected value of T_i (Total Turnout in precinct i) given X_i (Proportion Black in precinct i), and the boundary lines are 80% confidence intervals around the expected value.*

intersects the right vertical axis at about .30, and the left at .27. These intercepts, where $X_i = 1$ and $X_i = 0$, respectively, are simple (unweighted) averages of the fraction of blacks and whites voting in 1990 over all the precincts in this congressional district. It is worth emphasizing that these statistics reflect the behavior of the average precinct, not the average black or white resident. It appears from these intermediate estimates that blacks slightly outparticipated their white counterparts in the Second district.

The parameters of interest, however, are not these two precinct averages, but rather the 505 precinct-level rates of black turnout, B_i^b , and the 505 rates of white turnout, B_i^w . The data in *each* precinct of Pennsylvania's Second district contains some degree of deterministic information about the two quantities of interest for that precinct. Through the use of the "method of bounds", we can narrow the range of possible values of B_i^b and B_i^w for precinct i , even before applying the statistical techniques mentioned earlier (i.e. the technique of "borrowing" from all precincts to estimate parameters in any one). The idea behind the "method of bounds" is that the beginning point for any ecological inference should be the knowledge a researcher has for certain. This knowledge includes the fact that any proportion is by definition bound by 0 and 1. Furthermore, the marginals of a table, X_i (black population density) and T_i (total turnout) dictate the minimum and maximum possible values of the cells in the table. King's method makes direct use of this information to establish absolute bounds on the values of the quantities of interest.

Looking again at Figure 3.2, the scatterplot provides some initial indication of the amount of deterministic information available for each of these 505 precincts. As pointed

out above, the extreme sides of the graph contain information primarily about one racial group. On the right, where African-Americans constitute nearly 100% of the precinct population, the points reflect dynamics in black turnout. The left speaks to white turnout. In other words, as we move right we locate the region with the most deterministic information about black turnout (and the least information about white turnout). As we go left, we move into the region with the most deterministic information about white turnout. Immediately apparent from this figure is that, in many cases, the deterministic precinct-level bounds on the B_i^b (black turnout) parameter are very narrow. The most dense cluster of points in Figure 3.2 are on the right. By contrast, there are relatively few cases with narrow precinct-level bounds on the B_i^w (white turnout) parameter; there are several homogenous white precincts to the far left. In these cases the racial makeup of the precinct is such that there is little to no information available with which to estimate the value of B_i^b . Finally, there are only a limited number of cases in which the data from the precinct narrows the bounds on both quantities of interest. These precincts (where the proportions of blacks and whites are more evenly split) cluster along the bottom-center portion of Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 provides a sense of how much information is known. Figure 3.3 quantifies this information by calculating the width of the absolute bounds, and thus, identifying the range of possible values for black and white turnout in each of the precincts. Figure 3.3 is what is known as a “tomography” plot. Each of the 505 lines in the tomography plot traces out all possible values of the parameters (B_i^b and B_i^w) for the particular combination of T_i (total turnout) and X_i (proportion black) in precinct i . These

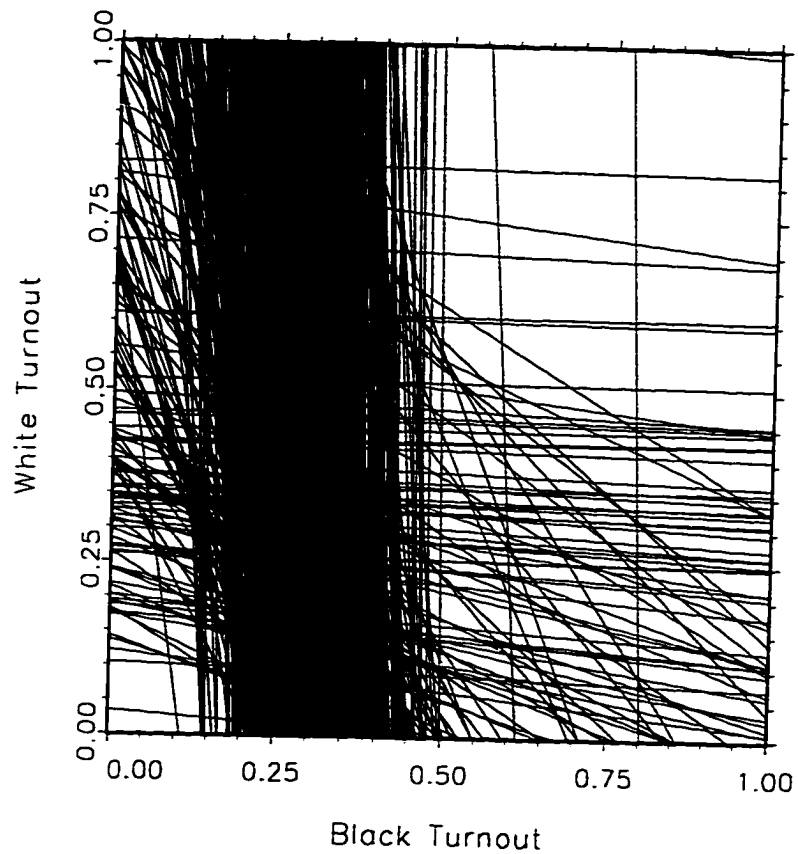


Figure 3.3: Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District. Tomography Plot. Each coordinate represents a unique possible value of B^b (Black Turnout) and B^w (White Turnout). Each line traces out, for the particular combination of T_i (Total Turnout) and X_i (Proportion black) in a given precinct, the following equation:

$$B_i^w = \left[\frac{T_i}{1-X_i} \right] - \left[\frac{X_i}{1-X_i} \right] B_i^b$$

parameter bounds can be determined by projecting each line onto the horizontal (B_i^b) or vertical (B_i^v) axes. For example, select a line. This one line summarizes 3 facts about the precinct it represents: (1) The slope of the line reflects the size of the black voting age population (relative to the total voting age population). A steep slope indicates that the precinct has a sizable black population. Take note of the number of steep lines in Figure 3.3; there are many precincts in the Second District that are predominantly black. Follow the selected line to each of its endpoints, where it intersects the boundaries of the graph. Drop a perpendicular line from the left endpoint down to the x-axis. (Or, from the top endpoint down to the x-axis if the line is perfectly vertical). This is the minimum value of B_i^b for this precinct. Drop a second perpendicular line from the right (bottom) endpoint down to the x-axis. This is the maximum value of B_i^b . If you selected a steep line (i.e. a predominantly black precinct) the distance between the maximum and minimum bounds should be very narrow. In fact, if the line was perfectly vertical, the maximum and minimum should be equal. Return to the endpoints of this line. Extend a horizontal line from the left (top) endpoint out to the y-axis. This is the maximum value of B_i^v for this precinct. Extend a second perpendicular line from the right (bottom) endpoint out to the y-axis. This is the minimum value of B_i^v . If you selected a flat line (i.e. a predominantly white precinct) the calculated bounds should be quite narrow.

Figure 3.3 reinforces the more general conclusions drawn from Figure 3.2. Most of the precincts in the Second District provide bounds for B_i^b that are narrow enough to be useful alone--without the application of any statistical techniques. These same

precincts (represented by the dense cluster of vertical lines centered around “Black Turnout = .30”) contain no additional deterministic information about B_i^w ; the values of B_i^w could fall anywhere in the range of $[0, 1]$. The diagonal lines which cut off the lower left corner of the tomography plot are equivalent to the points in the bottom-center of Figure 3.2: precincts with narrow bounds on both B_i^b and B_i^w .

It is clear then that in most cases, particularly for the 505 estimates of white turnout, the precinct-level bounds are too wide for substantive purposes. Pooling information across precincts will be necessary to determine the values of the parameters within their bounds. Figure 3.4 illustrates this second stage of estimation for the precincts in Pennsylvania’s Second district. This tomography plot includes the contour lines representing the truncated bivariate normal distribution of B_i^b and B_i^w . By pooling information available from other precincts, the truncated bivariate normal distribution allows us to identify the portions of the tomography lines most likely to contain the true coordinates of B_i^b and B_i^w for precinct i . Borrowing strength statistically from other precincts is especially important for estimates of B_i^w given the small number of precincts providing any deterministic information about white voting behavior. The large vertical variance, and much smaller horizontal variance, communicates the lack of deterministic information about B_i^w . The posterior distribution of each of the precinct parameters for precinct i is derived by the slice it’s tomography line cuts out of this bivariate distribution. Try to identify again the same line from Figure 3.3. The endpoints, now, are no longer the place where the line intersects the axes of the graph. Rather, the new endpoints are the places where the line intersects the contour ellipses. Projecting these endpoints down to

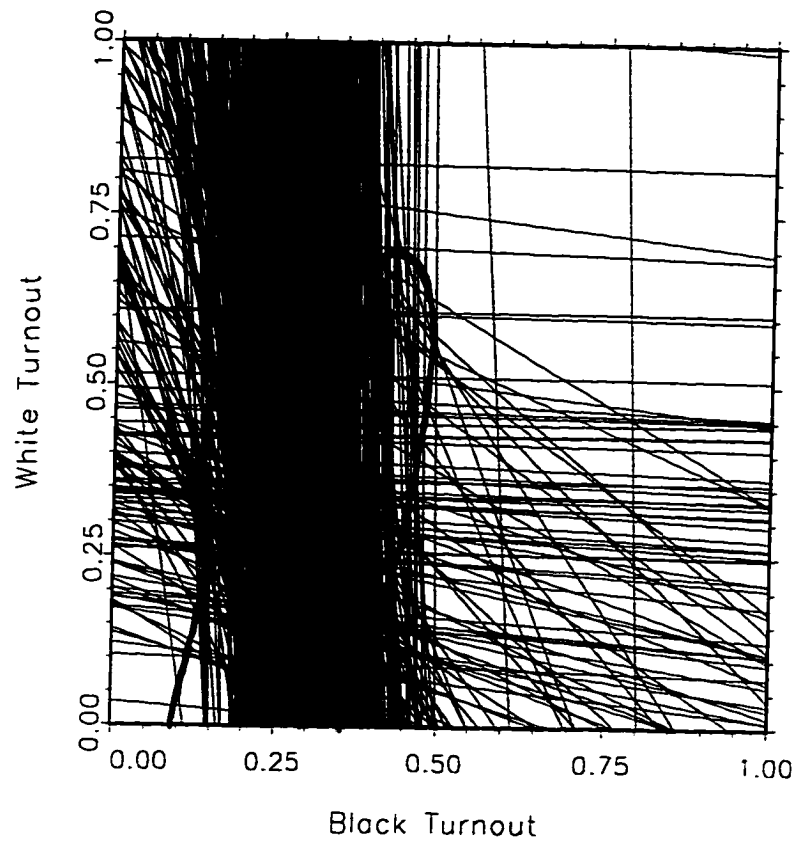


Figure 3.4: Pennsylvania's Second Congressional District. *Tomography Plot with 50% and 95% Maximum Likelihood Contour Ellipses. Each line maps all possible values of B^b (Black Turnout) and B^w (White Turnout) for one precinct I . The contours identify the portions of the lines with the highest probability of containing the true values for each parameter.*

the x-axis and across to the y-axis indicate the most likely location of the true precinct parameters. The bounds have been significantly narrowed. Not surprisingly the 50% maximum likelihood ellipse is narrower than the 95% ellipse. The means of these posterior distributions serve as the point estimates for the quantities of interests; the standard deviations serve as the standard errors of these estimates.

The 1010 point estimates (505 estimates of black turnout, 505 estimates of white turnout) generated by this method of ecological inference are summarized in Figure 3.5 and 3.6. These maps of Pennsylvania's Second district illustrate the variation in racial turnout across precincts. In the maps each of the 505 precincts is delineated and shaded to reflect the level of black (Figure 3.5) and white (Figure 3.6) turnout. While there were several precincts in which white turnout reached well above 70% of the white voting age population, the clear majority of the precincts experienced white turnout rates in the 10 to 30 percent range: 160 precincts had turnout rates between 10 and 20 percent, and 153 had rates between 20 and 30 percent. In two of the high (white) turnout precincts, black turnout was similarly above average. Finally, the maps indicate that in almost all precincts, black turnout was at least as high, if not higher, than white turnout. (In 409 precincts, black turnout exceeded white turnout.) The number of precincts witnessing black turnout at rates between 30 and 50 percent, rivals the number of precincts with less active constituents. Black turnout clustered around the 20 to 30 percent (226 precincts), and the 30 to 40 percent (201 precincts) ranges, with very few precincts experiencing turnout rates below 20%. During the 1990 election, black residents appear to have been the most highly mobilized constituency in the Second district.

Figure 3.5

**Black Voter Turnout
Pennsylvania - District 2
Philadelphia**

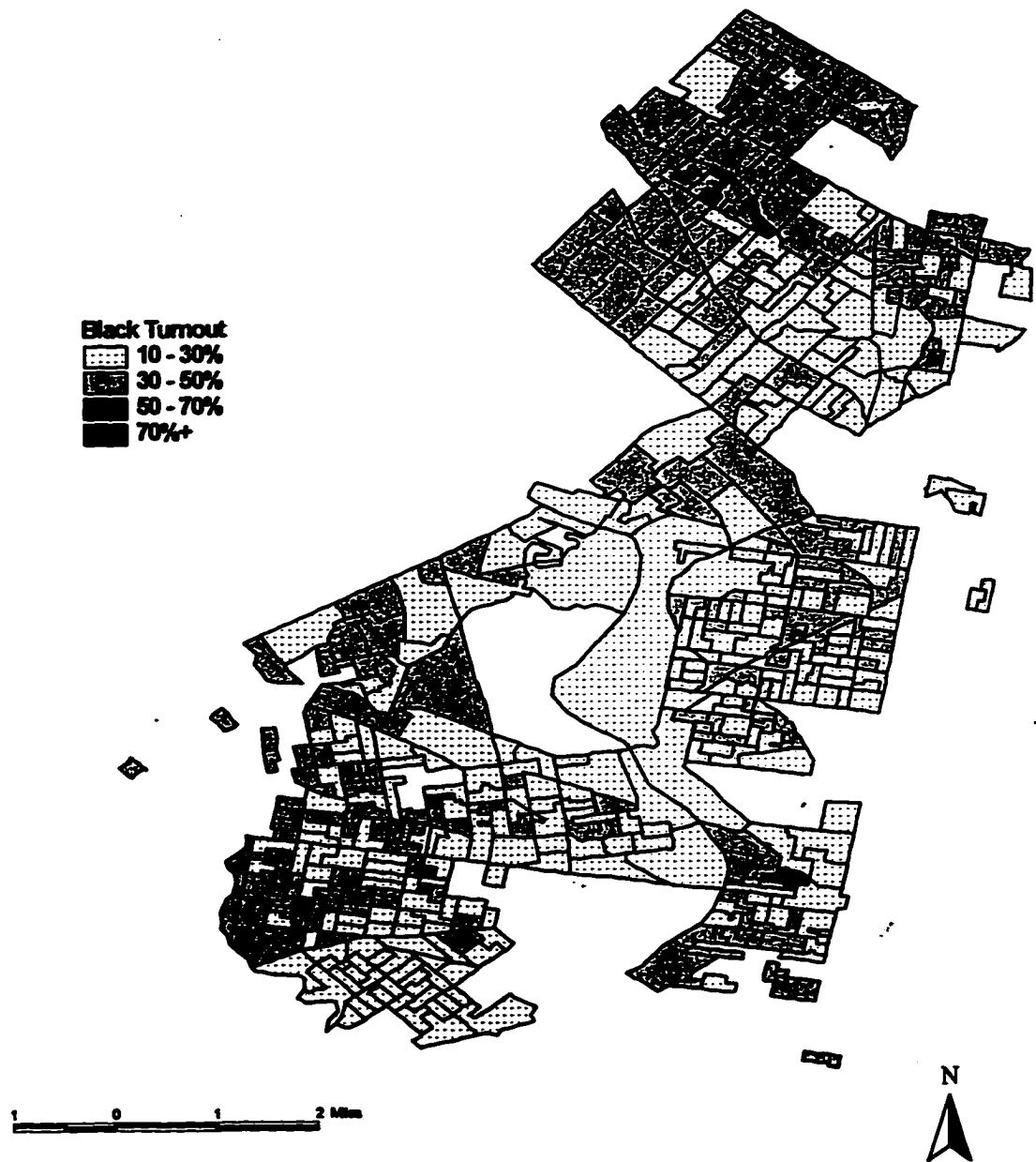


Figure 3.6

**White Voter Turnout
Pennsylvania - District 2
Philadelphia**



Similar analyses as those discussed here for the Second district, were performed for each of the twenty-three congressional districts in Pennsylvania. In the end, this stage one analysis generated both point estimates and standard error estimates for B_i^b and B_i^w , for each of the 8376 precincts in Pennsylvania.

4.2 Stage Two: Estimating the effect of Black representation

In 1990 Pennsylvania's Second congressional district was the only district represented by a black member of Congress, William Gray III. All other districts had white congressional representatives. In stage two, I use the estimates of B_i^b and B_i^w generated earlier to consider how white and black turnout in the precincts of Pennsylvania's Second differed from turnout in the state's other districts in November 1990. Figures 3.7 and 3.8 present the (weighted) *district-level* estimates of black and white turnout, allowing for an initial look at the variation in behavior across political settings. Also included in the plots are measures of the standard error and the aggregate bounds for each of these district estimates. The standard errors are represented by the height of each box: one standard error above and below the point estimate. The lines which extend outward from the boxes capture the width of the aggregate bounds (the range of possible values) for these district-level estimates. What both the errors and the bounds indicate is the far greater certainty contained in the estimates of white turnout. Recall that the Second District was dominated by precincts that were predominantly black. In these precincts, and by extension in this district, there was a great deal of information on black voting behavior. With the exception of Tom Foglietta's district (District 1), this

Figure 3.7
Black Voting Turnout, Pennsylvania
November 1990

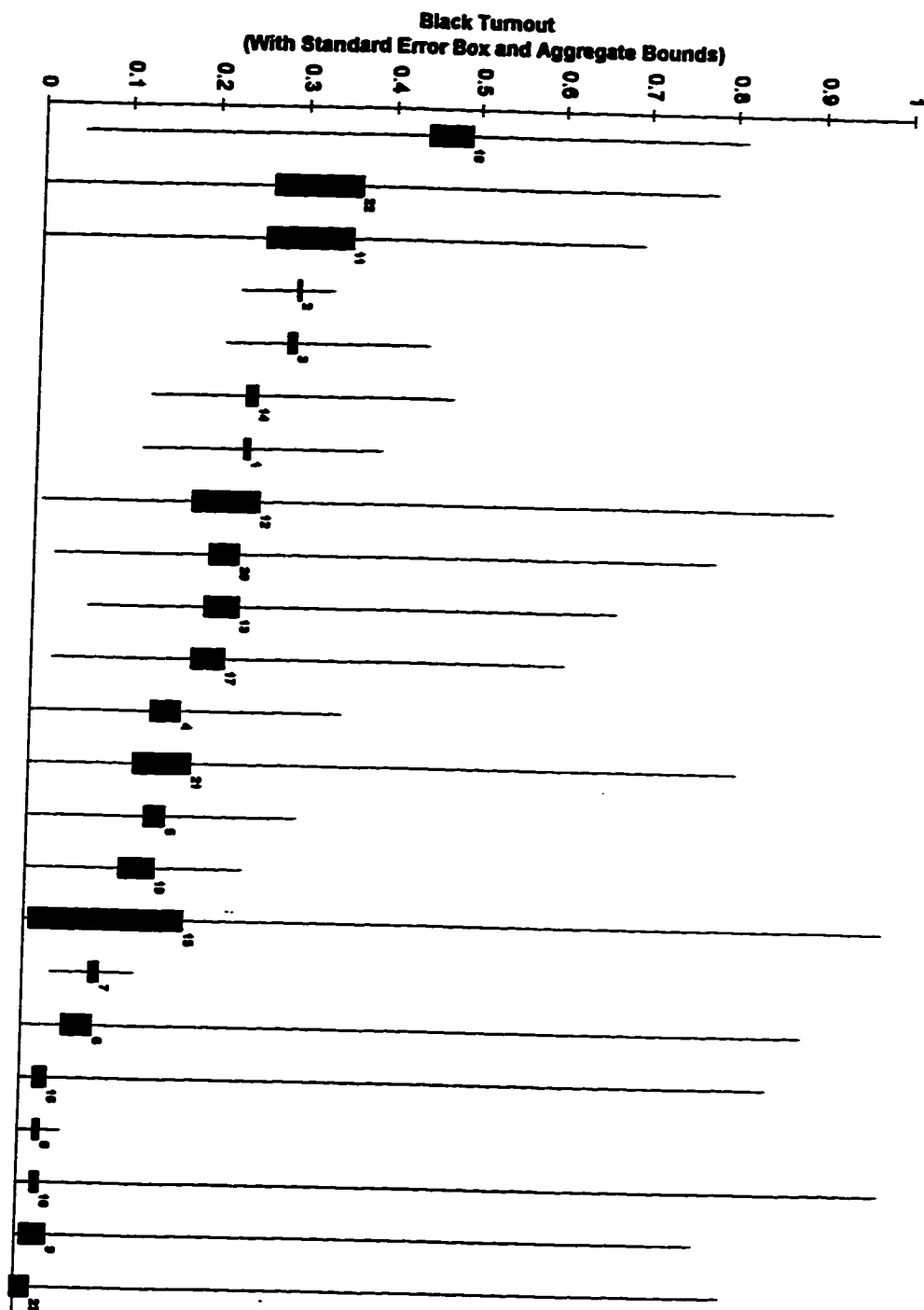


Figure 3.7: Each box captures the district's point estimate for turnout, as well as the range of values within one standard error. The lines capture the width of the aggregate bounds, the range of possible values for the estimate of black turnout.

Figure 3.8
White Voting Turnout, Pennsylvania
November 1990

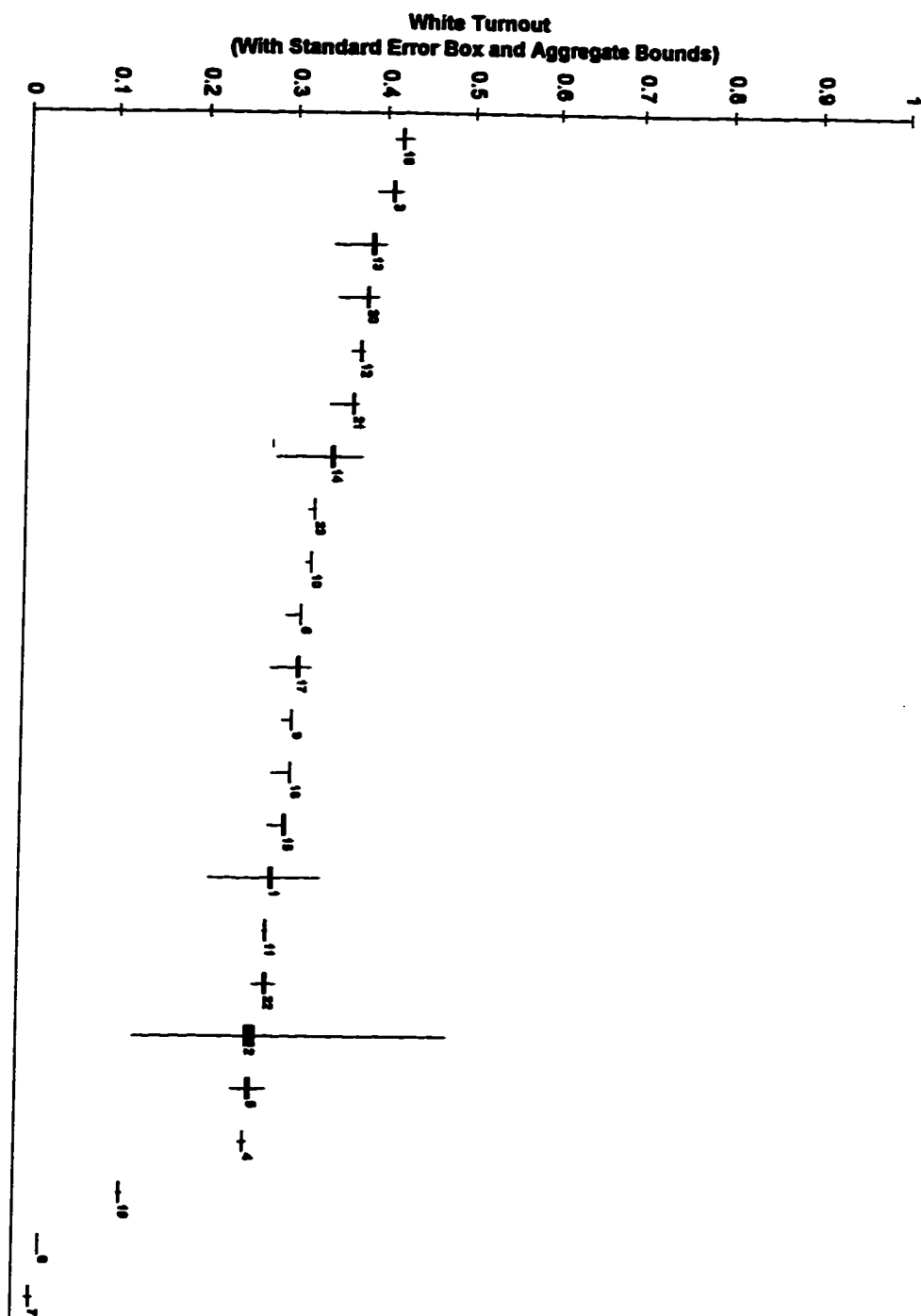


Figure 3.8: Each box captures the district's point estimate, as well as the range of values within one standard error. The lines capture the width of the aggregate bounds, the range of possible values for the estimate of white turnout.

is not the case in the other districts of Pennsylvania. As a consequence, the Second District is the only one where the estimate of black turnout (Figure 3.7) has the narrow bounds, and shorter box more characteristic of the white turnout estimates in Figure 3.8.

In general, turnout at this mid-term election was characteristically low, exceeding 40% of the voting age population in only one case. Black turnout (Figure 3.7) is especially low, less than 30% in most districts. The Second district is among four congressional districts having not only above average rates of black turnout, but also a participation gap in which black turnout exceeds white turnout. It is interesting to note that these observable differences exist even before taking socioeconomic factors into account. Of most interest, though, are not these aggregate quantities, but rather the behavior at the precinct level. As discussed in Section 3, stage two of the analysis uses the precinct measures of B_i^b and B_i^w as dependent variables in weighted least squares regressions predicting black turnout and white turnout as functions of black representation and socioeconomic conditions.

Table 3.4 presents the results from the regression predicting black turnout. Immediately apparent is that these results support the hypothesis that black constituents respond positively to black representation. Turnout rates among black constituents living in precincts represented by William Gray were 5.6% higher than those for blacks living in precincts that were demographically similar but represented by white incumbents. Clearly, in the case of Pennsylvania, race does matter.

The coefficients on the control variables suggest, not surprisingly, that education and income are positively correlated with black turnout, while neighborhood stability (as measured by the proportion of renters in the MCD) and black population density have a

Table 3.4
Predicting Turnout
Pennsylvania, November 1990

Variable	Black Turnout	White Turnout
Black Representative	.056 (.016)	-.040 (.009)
Education (Black)	.103 (.011)	
Education (White)		.029 (.026)
Income (Black)	.021 (.005)	
Income (White)		-.024 (.013)
Rent (Black)	-.056 (.009)	
Rent (White)		-.002 (.016)
Black Density	-.128 (.014)	-.016 (.008)
Constant	.153 (.048)	.541 (.115)
	N = 5535 SER = .183 R ² = .061	N = 6372 SER = .162 R ² = .01

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. The difference in the number of cases for the two regressions is due to the large number of precincts in which there are no black residents (therefore, no estimate of black turnout).

negative relationship with turnout.⁵ The measure of black population density is included so as to distinguish the influence of black representation from that of black neighborhoods, with which black representation is highly correlated. (Pearson's R of .64) To the extent that black population density serves as a proxy for neighborhood poverty, the negative coefficient bolsters the arguments made by Cohen and Dawson (1993). In a study of Detroit, Cohen and Dawson (1993) determined that not only does individual poverty depress turnout, but that the social isolation which accompanies neighborhood poverty can also inhibit political participation. In the absence of community organizations or churches, which can encourage and facilitate political involvement, residents in chronically poor areas can suffer political isolation. The relationship observed here may reflect that tendency. However, accurately estimating the causal relationships implied by the coefficients on the control variables requires alternative specifications which will not be tested here.⁶

A similar analysis was performed for white turnout. The results, which support the hypothesis regarding white voting behavior, are also presented in Table 3.4. As can be seen from the sign of the coefficient on black representation, white constituents in the precincts of the Second district were less likely to turnout than were their white counterparts in other Pennsylvania districts. Specifically, turnout rates were 4% lower in the precincts of the Second district. This change, as well as the 5.6% change in black

⁵ The "black population density" variable reflects the proportion of black residents in the precinct. By contrast, all of the other socioeconomic indicators measure the conditions of the MCD in which the precinct is located.

⁶ This is particularly the case with the relationship between turnout and black population density. The inclusion of the black representation variable obscures the "true" effect of black density by controlling for its main consequence.

turnout observed above, is substantial when one considers the generally low level of turnout in Pennsylvania during the mid-term election. When turnout rates hover in the 25 to 35 percent range, a 5-point difference is significant.

To this point, the analysis has considered the social and economic environments which distinguish these precincts from one another, and separate the precincts of Gray's Second from those in other congressional districts. But equally important, and equally neglected in previous research, are elements of the electoral context which also distinguish precincts and districts in ways relevant to participation. These elements include characteristics of the incumbent (How long has s/he been in office?) and characteristics of the House race (How competitive is the race?). To the extent that "black representation" is correlated with these other political factors, the variable actually serves as a proxy for both the racial and non-racial characteristics unique to William Gray and his Second district. (William Gray, elected in 1978, had been in office 12 years at the time of the November 1990 election). In an effort to sort out these confounding effects, I include controls for party affiliation, tenure, and the competitiveness of the election--as measured by the winning proportion of the vote.

Table 3.5 presents the black turnout results for a model which controls for both socioeconomic as well as political variables. This new specification leaves virtually unchanged the conclusions drawn from the initial model. Even when compared exclusively against other long term Democrats in uncompetitive races (Gray was reelected with 92% of the November vote), the behavior among Grays' black constituents differed by 5.6% from the behavior of African-Americans elsewhere. However, by disentangling

Table 3.5
Predicting Turnout
Pennsylvania, November 1990

Variable	Black Turnout	White Turnout
Black Representative	.056 (.017)	-.064 (.009)
Education (Black)	.095 (.010)	
Education (White)		-.008 (.025)
Income (Black)	.029 (.005)	
Income (White)		-.001 (.013)
Rent(Black)	-.044 (.008)	
Rent (White)		-.004 (.016)
Black Density	-.177 (.014)	-.011 (.008)
Party	.123 (.005)	.057 (.004)
Tenure	-.007 (.001)	.011 (.001)
Vote Margin	-.114 (.015)	.010 (.012)
Constant	.135 (.046)	.226 (.115)
	N=5535 SER=.159 R²=.217	N=8372 SER=.157 R²=.062

Note: The standard errors are in parentheses. The difference in the number of cases for the two regressions is due to the large number of precincts in which there are no black residents (therefore, no estimate of black turnout).

race from other aspects of the political climate one can appreciate more fully the salience of black representation in Pennsylvania. The gap between the Second district and the rest of the state is a function of race. The model as specified in column one of Table 3.5 captures 22% of the variance in black turnout across Pennsylvania. The addition of political controls significantly reduced the standard error of the regression: the estimate is, on average, off by 15.9% rather than by 18.3%. As expected the coefficients on the tenure and vote parameters indicate that long term incumbents and uncompetitive races contribute to lower turnout.

By comparison, the findings presented in column two of Table 3.5 indicate that the 4% gap in white turnout initially attributed to black representation actually concealed a slightly larger drop off. When compared to other (demographically similar) precincts represented by sixth-term Democrats, white constituents in William Gray's district turned out at rates that were 6.4% lower, on average. In Pennsylvania, white constituents were sensitive to the race of their congressional representative. It is interesting to note that this "sensitivity" persisted 12 years into William Gray's tenure, even though (by all accounts) he was considered a moderate whose representational style actively de-emphasized race. Of course, it is possible that the 6.4% gap reflects a *decline* in sensitivity over the course of his career, but that cannot be determined with this data alone. Whether Bill Gray's political style mitigated the effect of race is best judged through a comparison to patterns observed in other states. This relationship will be explored in greater depth below.

5 TURNOUT 1990 AND 1994

In the preceding example, Pennsylvania precincts were used to illustrate the procedures involved in identifying the relationship between turnout and black representation. With that exposition, the model is extended below to the other states of interest for both the 1990 and 1994 midterm elections.

5.1 Black Representation 1990: Michigan, New Jersey, and Georgia

Three states, in addition to Pennsylvania, were analyzed for the November 1990 elections: Michigan, New Jersey, and Georgia. Together these states were home to 4 black congressional representatives: George Crockett and John Conyers in the Detroit area, Donald Payne in Newark, and John Lewis in Atlanta. Unlike Bill Gray, Payne and Lewis in November 1990 were virtual newcomers to elected office: Payne was elected first in 1988, and Lewis in 1986. In political style, however, these two members of Congress shared far more similarities with Gray than Gray did with the long term incumbents from Detroit. All three men had been credited with having biracial appeal: Lewis because of his focus on local issues, Gray because of his aggressive coalition building, and Payne because of his "low key style." Meanwhile, Crockett and Conyers built careers which largely disregarded (or, in the case of Crockett, attacked) the small white communities in their districts. Although both Crockett and Conyers had long histories service, only Conyers (who first went to Washington in 1965) was running for reelection. Crockett had announced his retirement in March 1990 and most of the activity for his seat took place in the primary. *Congressional Quarterly* noted in August 1990, "that [the] race [to succeed Crockett] crystallized early on into a scramble to catch front-

runner [Barbara Rose] Collins," who enjoyed an immediate base from her strong 1988 House campaign (Idelson 1990a). City Councilwoman Barbara Rose-Collins, with the crucial support of Mayor Coleman Young, defeated a crowded field to enter the November election with virtually no competition--a position not unlike that enjoyed by strong *incumbents* nationwide (Idelson 1990b, Donovan 1990).

The patterns of participation in Michigan, New Jersey , and Georgia differed in some respects from what was observed in Pennsylvania during the November 1990 elections. Similar to the Pennsylvania case, turnout was generally low during the midterm elections. In only one congressional district (Michigan's 18th) did black turnout exceed 30 percent of the voting age population; in New Jersey black turnout was consistently below 19 percent; in Georgia, black district-level turnout hovered in the 17 to 25% range, with one district witnessing a turnout rate of only 7.3% of the black voting age population. While white turnout in all three states was higher than this on average, in most districts rates fell within the 35 to 38 percent range.

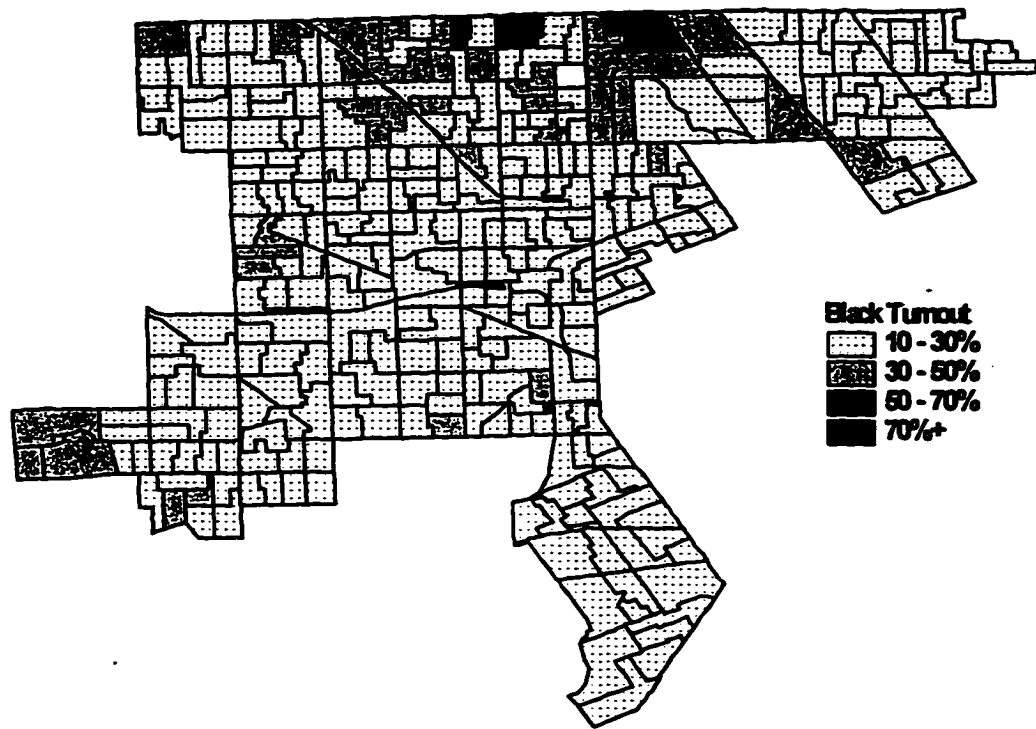
The only exceptions to these observations are in the First and Thirteenth districts of Michigan, and the Tenth district in New Jersey--all districts represented by black congressmen. In each of these cases, black turnout was not only above average (25% and 20% in Michigan's First and Thirteenth, respectively; 18% in New Jersey's Tenth), but it also exceeded white turnout in the district. (The relatively high rate of turnout in Conyer's First district, and the gap between the First and Crockett's Thirteenth, can be partially explained by the sizable number of middle and upper income black professionals in the district). Compared to other areas of the state, white turnout was at its lowest in

these black represented districts. In Michigan, only 15.8% of eligible white voters in the First, and 10.9% of white voters in the Thirteenth cast ballots. In New Jersey, where white voters turned out at rates as high as 38%, most white voters in the Tenth stayed home; only 13.6% turned out. In Georgia, however, white turnout rates in John Lewis' Atlanta district did not deviate from rates observed elsewhere in the state. And, in what was at the time the only black-represented district in Georgia, black turnout trailed white turnout.

Maps of some of these black represented districts illustrate in greater detail the stark differences in white and black turnout across precincts. Figure 3.9 presents a map of Michigan's First district, centered in North-Central Detroit. The overwhelming majority of these precincts had black turnout rates in the 10-30% range. There is also a fair number, primarily to the north, where turnout reached above 30%. Compare this to Figure 3.10 which summarizes white turnout patterns in the district. There are very few instances where turnout exceeded 30%; but there are many cases where turnout rates dropped below 10%. Where white turnout was high, so to was black turnout. Downtown Detroit (Figure 3.11) exhibits much the same pattern. With very few exceptions, black turnout was solidly in the 10-30% range. By contrast, only 47 of the 336 precincts in Michigan's Thirteenth had white turnout rates (Figure 3.12) in excess of 10% of the voting age population.

Figure 3.9

**Black Voter Turnout
Michigan - District 1
Detroit (North-Central), Highland Park**



2 0 2 4 Miles



Figure 3.10

**White Voter Turnout
Michigan - District 1
Detroit (North-Central), Highland Park**

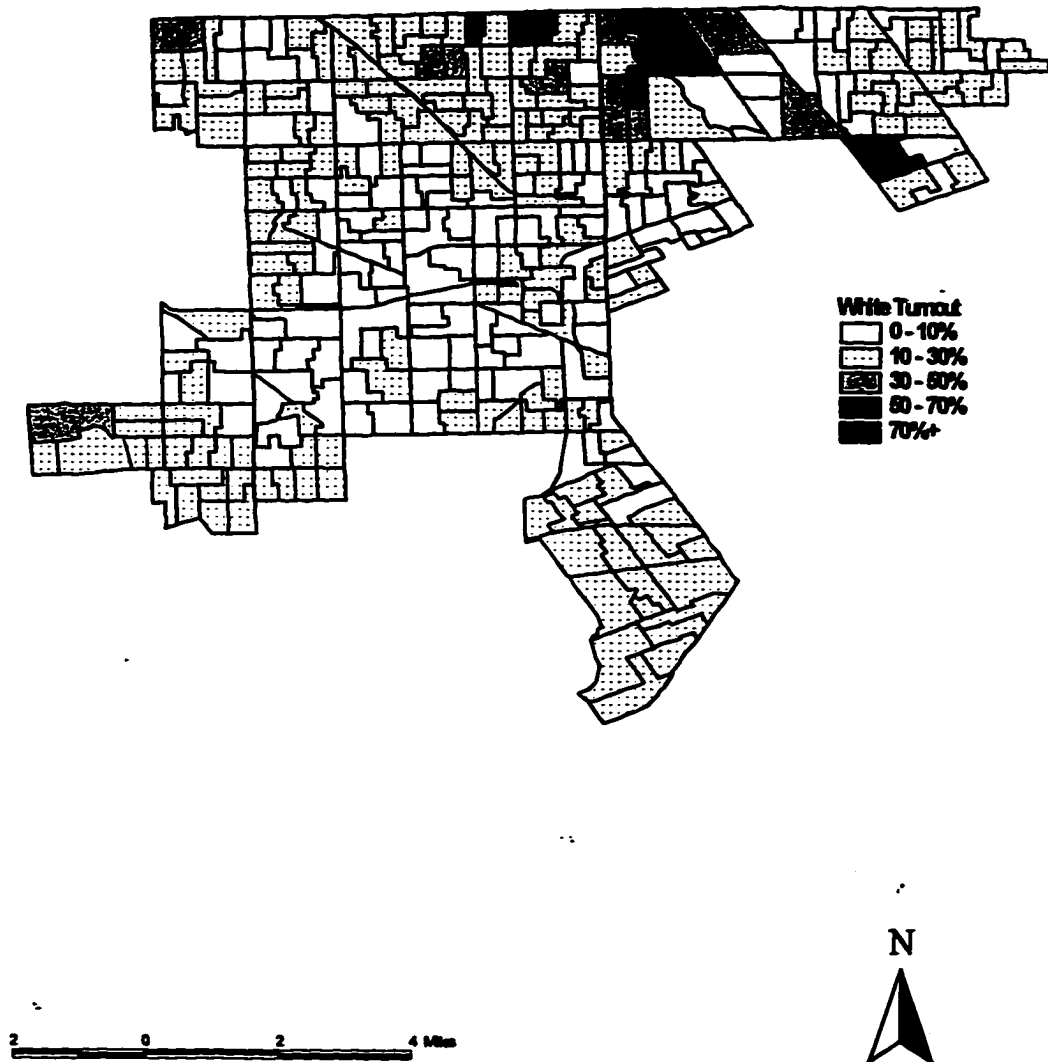


Figure 3.11

**Black Voter Turnout
Michigan - District 13
Downtown Detroit**

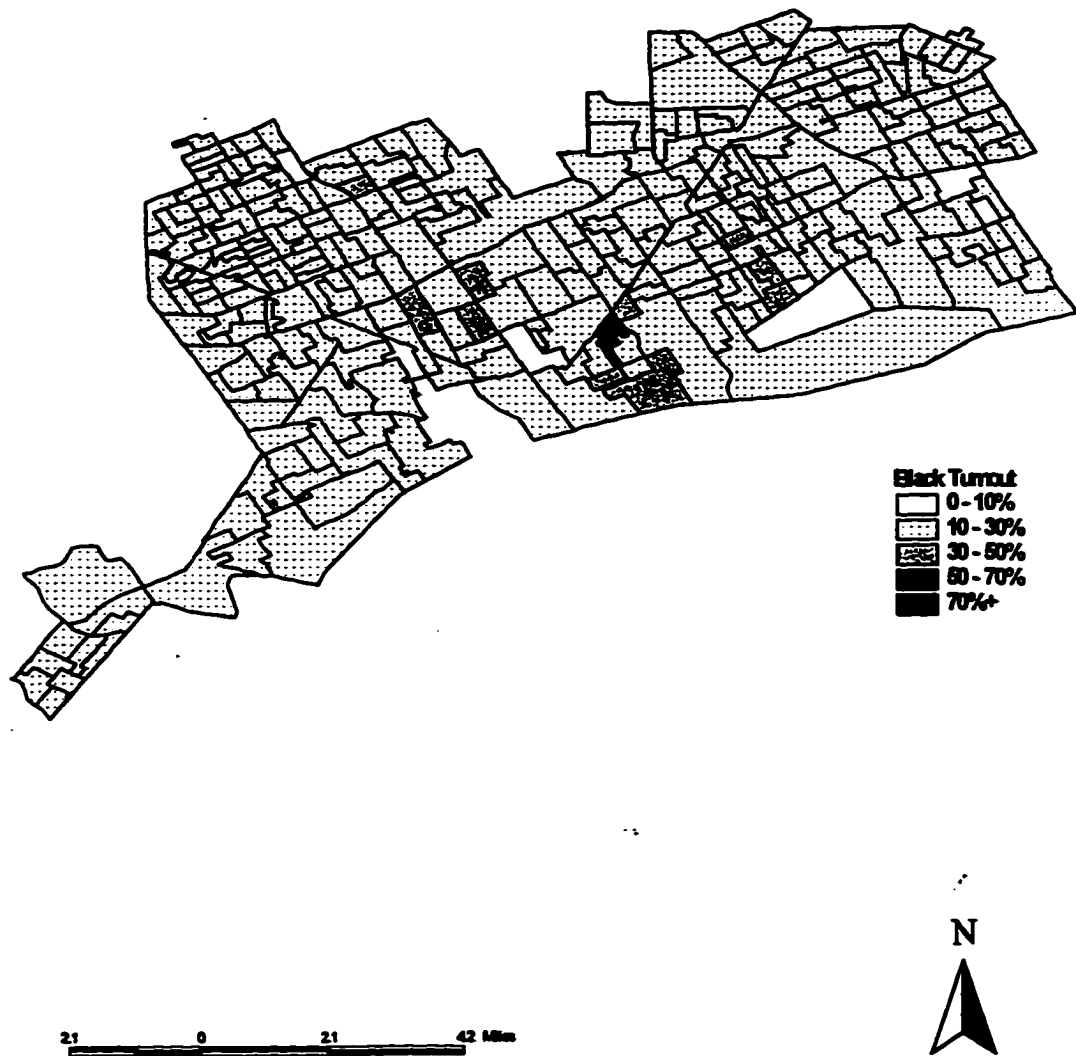
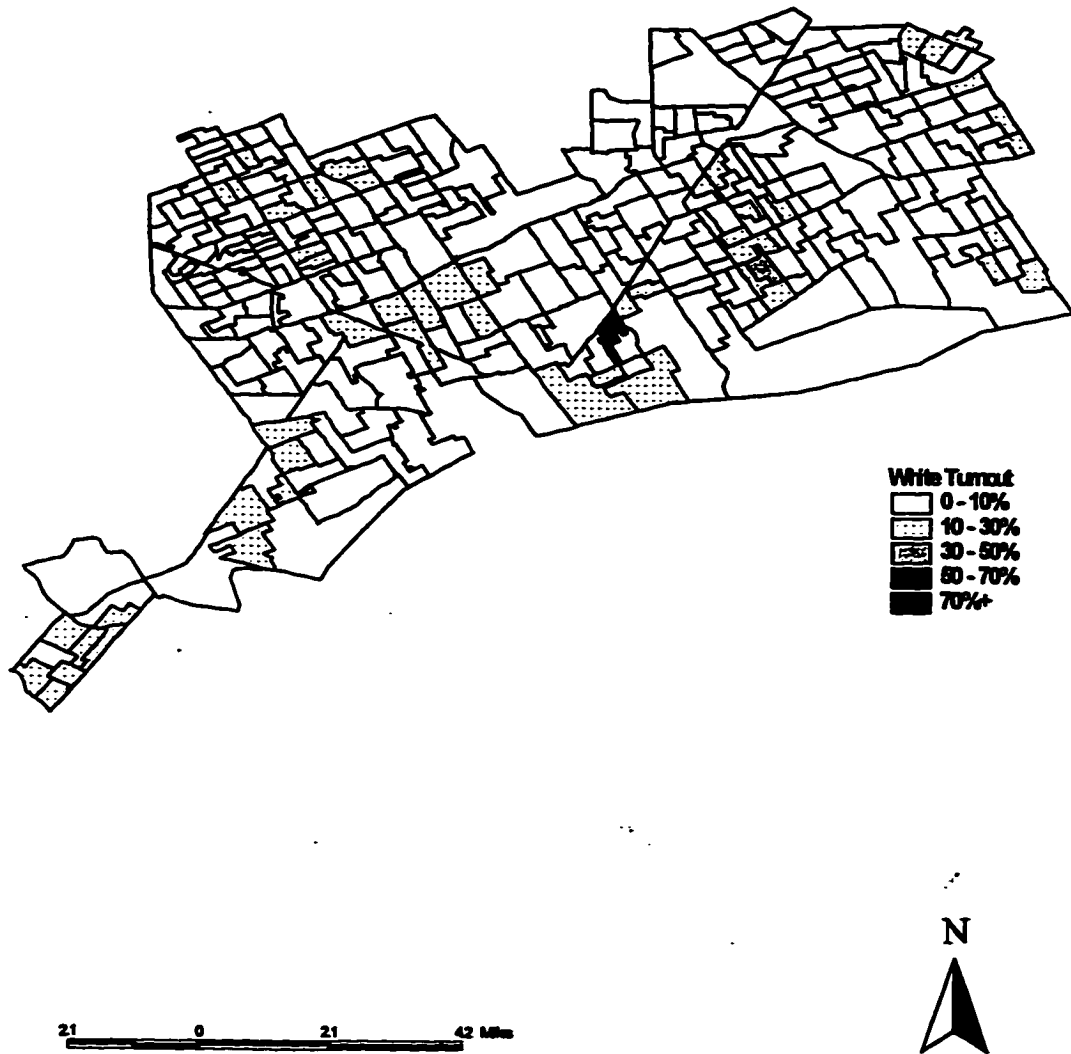


Figure 3.12

**White Voter Turnout
Michigan - District 13
Downtown Detroit**



To this point, the patterns in Michigan and New Jersey appeared similar to those discussed earlier for Pennsylvania: Black represented districts witnessed above average black turnout rates; these rates exceed the levels of participation by white constituents. The pattern of low turnout in John Lewis' district set Georgia apart from all three states. As argued above, the quantities of interest are not these district-level aggregates, but the behavior within the thousands of precincts that make up these districts. Namely, how did turnout in the black-represented precincts of Michigan, New Jersey, and Georgia compare with that in demographically similar precincts elsewhere in the states? After controlling for socioeconomic factors, and isolating the effect of black representation, the precinct-level behavior in all three states differed (in degree, if not in kind) from what was previously observed.

As Table 3.6 makes clear, in all four black represented districts in New Jersey, Michigan, and Georgia white turnout rates trailed those observed in demographically similar precincts elsewhere in these states. The decline in the number of eligible voters going to the polls was far more dramatic in these states than it was in Pennsylvania. Even in Georgia, where summary statistics had first led us to believe that the white constituents in John Lewis' district behaved no differently than their counterparts in other districts, turnout dropped by two percent more than it had in Pennsylvania's Second (6% in Atlanta compared to 4% in Philadelphia). In New Jersey, white voters in the precincts of the Tenth district turned out, on average, at a rate 8.8% below that of (demographically) similar precincts in other districts. Meanwhile, the largest roll-off was in the precincts of Michigan's First and Thirteenth districts. The white constituents of Grosse Pointe and

Table 3.6
Predicting White Turnout
November 1990

Variable	New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia
Black Representation	-.088 (.008)	-.248 (.009)	-.060 (.011)
Rep. John Conyers		.075 (.009)	
Education	.020 (.025)	.286 (.025)	-.003 (.049)
Income	.069 (.012)	-.062 (.012)	.095 (.033)
Rent	-.271 (.010)	-.283 (.019)	-.247 (.047)
Black Density	.021 (.007)	.004 (.009)	.030 (.013)
Constant	-.253 (.110)	.922 (.105)	-.505 (.296)
	N=5343 SER=.117 R²=.302	N = 4464 SER = .122 R²=.425	N=716 SER=.088 R²=.089

Note: Standard Errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of white per capita income. "Rent" measures the proportion of renter-occupied white households.

Grosse Pointe Park, the wealthy enclaves in the far eastern corner of Crockett's Thirteenth district, went to the polls at a rate almost 25% below that of their counterparts in similar precincts. Slightly more modest was the 17.3% (-24.8 + 7.5) drop off in John Conyers district where the white population consists primarily of middle-class ethnics in the northeast and southwest corners of the district.

The behavior of black voters, however, in the black represented precincts of Georgia, New Jersey and Michigan was indistinguishable from that of voters in demographically similar precincts elsewhere in these states. (See Table 3.7) Taking into account only the socioeconomic resources of the communities, the results suggest that these black voters were not sensitive to the race of their congressional representatives. What appeared to be uniformly low black turnout at the aggregate level also holds up at the precinct level.

This finding is particularly interesting in the case of New Jersey: Although the Tenth district had been majority-black for more than a dozen years Donald Payne, elected in 1988, was the first African-American to represent the district. Payne's election followed the reluctant departure of Peter Rodino, who was encouraged to retire by black leaders eager to send an African-American to Congress. Perhaps the unresponsiveness of black constituents in Newark reflects the racial disregard that kept Rodino in office long after the makeup of his district had changed. In that way, African-Americans in Newark exhibited the same independent streak as had been witnessed in the Atlanta area in the early 1980s. After court ordered redistricting in 1980, Georgia's Fifth was transformed from a majority-white district electing black congressmen (Andrew Young in 1972, 1974,

Table 3.7
Predicting Black Turnout
November 1990

Variable	New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia
Black Representation	.286 (.257)	.032 (.125)	.007 (.072)
Rep. John Conyers		-.002 (.159)	
Education	-.028 (.005)	.045 (.012)	-.152 (.042)
Income	-.009 (.003)	-.003 (.005)	.000 (.015)
Rent	-.018 (.003)	-.023 (.010)	-.045 (.025)
Black Density	-.010 (.015)	-.217 (.047)	.325 (.040)
Constant	.285 (.027)	.286 (.047)	.260 (.135)
	N=3504 SER=.054 R ² =.027	N=2275 SER=.155 R ² =.020	N=425 SER=.084 R ² =.252

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of black per capita income. "Rent" measures the proportion of renter-occupied black households.

and 1976) to a majority-black district with a white incumbent (Wyche Fowler). These ironic results contrast sharply with the behavior documented in Philadelphia.

As discussed earlier, there are numerous electoral factors which further distinguish precincts and districts from one another in ways relevant to participation. It is worthwhile to consider that demographics alone may not adequately capture the relevant comparison groups. White and black turnout may also be influenced by the non-racial characteristics of black representatives (tenure, party affiliation) and by electoral competitiveness, more generally.

First, white participation. After controlling for electoral factors, the magnitude of the impact of black representation on white turnout is affected, but the conclusions remain the same. (See Table 3.8). In the Newark area, white turnout was on average 9.6% lower than in comparable precincts represented by freshman Democrats in non-competitive races. In Michigan, white turnout in the precincts of the historically black districts of the First and Thirteenth trailed turnout in other precincts by 17.1% and 25.2%, respectively. As for Georgia, what was initially thought to be a 6% drop-off, was in fact an almost 9-point drop in white turnout, when compared to districts represented by other "young" Democrats. Thus, whether the incumbent was fairly new to the political stage, or could claim over a decade of service, white constituents consistently defected from politics in their districts. The varying degrees of defection, from 6% to over 25%, may suggest something about time and its ability to compound alienation, or something about political styles. Is it that white constituents increasingly lose faith or interest in black elected

Table 3.8
Predicting White Turnout
November 1990

Variable	New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia
Black Representation	-.096 (.012)	-.252 (.010)	-.089 (.014)
John Conyers		.081 (.010)	
Education	.021 (.026)	.245 (.027)	-.027 (.050)
Income	.071 (.012)	-.038 (.013)	.089 (.034)
Rent	-.275 (.011)	-.268 (.020)	-.247 (.049)
Black Density	.022 (.007)	.005 (.009)	.021 (.014)
Party	.009 (.004)	-.020 (.005)	-.025 (.018)
Tenure	-.002 (.001)	-.002 (.001)	-.013 (.003)
Vote Margin	-.009 (.020)	.064 (.022)	.100 (.068)
Constant	-.262 (.120)	.692 (.114)	-.402 (.324)
	N=5343 SER=.117 R ² =.303	N=4464 SER=.122 R ² =.429	N=716 SER=.086 R ² =.116

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of white per capita income. "Rent" measures the proportion of renter-occupied white households.

officials? Or is it that representational styles can mitigate or exacerbate perceptions of disenfranchisement? This issue will be explored in Section 6.

After controlling for variations in the electoral context, the story for black constituents in these three states remains unchanged. (See Table 3.9). In Georgia, New Jersey, and Michigan race was not a salient factor in shaping voting behavior in the November 1990 elections.

5.2 Black Representation 1994: Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, Missouri, and Illinois

November 1994 was an election not short on drama. Widely regarded as the mark, if not the harbinger, of a political revolution, these midterm elections completely altered the landscape: incumbency was rendered a liability rather than an advantage, and Democratic legislators scrambled in vain to maintain a foothold. It was the first reelection year in the aftermath of a districting cycle that had increased black congressional representation by 50%. (This same districting cycle was later credited with the tremendous losses suffered by white congressional Democrats (Swain 1995; Holmes 1994a, 1994b, 1995; Hill 1995; Frisby 1994; Overby 1996). As the Supreme Court heard challenges to the constitutionality of the race-conscious districting of 1990 (challenges which would lead in 1996 to the elimination of five majority-black districts), black representatives in 1994 were threatened by their own success. Though they managed to hold on to their House seats, the Republican sweep of Congress transformed Black

Table 3.9
Predicting Black Turnout
November 1990

Variable	New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia
Black Representation	.361 (.405)	.080 (.358)	.030 (.071)
Rep. John Conyers		-.006 (.650)	
Education	-.021 (.005)	.000 (.012)	-.202 (.044)
Income	.003 (.003)	-.005 (.005)	.021 (.018)
Rent	-.019 (.003)	.016 (.010)	-.048 (.024)
Black Density	-.012 (.015)	-.033 (.052)	.311 (.042)
Party	-.007 (.003)	-.174 (.007)	.072 (.015)
Tenure	.011 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	.002 (.004)
Vote Margin	-.099 (.014)	.354 (.041)	-.163 (.081)
Constant	.185 (.029)	.152 (.049)	.127 (.174)
	N=3427 SER=.051 R ² =.131	N=1996 SER=.140 R ² =.230	N=425 SER=.081 R ² =.296

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of black per capita income. "Rent" measures the proportion of renter-occupied black households.

Democrats into minority members of the minority party. Some African-Americans did benefit from the "revolution": J.C. Watts from Oklahoma became only the third Black Republican (and the seventh African-American from a majority-white district) to be elected to the House since Reconstruction.

Five states were analyzed for the November 1994 elections: Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, Missouri, and Illinois. Together these states were home to nine black incumbents, including one incumbent representing a majority-white district. Alan Wheat of Kansas City, Missouri was also the only incumbent not running for reelection, choosing instead to run for Senate. In November, Karen McCarthy a white Democrat won the race to succeed Wheat against a Black Republican. In the solidly Democratic Fifth district, McCarthy managed a comfortable 13% margin of victory. Also included in the sample is Illinois's First district on Chicago's South Side, the district with the nation's longest history of uninterrupted black congressional representation. At the time, the First was represented by former Black Panther Bobby Rush who was a veteran of elected office but fairly new to the House. In two cases, one in Virginia and one in Maryland, black representation was the product of the 1990 redistricting cycle. Maryland presents an interesting case. The state had two black congressional representatives: Kweisi Mfume (now the President of the NAACP) represented an historically black, inner-city district; Albert Wynn represented a newly black district that has the distinction of being the nation's largest black suburban community. Baltimore is a struggling city, while Prince George's County (whose primary industry is government) is the home of the black middle

class. It is interesting to consider how race, representation, and participation play out in these varying contexts.

At the district-level there were echoes of 1990 in the 1994 turnout patterns. Participation, though generally higher among whites in 1994 than among whites in 1990, remained low for African-Americans in all five states. And, with some notable exceptions, white constituents went to the polls at higher rates than their black neighbors. In the aftermath of the elections, many commentators cited this participation gap as critical to the success of the Republican sweep. Higher black turnout, they argued, might have prevented some of the Democratic losses.

There are several states whose district-level turnout patterns warrant some attention. Tennessee, by far, witnessed the highest turnout rates (for both whites and African-Americans) of any state in the sample. While black turnout in other states rarely exceeded 30%, in Tennessee black turnout ranged from 39-to-79% with the majority of districts enjoying rates over 50%. It was in the Ninth district, represented by 10-term Black Democrat Harold Ford, where black turnout was at its highest. White turnout was similarly high with 51-to-68% of the white voting age population in any district casting ballots. In three cases, including Ford's district, white turnout trailed black turnout by 10-points or more. Given the activity at the ballot box, it is not surprising that when the dust settled Tennessee emerged as the state most thoroughly transformed by a political revolution: the state's Democratic governor and its two Democratic senators were ousted, and the House delegation was no longer 6-3 Democrats, but 5-4 Republican.

The most dramatic participation gaps were in Virginia, Illinois, and Maryland. In half of the districts in Illinois, fewer than 15% of eligible African-Americans turned out to vote. By comparison, white turnout was consistently in the high-30s to mid-40s; two of the twenty districts had white turnout rates of 50 and 52%. In Virginia there were four cases in which white turnout exceeded black turnout by more than 30 points. Similar patterns existed in Maryland. But for all states, black representation either narrowed (Virginia, Missouri) or reversed the participation gap. In Mel Reynold's district in Chicago, for example, African-Americans participated at 29% while the white community (which accounts for a quarter of the total population) turned out at only a 16% rate.

Moving from the district-level to the precinct, and taking into account socioeconomic conditions, the patterns from 1994 begin to diverge from those of 1990. As Table 3.10 indicates, the uniformly negative response to black representation witnessed among white constituents in 1990, was not duplicated in 1994. The trend, however, was clearly towards white demobilization in black districts. The exceptions could be found in Tennessee, where black representation had no effect on white turnout, and in Illinois' First, where Bobby Rush's white constituents were slightly more active than white residents of demographically similar precincts. In Tennessee, the same "revolutionary" zeal that carried the state through dramatic political changes, was apparently in evidence in Ford's district as elsewhere. To that extent, one could argue that white constituents were less influenced by Ford than by the opportunity to effect the statewide races for Senate and Governor.

Table 3.10
Predicting White Turnout
November 1994

Variable	Illinois	Tennessee	Maryland	Missouri	Virginia
Black Representat'n	-.323 (.008)	.010 (.015)	-.146 (.009)	-.028 (.009)	-.047 (.011)
Bobby Rush	.332 (.009)				
Cardiss Collins	.292 (.009)				
Albert Wynn			.068 (.009)		
Bill Clay				-.004 (.010)	
Education	.221 (.012)	.142 (.038)	.283 (.023)	.225 (.023)	.337 (.031)
Income	-.140 (.007)	-.051 (.021)	-.050 (.015)	-.053 (.013)	-.073 (.016)
Rent	-.407 (.009)	-.257 (.029)	-.314 (.017)	-.334 (.017)	-.378 (.022)
Black Density	.056 (.008)	.052 (.018)	.149 (.012)	.081 (.013)	.185 (.016)
Constant	1.90 (.070)	1.19 (.209)	.907 (.154)	1.05 (.132)	1.10 (.153)
	N=9730 SER=.152 R²=.317	N=2255 SER=.173 R²=.041	N=1557 SER=.10 R²=.503	N=2827 SER=.152 R²=.184	N=2022 SER=.138 R²=.177

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

In the precincts of the other seven black-represented districts the drop in white turnout ranged from as low as 2.8% in Missouri to over 32% in Mel Reynolds' Chicago district. At the district -level above, and prior to controlling for confounding effects, the gap between white constituents in Reynold's district and those elsewhere in Illinois averaged well over 20%. But a comparison to residents of other middle-class districts reveals a more dramatic decline. Though we have yet to consider other elements of the political environment, this sizable drop may well have been influenced by Reynold's August 1994 indictment for sexual assault and obstruction of justice. Given an indicted politician running unopposed, turning out to vote can seem less than worthwhile.

For Black constituents the story for 1994 was considerably different from that played out in 1990. (See Table 3.11). In contrast to the general indifference of the previous midterm election, the dominant trend was for black representation to enhance black political engagement in 1994. Again, Tennessee stands out. Harold Ford's Memphis constituents turned out, on average, at a rate 30% higher than that seen in similar precincts elsewhere. Ford's district has the smallest black majority of any of the districts in this sample: African-Americans make up only 54% of the voting age population. In a climate where racial polarization in vote choice is the norm (Ford won 58% of the vote in 1990, 1992, and 1994), such a narrow majority demands high mobilization in order to elect the candidate of choice.

In Chicago, the significance of black representation to political engagement varied across the three black districts. While African-Americans in Cardiss Collins' and Bobby Rush's districts turned out at rates 10% (.069+.027) and 15%(.069+.082) higher,

Table 3.11
Predicting Black Turnout
November 1994

Variable	Illinois	Tennessee	Maryland	Missouri	Virginia
Black Representat'n	.070 (.010)	.301 (.021)	.014 (.020)	.130 (.009)	.138 (.449)
Bobby Rush	.082 (.013)				
Cardiss Collins	.027 (.012)				
Albert Wynn			-.056 (.024)		
Bill Clay				-.084 (.012)	
Education	.127 (.011)	.067 (.029)	.260 (.030)	.204 (.022)	.115 (.021)
Income	-.095 (.006)	-.067 (.016)	-.222 (.019)	.016 (.012)	-.049 (.012)
Rent	-.252 (.009)	.010 (.027)	-.405 (.025)	-.162 (.017)	-.097 (.018)
Black Density	.036 (.010)	-.162 (.043)	.256 (.031)	.136 (.022)	.418 (.023)
Constant	1.23 (.064)	1.13 (.163)	2.58 (.193)	.031 (.120)	.685 (.120)
	N=8237 SER=.135 R ² =.127	N=1541 SER=.102 R ² =.141	N=1277 SER=.119 R ² =.194	N=2575 SER=.129 R ² =.226	N=822 SER=.065 R ² =.350

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

respectively, than those in similar communities elsewhere, Reynolds witnessed only a 7% intra-racial participation gap. Of course, as compared to Mfume in Maryland and Bobby Scott in Virginia, neither of whom influenced black participation in their districts, the "Reynolds effect" is substantial. A similar within-state variation could be seen in Missouri. In that state, Wheat's Kansas City district differed more dramatically from the norm than did Clay's district in St. Louis. As mentioned earlier, Wheat's majority-white district was atypical: not only had he given up his seat to run for the Senate, but the House race pitted a white Democrat against a Black Republican. News coverage suggests that race was not a particularly salient issue in the competition for the House; it is unlikely that it was a significant mobilizing force. Instead, similar to white constituents in Tennessee, the higher degree of mobilization may reflect black interest in Wheat's senatorial candidacy.

The patterns observed among whites and African-Americans remain largely the same after taking politics into account. For white constituents (Table 3.12), with three exceptions, the story remains one of demobilization. The degree of demobilization is less extreme when compared to turnout in similarly uncompetitive races. For example, the 32% drop in Reynold's district softens to a 9.7% drop when compared to precincts where white incumbents were running with virtually no opposition. Lack of opposition also accounted for what had appeared to be a 4.7% gap in white turnout between the precincts in Bobby Scott's Virginia district and similar precincts elsewhere in the state. In fact, there was no demobilization in Virginia.

Tennessee proves to be an interesting case for white and black constituents. The controls for the electoral environment revealed that white constituents in Harold Ford's

Table 3.12
Predicting White Turnout
November 1994

Variable	Illinois	Tennessee	Maryland	Missouri	Virginia
Black Representat'n	-.097 (.014)	.052 (.016)	-.072 (.018)	-.029 (.010)	-.009 (.016)
Bobby Rush	.168 (.012)				
Cardiss Collins	.187 (.010)				
Albert Wynn			.044 (.018)		
Bill Clay				-.048 (.016)	
Education	.224 (.012)	.207 (.037)	.297 (.023)	.237 (.023)	.347 (.030)
Income	-.101 (.007)	-.109 (.021)	-.055 (.015)	-.047 (.013)	-.073 (.015)
Rent	-.355 (.009)	-.289 (.028)	-.309 (.017)	-.332 (.017)	-.375 (.021)
Black Density	.078 (.007)	.016 (.018)	.168 (.012)	.087 (.013)	.164 (.016)
Tenure	-.003 (.000)	-.009 (.001)	-.001 (.003)	.004 (.001)	.005 (.002)
Party	-.048 (.005)	-.037 (.013)	-.055 (.010)	.012 (.010)	.027 (.016)
Vote Margin	-.673 (.034)	-.369 (.051)	-.339 (.107)	.205 (.073)	-.205 (.049)
Constant	1.96 (.070)	2.09 (.220)	1.19 (.174)	.835 (.142)	1.20 (.156)
	N=9730 SER=.149 R²=.344	N=2255 SER=.167 R²=.091	N=1557 SER=.10 R²=.525	N=2827 SER=.152 R²=.190	N=2022 SER=.132 R²=.245

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

district turned out at slightly higher rates (5.2%) than those in other districts with long-term Democrats facing moderate competition. So while white voters across Tennessee may have been driven to the polls by a "revolutionary" zeal, white voters in Memphis were additionally motivated by the presence of a black incumbent in a district where they were a sizable minority. Black Memphis residents (Table 3.13) were 14.2% more active than African-Americans elsewhere. The original estimate of a 30.1% participation gap had much to do with electoral competition. Compared to other incumbents with serious challengers, behavior in Ford's district was not as extreme. But simple competition did not account for the entire 30% gap; Ford remained uniquely "significant" because he operated in a district where there was not only competition, but racial competition. Ford mobilized black and white constituents because he symbolized the triumph of the narrow black majority.

6 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The simple story which emerges from this analysis is that black representation, with few exceptions, lead white constituents in 1990 and 1994 to turn away from the voting booths. At the same time the presence of black incumbents did not necessarily make voters out of the thousands of African-Americans who normally play no role in the electoral process. These broad strokes, however, do not make for the most interesting story. What is interesting is that beneath these trends is an enormous amount of variation. There is nothing transparent about the significance of black incumbents; the degree to which they influence behavior clearly depends on more than just race. It is through

Table 3.13
Predicting Black Turnout
November 1994

Variable	Illinois	Tennessee	Maryland	Missouri	Virginia
Black Representat'n	.109 (.016)	.142 (.024)	.060 (.032)	.179 (.010)	.134 (.600)
Bobby Rush	.008 (.015)				
Cardiss Collins	.070 (.014)				
Albert Wynn			-.258 (.031)		
Bill Clay				-.133 (.016)	
Education	.126 (.011)	.071 (.023)	.247 (.028)	.186 (.020)	.120 (.021)
Income	-.041 (.007)	-.028 (.013)	-.164 (.018)	-.011 (.012)	-.053 (.012)
Rent	-.179 (.009)	-.061 (.021)	-.327 (.024)	-.153 (.016)	-.104 (.018)
Black Density	.045 (.010)	.155 (.037)	.293 (.029)	.117 (.026)	.460 (.024)
Tenure	-.012 (.000)	.014 (.001)	-.050 (.003)	.011 (.002)	
Party	-.018 (.005)	.155 (.006)	.086 (.012)	-.179 (.012)	
Vote Margin	-.297 (.034)	.787 (.042)	-.521 (.156)	-.388 (.055)	.080 (.016)
Constant	.930 (.064)	.087 (.132)	2.43 (.221)	.597 (.133)	.655 (.118)
	N=8237 SER=.128 R²=.214	N=1121 SER=.065 R²=.494	N=1238 SER=.108 R²=.340	N=2575 SER=.121 R²=.293	N=815 SER=.063 R²=.373

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct. Tenure and party were not estimated in the Virginia equation; high collinearity between these variables and black representation made estimation impossible.

explaining this variation, that the relationship between race, representation, and participation is more fully understood.

Table 3.14 summarizes the effect of black representation on white turnout across the 9 states, and 14 black-represented districts, in the sample. The cases are ranked in decreasing order of magnitude. This summary highlights several interesting relationships. First, the dominant trend is clearly white demobilization. Black representation decreases turnout in most cases. Second, The greatest declines in turnout tend to occur in the districts with the longest experiences of black representation. Of the eight districts in which white turnout declined by more than 6%, six had experienced continuous black representation for more than ten years at the time of the election. The finding suggests that white alienation from politics is compounded over time. What is interesting about this relationship is that it indicates that the salience of race is not limited to low-information environments. Rather than becoming less sensitive to race as they learn more about their black incumbents, white constituents become more distant and more resigned. It is important to bear in mind that these effects are not the products of uncompetitive electoral conditions; competition has already been taken into account. Whatever learning takes place as white constituents become accustomed to black representation apparently does not contribute to more positive affect.

Third, more combative representational styles are accompanied by more extreme declines in white turnout. John Conyers and George Crockett of Detroit appear to be in a class of their own. Both Congressmen were emblematic of an older generation of black elected officials who coupled provocative rhetoric with exclusive attention to black

Table 3.14
Percent Change in White Turnout Under Black Representation

State	Black Incumbent	Change in Turnout
Michigan	George Crockett	-25.2%
Michigan	John Conyers	-17.1%
Illinois	Mel Reynolds	-9.6%
New Jersey	Donald Payne	-9.6%
Georgia	John Lewis	-8.8%
Missouri	Bill Clay	-7.6%
Maryland	Kweisi Mfume	-7.2%
Pennsylvania	Bill Gray	-6.4%
Maryland	Albert Wynn	-2.8%
Missouri	Alan Wheat	-2.8%
Virginia	Bobby Scott	0
Tennessee	Harold Ford	+5.2%
Illinois	Bobby Rush	+7%
Illinois	Cardiss Collins	+9%

constituents. George Crockett, for example, went so far as to say that his white constituents in Grosse Pointe “did not need a representative,” their wealth and privilege provided them with ample access to the halls of power (Swain 1995). Compared to Bill Gray or Alan Wheat or even Kweisi Mfume, these representatives created a climate which would discourage white political involvement. Why engage in politics when you are constantly reminded of your irrelevance? The younger generation of black House members adopted a style more collegial, more reliant on coalition-building, and based more heavily on issues with broad appeal. Their efforts could not compensate entirely for the barrier presented by race, but at the very least they did not exacerbate the cleavage.

Fourth, the response to new black congressional representation appears to be conditioned on the age of the district. Of the four incumbents (Lewis, Payne, Wynn, and Scott) in districts with less than 10 years experience with black representation, the two who witnessed substantial declines in white turnout represented old majority-black districts. Both Lewis in Atlanta and Payne in Newark were the first black elected officials to represent districts that had been majority-black for 6 to 10 years prior. So while black representation was relatively new, the erosion of white political clout was well underway. In a sense then, white voters might have perceived an environment not unlike that found in districts with longer histories of black representation. This would account for the similarity in behavior between these two districts and the older districts discussed earlier. In the case of Wynn and Scott, new black representatives in newly created districts, the compounding of white alienation had not yet begun.

For black constituents, as well, there are several interesting observations. Similar to the table above, Table 3.15 summarizes the effect of black representation on black turnout. Again, the cases are ranked in decreasing order of magnitude. Three points should be made. First, all of the instances in which black representation increased black political engagement occurred in districts with a long experience of black representation. (Compare this to the white response to years of black representation). As black constituents grow more accustomed to descriptive representation (and to whatever substantive representation may accompany it), politics appears to assume greater relevance. Secondly, 1994 was the year when black representatives had their greatest impact on the political behavior of their black constituents. In that year, with minority districts under siege from the courts and other critics, black constituents were more highly mobilized than they had been in the quiet days of 1990. Though the black districts in this sample were not directly threatened by legal challenges, the activity at the polls may have been in part a function of fear and in part a measure of solidarity. Finally, unlike white constituents for whom the loss of political clout began before Payne or Lewis took office, black constituents did not respond to these congressmen any differently than they did to other new black representatives. Though they had long enjoyed the advantage of a majority-black district, that history was not an equal substitute for actual descriptive representation.

Merging Tables 3.14 and 3.15 reveals a final interesting pattern. Where black representatives most alienated white voters, they were not particularly successful in attracting black voters either. (Four of the "top" five cases in Table 3.14 are among the

Table 3.15
Percent Change in Black Turnout Under Black Representation

State	Black Incumbent	Change in Turnout
Missouri	Alan Wheat	+17.9%
Illinois	Cardiss Collins	+17.8%
Tennessee	Harold Ford	+14.2%
Illinois	Mel Reynolds	+10.8%
Illinois	Bobby Rush	+10.8%
Pennsylvania	Bill Gray	+5.5%
Missouri	Bill Clay	+4.6%
New Jersey	Donald Payne	0
Michigan	George Crockett	0
Michigan	John Conyers	0
Georgia	John Lewis	0
Maryland	Kweisi Mfume	0
Virginia	Bobby Scott	0
Maryland	Albert Wynn	-25.8%

bottom cases in Table 3.15). And where black representatives were able to maintain the political involvement of white constituents, they secured black political involvement as well. (Four of the “bottom” five cases in Table 3.14 are among the top cases in Table 3.15). What does this suggest? The combative representational styles, shown above to alienate white voters, do not succeed in attracting black voters. Both Crockett and Conyers lost far more than they gained through their constant appeals to racial solidarity. Their rhetoric, presumably designed to mobilize Detroit’s African-American community, only managed to drive their white constituents from the polls. On the flip side, those who abstained from provocative rhetoric, preferring instead biracial appeals, managed to retain not only more white voters but also the political interest of their black constituents. Racial moderation did not dampen black political engagement. In fact in four cases, black participation actually increased.

These results make it clear that the racial dynamic which operates between representatives and their constituents is more complex than one would expect, given the claims of those supportive and suspicious of minority representation (and the mechanisms which enhance minority representation). Critics of minority districting (Swain 1995, Duncan 1990, Duncan 1993a; Duncan 1993b) have long maintained that the practice of concentrating minorities, so as to insure the election of a minority candidate, does not make voters out of unengaged minority Americans. By removing the “suspense” from the November elections, map-drawers give minority residents “no special reason to turn out” (Duncan 1993b). And by packing together a group that lacks the “culture of political participation” (Duncan 1993b, Donovan 1992), these districts further depress

black voter turnout. The only ones who gain from efforts to secure minority representation are the black candidates and incumbents who face a near guarantee of (re)election (Swain 1995, Thernstrom 1987). Supporters of minority districting efforts (and minority office-holding in general) have been equally confident in their belief that minority representation is not only the best guarantor of progressive legislation, but also a means by which minority constituents come to recognize the instrumental value of participation.

The empirical record contradicts these arguments. The findings from 1990 and 1994 indicate that when you (1) accurately calculate race-specific turnout rates (rather than rely on a few raw numbers extracted from *Congressional Quarterly*), and (2) take into account socioeconomic factors that depress turnout regardless of who the representative is, a much more complex picture emerges. Black representation can make a real difference in the level of black political engagement, as we observed in Pennsylvania, Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee. But contrary to the best hopes of supporters, black representation can also leave constituents totally uninspired to vote. Economics has much to do with the level of black turnout in black-represented districts.

Furthermore, reliance on summary statistics (i.e. total turnout in a congressional district) without controls, has concealed the fact that where there is a decline in turnout associated with black representation, it is white constituents who are staying away in droves. The relationship between white voting behavior and black representation is a function of race, political style, and district politics. While it is impossible to deny the

prevalence of white defection from politics, the magnitude of this defection is not wholly inevitable. Black representatives can and do work to minimize white alienation.

On the basis of the information here we can only speculate about the perceptions which underlie the behavioral shifts observed under black representation. In subsequent chapters, I use survey data to identify the attitudes and political orientations which animate these voting decisions. For African-Americans in Pennsylvania, Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee, the explanation may be simply a "role model" effect. That is, "black faces" in Congress indicate to black constituents that politics has something to do with them.. After an era in which it was not uncommon for states and localities to actively discourage minority political participation, black representatives may go a long way in eliminating the impression among blacks that elections are none of their business. Black representatives may also symbolize something more concrete: responsiveness. Both white and African-American constituents, alike, may use the race of their representative as a heuristic device to determine how responsive s/he will be to issues and policies of concern to them. If white constituents feel that black representatives represent only black interests in the district, they may not see the value of participating. The systematic withdrawal among whites may reflect this impression. But does the absence of a participation effect imply that black representation in those states has no political meaning for black constituents? Or rather, does it imply that the good will that black constituents feel towards their black representatives in these states is, for some reason, not extended to the political process more generally? Survey analysis can resolve this issue.

Black Representation and Vote Choice

Chapter 3 examined the relationship between black representation and political engagement, finding that the constituents of black members of Congress go to the polls at rates significantly different from those observed elsewhere. Election day in black districts is generally characterized by patterns of white demobilization, while African-American communities are as likely to be indifferent as they are to be inspired. This chapter considers what happens when constituents do go to the polls. How does the experience of black congressional representation influence future vote choice? In particular, this chapter explores the impact of black incumbency on Democratic voting. (All but three black congressmen since Reconstruction have been Democrats). Are there observable differences in the patterns of Democratic voting between districts with and without a history of representation by Black Democrats? To what extent do white constituents, already shown to withdraw from politics, defect to Republican alternatives after black Democrats have held the House seat ? And how is the allegiance of black constituents, for whom descriptive representation does not always inspire political engagement, affected when the district's Party spokesman is black? The analysis compares rates of Democratic voting across districts, identifying where the patterns deviate from what would be expected given both the politics and economics of the area. The results suggest that black incumbency not only drives white voters from the polls, but also drives up white Republican voting. And for African-Americans, black incumbency can reinforce what is already a strong partisan bias.

The link between minority office-holding and political preferences is one largely unexplored in the minority-empowerment literature. Though analysts, in their research on black mayors and city councils, have considered the implications for participation, as well as for political attitudes, no attention has been directed towards the “substance” of politics: how constituents pick and choose among alternatives, and whether that process is informed by their experience with black elected officials. Race as an influence on this decision-making process is an idea examined primarily in the literature on the electability of black candidates (Karnig and Welch 1980; Bullock 1984; Williams 1990; Citrin, Green, and Sears 1990; Strickland and Whicker 1992; Jones and Clemons 1993; Terkildsen 1993; Hertzog 1994; McDermott 1996, 1997; Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkosz and Nitz 1995). In this literature, race appears as a virtually insurmountable barrier between white constituents and black political hopefuls: white voters are more likely than black voters to favor candidates of their own race, expressing greater confidence in their policy objectives and personal traits.

The research on black electability emphasizes the role of prejudice and stereotyping in shaping vote choice in low-information environments.¹ This chapter transfers the question of vote choice to a different context. Rather than candidates about whom voters know little, or districts where black candidacy and office-holding are a novelty, the analysis considers what happens when there is high information--when behavior need not be based on expectations, but on experience. Furthermore, this chapter answers these questions not through surveys cataloging opinion towards experimentally-

¹ However, Bullock (1984) and Jones and Clemons (1993) show that other factors, for example party and media endorsements, or prior political experience, can inhibit the prevalence of race-conscious voting.

manipulated ideal-types, but rather through analysis of actual turnout patterns in districts with black incumbents. What happens when constituents presumably have more than stereotypes at their disposal? Just as Huckfeldt and Kohlfeld (1989) attributed white defection from the Democratic party to its overwhelming popularity among black voters, and consequently to its growing association with black interests, the analysis in this chapter reveals the potency of the link between black incumbency and the Democratic Party. Whether or not this link is the product of persistent stereotypes, or the result of heightened racial group competition (Giles and Hertz 1994), it does demonstrate that experience is not always the antidote to polarized voting.

In the proceeding sections I will present the data and methodology for this analysis, discuss the results on a state-by-state basis, and then summarize the dominant trends in vote choice in minority districts.

2 THE DATA

This chapter analyzes results from the 1994 congressional elections in Illinois, Missouri, Maryland, Tennessee, and Virginia. The data from these states were first presented and discussed in Chapter 3. Together these states were home to nine congressional districts represented by black Democrats at the time of the midterm elections. See Table 4.1. The sample includes districts with long histories of black congressional representation (e.g. Tennessee's Ninth), as well as districts newly created in the 1990 round of redistricting (e.g. Maryland's Fourth). In all but one case, Representative Alan Wheat from Missouri, each of the black incumbents included in the

sample ran for reelection in November 1994. In this way, these incumbents had much in common with their white counterparts included in the sample: in 41 of the 48 other congressional districts, incumbents ran for reelection in 1994.

Table 4.1
Sample of Black Congressional Representatives
November 1994

State	District	Representative
Maryland	4	Albert Wynn
	7	Kweisi Mfume
Tennessee	9	Harold Ford
Virginia	3	Robert Scott
Missouri	1	William Clay
	5	Alan Wheat
Illinois	1	Bobby Rush
	2	Mel Reynolds
	7	Cardiss Collins

As noted earlier the data, assembled with the help of the National Committee for an Effective Congress, is organized at the precinct-level, and consists of both demographic and political information. The primary measure of vote choice in these midterm elections is "total votes for the Democratic congressional candidate as a proportion of the total ballots cast in the precinct." (Section 3 will discuss how this aggregate figure is used to derive race-specific vote preferences). In addition, each precinct is identified by the race and partisan affiliation of its congressional representative, and by whether that representative ran for reelection in 1994. Other measures of electoral

conditions include campaign spending information, and the district's 1992 vote for Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton. The Clinton measure serves as a rough approximation of aggregate partisan identification in the districts, a measure other than vote choice in the 1994 congressional elections.

The demographic data available for each precinct consists of education rates, income levels, and racial makeup. Neither education nor income is disaggregated by racial group. Education is measured as the proportion of the total (over 25) population in the precinct with at least some college education. Income level is measured by the median household income in the precinct.

3 THE MODEL

Identifying the relationship between minority office-holding and political preferences requires a two-stage analysis similar to the one discussed in Chapter 3. As in the earlier chapter, the first stage employs a model of ecological inference—in this case, to calculate the proportions of black and white constituents voting for Democratic congressional candidates. These polarization figures are generated on the basis of (1) aggregate statistics on the voting age population, and (2) the race-specific turnout estimates calculated earlier. Stage one essentially extends the work of Chapter 3, using what we know about who votes to estimate how they vote. Table 4.2 illustrates what is involved in disaggregating the results from Chapter 3 in order to generate our new quantities of interest.

Table 4.2
Ecological Inference and Vote Choice

Race	Vote Choice		Total Turnout	No Vote	
	Democrat	Republican			
Black	λ_i^b	$1 - \lambda_i^b$	B_i^b	$1 - B_i^b$	X_i
White	λ_i^w	$1 - \lambda_i^w$	B_i^w	$1 - B_i^w$	$1 - X_i$
	D_i	$1 - D_i$	T_i		

The previous analysis (see Table 3.2) used X_i (proportion black) and T_i (total turnout), the only observed data, to estimate the precinct parameters B_i^b (the proportion of voting age blacks turning out to vote) and B_i^w (the proportion of voting age whites turning out to vote), which are not observed. In this chapter, the goal of ecological inference is to use the estimates B_i^b and B_i^w , as well as the marginals, X_i and D_i (total ballots cast for Democratic candidate), to calculate the quantities in the body of the table. The quantities of interest are, λ_i^b (proportion of black voters voting Democratic), and λ_i^w (proportion of white voters voting Democratic).

The mechanics and the logic that govern this ecological inference procedure are identical to those from the earlier analysis. For example, to control for electoral effects during the estimation procedure precincts are grouped and analyzed by congressional district, one state at a time. Just as in the earlier procedure, the amount of deterministic information on vote choice available in any single precinct varies considerably. More homogenous precincts allow for more accurate estimates of vote choice among the predominant racial group, while leaving more uncertain the estimates for the minority

racial group. Pooling information across precincts enables estimation in the absence of definitive precinct-level bounds. In all cases, the point estimates for λ_i^b and λ_i^w are accompanied by standard errors, reflecting the degree of uncertainty.

In the second stage of the analysis, the precinct measures of λ_i^b and λ_i^w are used as dependent variables in regressions predicting Democratic voting as a function of black representation, controlling for political and economic conditions in the area. The stage employs a weighted least squares model identical to that in Chapter 3. (See Appendix C). This chapter examines two hypotheses regarding the response of black and white voters to black congressional representation in 1994. First, white constituents in districts represented by Black Democrats defect from Democratic politics. Secondly, black representation further enhances African-American allegiance to the Democratic party. In sum, black congressional representation leads to a polarization in vote choice. The hypotheses take the following mathematical form:

Hypothesis 1:

White Democratic Voting:

$$\hat{\lambda}_i^w = \beta_0 + \beta_1^w * \text{Black Representation} + \beta_{2-4}^w * \text{SES} + \beta_{5-7}^w * \text{Politics}$$

Hypothesis 2:

Black Democratic Voting:

$$\hat{\lambda}_i^b = \beta_0 + \beta_1^b * \text{Black Representation} + \beta_{2-4}^b * \text{SES} + \beta_{5-7}^b * \text{Politics}$$

where,

$\hat{\lambda}_i^w$ = Democratic proportion of white vote in precinct i

$\hat{\lambda}_i^b$ = Democratic proportion of black vote in precinct i

$\beta_{0-7}^{w,b}$ = Coefficients for explanatory variables

Black Representation = Presence of Black incumbent in precinct i

SES = Measures of the socioeconomic conditions in precinct i
 Politics = Measures of the political conditions in precinct i

In this chapter, our attention is directed towards the β_1^b and β_1^w coefficients in Hypotheses One and Two. β_1^w in Hypothesis One measures the extent to which Democratic voting rates for white constituents in precincts with black congressional representatives differ from those in precincts with white congressional representatives. Similarly, β_1^b in the second equation measures the difference in black Democratic voting between each of these district types.

In addition to the confounding effects of socioeconomic status (e.g. wealth is correlated with Republican voting), each hypothesis takes into account political factors which could influence Democratic voting in congressional races. Chief among these electoral variables is incumbency advantage. Congressional scholars have found incumbency, with the name recognition and funding advantage it implies, to be of major significance in determining electoral success (Mayhew 1974; Alford and Hibbing 1981; Jacobson and Kernell 1981; Niemi and Weisberg 1990). Since the 1950s, the reelection rate for incumbent House members has rarely dipped below 90%. In 1994 it was 92.3% (Swain 1997). Because Democrats (and Republicans, for that matter) receive relatively more votes as incumbents than as challengers, the models control for cases where the Democratic candidate is the incumbent. In this way, the voting patterns in the districts of black congressional representatives can be compared, appropriately, to patterns in districts with other Democratic incumbents running for reelection. The model also takes into account the level of campaign spending. Measured as the ratio between total spending by

the Democratic candidate and total spending by the Republican, the model acknowledges that Democrats who outspend the competition garner more votes than those who trail their competitors in fundraising. The model also acknowledges that when it comes to campaign dollars, black incumbents are often at a disadvantage. On average, African-American candidates receive lower amounts of money from individual contributions and political action committees than white candidates (Wilhite and Theilmann 1986). Lastly, the model includes a variable for the Clinton vote as a rough measure of partisan tendencies in the district. To the extent that it captures the popularity of the Democratic Party, in general, districts where Clinton was enthusiastically supported in 1992 would be more likely to support Democratic candidates in 1994. Of course, the Republican "revolution" in 1994 indicates that even these Democratic districts can have a change of heart.

4 THE RESULTS

This section will present the results of Hypotheses One and Two for each of the five states included in the sample.

4.1 Illinois

The 1994 mid-term elections in Illinois brought moderate change to the state's House delegation, shifting the balance to the right but not as dramatically as in other states. Democrats moved from a 12-8 majority, to an even split with Republicans. Only one Democratic incumbent lost his bid for reelection. Eighteen term Democrat Dan

Rostenkowski, facing a 17-count indictment on charges of embezzlement, fraud, and witness tampering, was handily defeated by Republican challenger Michael Flanagan. (The second Democratic House seat was lost following the retirement of George Sangmeister).

Democratic congressional candidates consistently enjoyed high levels of support among black voters in Illinois, a familiar story in black politics. Figure 4.1 plots Democratic voting among blacks and whites in each of the state's 9730 precincts. Each circle summarizes information on Democratic voting in one precinct. While there was a fair amount of variability among white voters, in most precincts the overwhelming majority of black voters cast ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate. Note that the points on the graph cover virtually the entire horizontal axis (white voters), but tend to cluster above .75 on the vertical axis (black voters). Whites were rarely as enthusiastic as their African-American neighbors about the precinct's Democratic congressional candidate: most points on the graph are above the 45° line, where black and white Democratic voting would be equal.

Examining the data district-by-district reveals a similar pattern. In all but six congressional districts, 90% or more of black voters threw their support behind the Democrats. In four of the remaining six congressional districts, Democratic candidates secured at least 75% of the black vote. By comparison, the variability in the white vote witnessed at the precinct level translated into an equally high degree of variability at the district-level. Anywhere from 23% to 74% of white voters endorsed Democratic candidates. In 12 of Illinois' 20 congressional districts, support for Democrats fell below

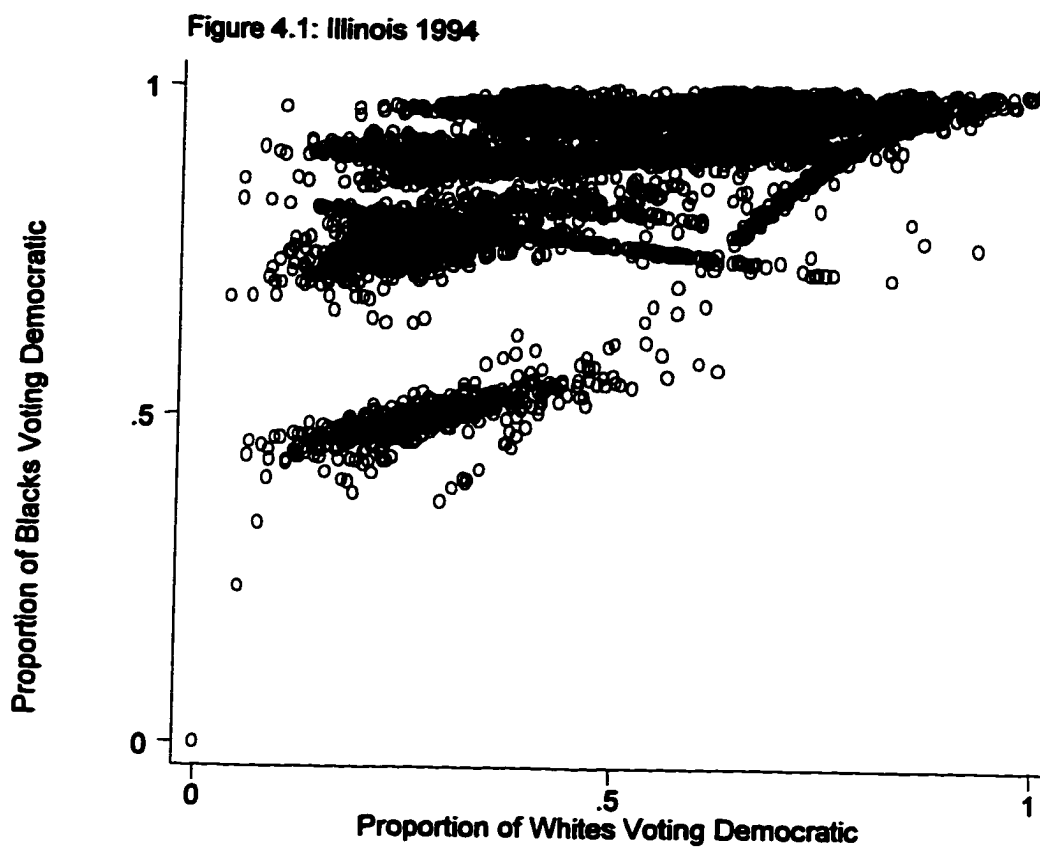


Figure 4.1: Illinois 1994. *Each point summarizes, for one precinct i , the proportions of white and black voters casting ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate.*

50%. In only 3 districts did white Democratic voting exceed 60%. On the surface, the behavior in the districts of Bobby Rush, Mel Reynolds, and Cardiss Collins--the three black incumbents running for reelection--did not differ from that elsewhere in the state. All three secured 96% of the black vote, but only 35% to 58% of the white vote. Only Cardiss Collins was reelected with the support of a majority of the white voters in her district.

The difference between these three black districts and districts elsewhere in the state become more clear when their precincts are compared to other demographically similar precincts in Illinois. Table 4.3 presents the results from regressions predicting Democratic voting among white district residents. As can be seen from the coefficient on "black representation" (column one), when compared to their counterparts in equally wealthy and educated precincts represented by white incumbents, white voters were less likely to support the Democratic party. On average, Democratic voting in the three districts with black incumbents trailed by 2.2% Democratic voting in districts represented by other Democrats. When disaggregated further, the drop off was greatest in Bobby Rush's district (18.4%) and negligible among Cardiss Collins white constituents (column two). Finally, white constituents represented by Mel Reynolds, a black incumbent and former Rhodes Scholar elected in 1992, appeared more enthusiastic about Democrats than white voters--in similar economic circumstances--who had never been represented by a Black Democrat.

It is not only economic circumstances which can influence the popularity of a Democratic candidate. Incumbency, spending, and constituents already partial to

Table 4.3
Democratic Voting in Illinois, 1994
White Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	-.02 (.01)	-.18 (.00)	-.37 (.01)
Cardiss Collins		.19 (.00)	.17 (.01)
Mel Reynolds		.61 (.01)	.53 (.02)
Party	.22 (.00)	.22 (.00)	.04 (.01)
Black Density	-.06 (.01)	.03 (.01)	.02 (.00)
Income	-.03 (.00)	-.05 (.00)	-.03 (.00)
Education	-.19 (.01)	-.05 (.01)	-.08 (.01)
Incumbency			.12 (.01)
Clinton Vote			.01 (.00)
Campaign Spending			.001 (.00)
Rostenkowski			-.13 (.01)
Constant	.70 (.05)	.91 (.04)	.50 (.04)
	N=9729 SER=.15 R² =.28	N=9729 SER=.11 R² =.63	N=9729 SER=.10 R² =.68

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct. "Incumbency" indicates whether the Democratic congressional candidate was an incumbent.

Democratic politics can considerably improve prospects. For that reason, it is instructive to compare the behavior in the three black districts to behavior in other districts where the Democratic candidate is the incumbent; where s/he outspends her/his Republican challenger, and where the Party has been popular in the past. Including such controls allows for a better evaluation of the divergent patterns in black districts. (Table 4.3, column three). For example, when compared to other Democratic incumbents in pro-Clinton districts, the white constituents in Mel Reynold's district no longer outvoted their counterparts by 42%, but only by 16%. The initial estimate was in large part an artifact of favorable electoral conditions. The remaining 16% gap is most likely due to the fact that Reynold's was running unopposed, the only incumbent in Illinois in that position. For Cardiss Collins and Bobby Rush, the degree of white defection from the Democratic Party was much greater than originally estimated. Democratic voting among whites in those districts trailed--by 20% ($-37\% + 17\%$) and 37%, respectively--the rates observed in similar districts represented by well-financed White Democrats. (Note that the expanded model in column three includes a control for Rostenkowski's Fifth district. This control captures the impact of factors unique to the Fifth, namely the criminal charges against Rostenkowski, which separate that political race from others. Without the control, the model would underestimate the significance of incumbency, spending, and district partisanship).

Black residents, among whom Democratic candidates were consistently popular, reacted somewhat differently to their experience of black representation. See Table 4.4. On average, Democratic voting in precincts with black incumbents was 5% higher than

Table 4.4
Democratic Voting in Illinois, 1994
Black Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	.05 (.00)	.03 (.01)	-.10 (.01)
Cardiss Collins		.02 (.01)	.07 (.01)
Mel Reynolds		.06 (.01)	.16 (.02)
Party	.14 (.00)	.14 (.00)	.10 (.00)
Black Density	-.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)
Income	-.06 (.00)	-.06 (.00)	-.04 (.00)
Education	-.04 (.01)	-.04 (.01)	-.05 (.01)
Incumbency			.02 (.01)
Clinton Vote			.003 (.00)
Campaign Spending			-.001 (.00)
Constant	1.36 (.04)	1.40 (.04)	1.11 (.05)
	N=5968 SER=.09 R²=.52	N=5968 SER=.09 R²=.53	N=5968 SER=.09 R²=.54

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct. "Incumbency" indicates whether the Democratic congressional candidate was an incumbent.

that in demographically similar precincts elsewhere in Illinois (column one). The highest rates were observed in Mel Reynold's district, where Democratic voting exceeded rates in other parts of the state by 9% (column two). For black voters represented by Rush and Collins, the partisan gap was a more modest 3% and 5%, respectively.

As it turns out, however, the story changes when one considers the ideal electoral circumstances in which these Democratic candidates found themselves. Their popularity among African-Americans did not derive exclusively from the good will generated by several years of descriptive representation. In fact, after considering the advantage of incumbency and a well-financed campaign, black voters in both Collins' and Rush's districts were *less* enthusiastic than other black voters in Illinois (or, more accurately, in Chicago). Rush's constituents were the least enthusiastic about the Democrat, with voting rates an average of 10% below expected levels (column three). Collins secured 3% less of the black vote than her counterparts in other districts. Of course, these declines are minor within the context of black America's solidly Democratic profile. Similar declines among white constituents, who are more evenly split across Democratic and Republican camps, would be more dramatic. Mel Reynolds was the only black representative whose constituents appeared to respond favorably to descriptive representation. Again, attributing this entirely to the consequences of descriptive representation could be misleading. Reynolds ran unopposed in the Second district.

In sum, there were strong parallels between the responses of black voters and white voters in Illinois to black representation. In Mel Reynold's district, both groups displayed above average rates of Democratic voting. The First (Rush) and Seventh

(Collins) districts witnessed declines in the expected levels of support for Democratic candidates. The declines, in relative and absolute terms, were most dramatic among the white voters in these two districts.

4.2 Virginia

In a year of political revolutions and new political contracts, the 1994 mid-term elections in Virginia were remarkable for their consistency with the past. With one notable exception, congressional incumbents (Democrats and Republicans, alike) ran for and won reelection--in some cases, effortlessly. Only in the Eleventh district, where Republican Tom Davis successfully challenged Democratic incumbent Leslie Byrne, was there a hint of the trends sweeping the nation. The victory was significant, leaving Democrats with only a 6-to-5 majority in the Virginia delegation, and making a mockery of a partisan redistricting plan designed to guarantee a Democrat in the Eleventh.

Virginia voters differed from Illinois voters in a number of respects. As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, there was considerably more variation in the voting behavior of black constituents in Virginia. In most of the precincts the Democratic congressional candidate secured a solid majority of the black vote; but, there were a number of precincts where less than 50% of black voters cast ballots for Democrats. Also, there were more precincts in Virginia than in Illinois where the vote was not polarized by race--precincts where white and black voters were equally supportive of the Democratic candidate. Finally, in three of Virginia's congressional districts there were no Democratic candidates running for election, and consequently no ballots cast for Democrats. In the Sixth district,

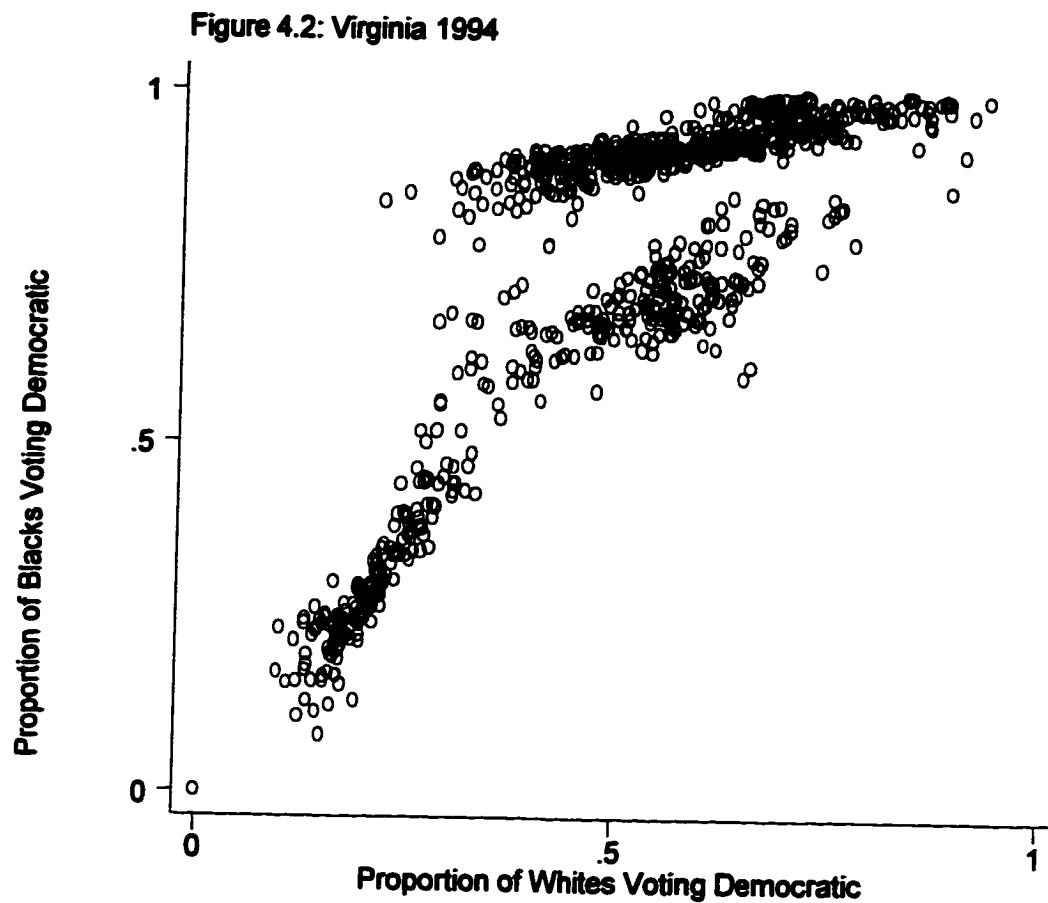


Figure 4.2: Virginia 1994. *Each point summarizes, for one precinct i , the proportions of white and black voters casting ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate.*

Republican Bob Goodlatte ran unopposed for reelection. In the Seventh and Tenth districts, Republican incumbents faced minor challenges from Independent candidates.

Despite the greater variability at the precinct-level, in six of the eleven congressional districts 70% to 95% of black voters supported Democrats. Only in the First district, where a six term Republican faced a poorly-funded Democrat, did the district-wide vote fall below 50%. In that case, only 33% of Blacks voted Democratic. Meanwhile, Democratic candidates never secured more than 59% of the white vote. Relatively speaking, Rep. Bobby Scott, Virginia's only black Democrat, did fairly well among his white constituents. He won 56% of the white vote in his district, compared to two of his white colleagues who were reelected with support from only 50% to 52% of their white constituents.

When compared to what would be expected in demographically similar precincts, Bobby Scott's performance among white voters no longer looks like a success. Table 4.5 summarizes the results of regressions predicting white Democratic voting as a function of black representation. While it was true that Norman Sisisky and L.F. Payne won a smaller percentage of the white vote than Scott, Scott's constituents were actually less supportive than their economic circumstances would normally dictate. Six percent more of these same constituents would have voted Democratic had they been represented by a white Democrat.

Rep. Scott had more than just economics working in his favor when he ran for reelection. He also enjoyed a funding advantage that enabled him to outspend his Republican rival by more than 3-to-1. And he represented the most Democratic district in

Table 4.5
Democratic Voting in Virginia, 1994

Variables	White Voters		Black Voters	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Black Representation	-.06 (.01)	-.25 (.02)	.05 (.01)	.25 (.09)
Party	.45 (.01)	.39 (.02)	.59 (.01)	.52 (.02)
Black Density	.19 (.01)	.21 (.01)	.31 (.02)	.32 (.02)
Income	-.11 (.01)	-.11 (.01)	.12 (.02)	.11 (.02)
Education	.20 (.02)	.19 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	-.01 (.04)
Clinton Vote		.01 (.00)		-.01 (.00)
Spending Ratio		-.00 (.01)		.06 (.01)
Constant	1.13 (.11)	.81 (.11)	-1.06 (.19)	-.72 (.27)
	N=1884 SER=.11 R ² =.80	N=1884 SER=.11 R ² =.81	N=1062 SER=.13 R ² =.84	N=1062 SER=.12 R ² =.85

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

Virginia: sixty-five percent of his district supported Clinton's 1992 presidential bid. Only Jim Moran's "inside-the-Beltway" district came close to that level of support, with 51% of constituents voting for Clinton. Taking these factors into account reveals a much greater defection among Scott's white constituents. Had Scott been a white Democrat in a similar position, 24% more of his white constituents would have voted Democratic. Instead, with the experience of black representation behind them, many whites sought alternatives to the Democratic party. (Note that the expanded model in column two does not include a control for Democratic incumbency. In Virginia, all incumbents ran for reelection).

For black constituents, Scott made Democratic politics more attractive. The aggregate figures from the district understate his significance. Rather than reject the Party, as their white counterparts had, black representation made African-Americans more willing to embrace it. See Table 4.5, columns three and four. Considering only their socioeconomic circumstances, 5% more African-Americans voted Democratic than would have had they previously been represented by a white, rather than a black, Democrat. This 5% gap, in part, reflects Scott's ability to compensate for black Virginians' growing dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party. In an article published shortly before the November elections, the New York times reported on African-American discontent with President Clinton, and trouble it would spell for Democratic candidates running in tight contests. Losing patience with a Democratic Party more concerned with "locking up criminals" than addressing the needs of their communities, African-Americans were expected to stay home rather than vote for a party in which they had lost faith (Berke 1994). In fact, in Virginia, African-Americans in the districts most supportive of the

Clinton presidency in 1992 had the lowest rates of Democratic voting in 1994. Scott arrived in Virginia at an important time. Compared to other precincts in which pro-Clinton sentiment had run high (and in which the Democratic incumbent ran a well-financed campaign), Scott's black constituents were 25% more supportive of the Democrats (column four). This rise, substantial even for a group with an almost homogenous partisan identity, demonstrates the ability of race to put a new face on--and, in doing so, redeem--a political party.

In sum, black representation in Virginia intensified the degree of racial polarization in vote choice. Rep. Bobby Scott was as successful at pulling blacks towards the Democratic party, as he was at pushing whites towards Republican alternatives.

4.3 Tennessee

For Democrats in Tennessee, the mid-term elections in 1994 were a bit like musical chairs, where success was possible only for those who chose to remain seated. Democrats who ventured up to the Senate (Jim Cooper), or out of the Congress (Marilyn Lloyd), surrendered their districts to Republicans. The four Democrats who sought reelection were the only four left after the dust settled. A microcosm of the Republican revolution, the Tennessee House delegation shifted from a 6-to-3 Democratic advantage, to a 5-to-4 Republican majority.

Figure 4.3 summarizes voting patterns in Tennessee precincts in 1994, illustrating the general unpopularity of the Democrats. With points tightly clustered in the bottom-left quadrant of the graph, it is clear that among blacks and whites alike, Democrats rarely

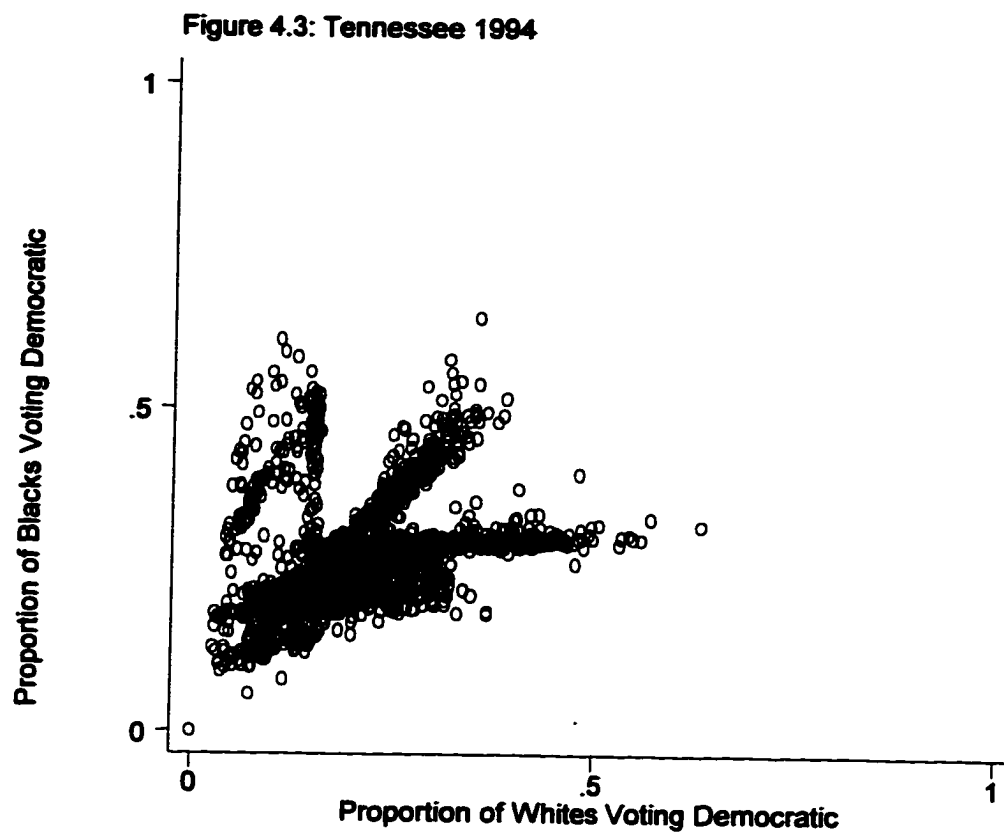


Figure 4.3: Tennessee 1994. *Each point summarizes, for one precinct i , the proportions of white and black voters casting ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate.*

received more than 50% of the votes cast. Voting also appeared to be less racially polarized than what was observed in the earlier states. (Recall Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Admittedly, it was more common than not for Democrats to secure a larger fraction of the black vote than of the white vote; but, there are a number of precincts clustered around the 45° line where Democratic voting is roughly equal across racial groups. There are also instances where white voters were attracted to Democrats in larger numbers than were their black neighbors. And even where black Democratic voting exceeded white Democratic voting, the gap was not as dramatic as what was witnessed in a state like Illinois.

The exception was Harold Ford's Ninth district, a district with a narrow black majority (59% black) and a long history of black representation. Represented by the cluster of points to the upper-left of the graph, Ford's district was the site of extreme racial polarization at the ballot box. Ford's support among white voters rarely reached the double digits. Overall, Ford secured 7% of the white vote in his district. Elsewhere, Democrats won up to one-third or more of the white vote. In fact, even in districts with Republican incumbents, running successfully for reelection, more than 7% of the white voters supported the Democratic candidate.

This anti-Democratic bias in Ford's district, already visible from just the aggregate data, is more striking when one compares these precincts to similar ones in other Tennessee districts. Table 4.6 presents the results of regressions predicting Democratic voting among white constituents in Tennessee. On average, 21% fewer whites voted Democratic in Ford's district than would have had their representative been a white

Table 4.6
Democratic Voting in Tennessee, 1994

Variables	White Voters		Black Voters	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Black Representation	-.21 (.01)	-.14 (.01)	.10 (.01)	.19 (.02)
Party	.12 (.00)	.08 (.01)	.11 (.00)	.14 (.01)
Black Density	.11 (.01)	.06 (.01)	.09 (.01)	.09 (.01)
Income	.08 (.01)	.06 (.01)	.04 (.01)	.03 (.01)
Education	-.07 (.01)	-.05 (.01)	.04 (.01)	.06 (.01)
Incumbency		.04 (.01)		.03 (.01)
Clinton Vote		-.002 (.00)		-.01 (.00)
Spending Ratio		.01 (.00)		.001 (.00)
Constant	-.70 (.07)	-.37 (.07)	-.21 (.08)	.04 (.08)
	N=2255 SER=.08 R²=.50	N=2255 SER=.06 R²=.64	N=1847 SER=.07 R²=.49	N=1847 SER=.07 R²=.51

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct. "Incumbency" indicates whether the Democratic congressional candidate was an incumbent.

Democrat. And compared to the constituents of the other three Democratic incumbents, all seeking reelection and spending heavily on their campaigns, 14% fewer whites endorsed the Democratic party.

Fortunately for Ford, black representation did not compromise the relationship between African-Americans and the Democratic Party. (See Table 4.6, columns three and four) In fact, the experience, and whatever good will it may have generated, strengthened the allegiance of black voters. Given expectations based on the socioeconomic conditions in which they lived, black voters in the Ninth district were a full 10% more supportive of the Democrats than black voters in other Democratic-controlled precincts in the state.

Ford was one of four Democrats whose electoral prospects were significantly improved by the advantage of incumbency. However, Ford spent considerably less money--relative to his Republican challenger--than did the other Democrats running for reelection. Ford outspent Republican Rod DeBerry by 2-to-1, while John Tanner, for example, spent more than sixteen dollars for every one spent by his challenger. With well-financed campaigns able to lure more voters, the three white Democrats in Tennessee could compensate, to some extent, for the more limited interest shown by African-Americans. Controlling for electoral advantages, in addition to socioeconomic conditions, reveals that the 10% gap initially attributed to black representation understated its full impact. At similar levels of funding, a white Democratic incumbent would have won 18% less of the black vote than Ford managed in the November election (column four).

In sum, what black representation cost in white votes, it recaptured in the heightened allegiance of Tennessee's black voters.

4.4 Maryland

Much as it did their neighbors in Virginia, the Republican fervor of 1994 largely bypassed Maryland. The election began and ended with the eight member Maryland congressional delegation evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. All but one incumbent ran for, and easily won, reelection. Representative Helen Bentley who stepped down to run for Governor (and lost in the primary), was replaced by a fellow Republican in the Second district.

As in most states, Maryland Democrats were especially popular among African-Americans. Figure 4.4 indicates that in the majority of precincts more than 50% of black voters supported the Democratic congressional candidate. In fact, in the typical precinct 77% of black votes went to the Democrats. But with the large concentrations of federal and public employees, particularly in the counties bordering the District of Columbia, Democrats also did well among white voters. There were a number of precincts in which more than half of white voters endorsed the Democratic candidate. These precincts, in areas such as Prince George County and Montgomery County, are represented by the cluster of points in the upper right quadrant of the graph. Of course, there is far more variability in the white vote than in the black; quite a few precincts awarded Democrats no more than a third of the white vote. Similar to what was observed in Virginia, there were instances in which the preferences of white and black voters converged. Judging by the points clustered around the 45° line, racial polarization in vote choice was not the story in every precinct.

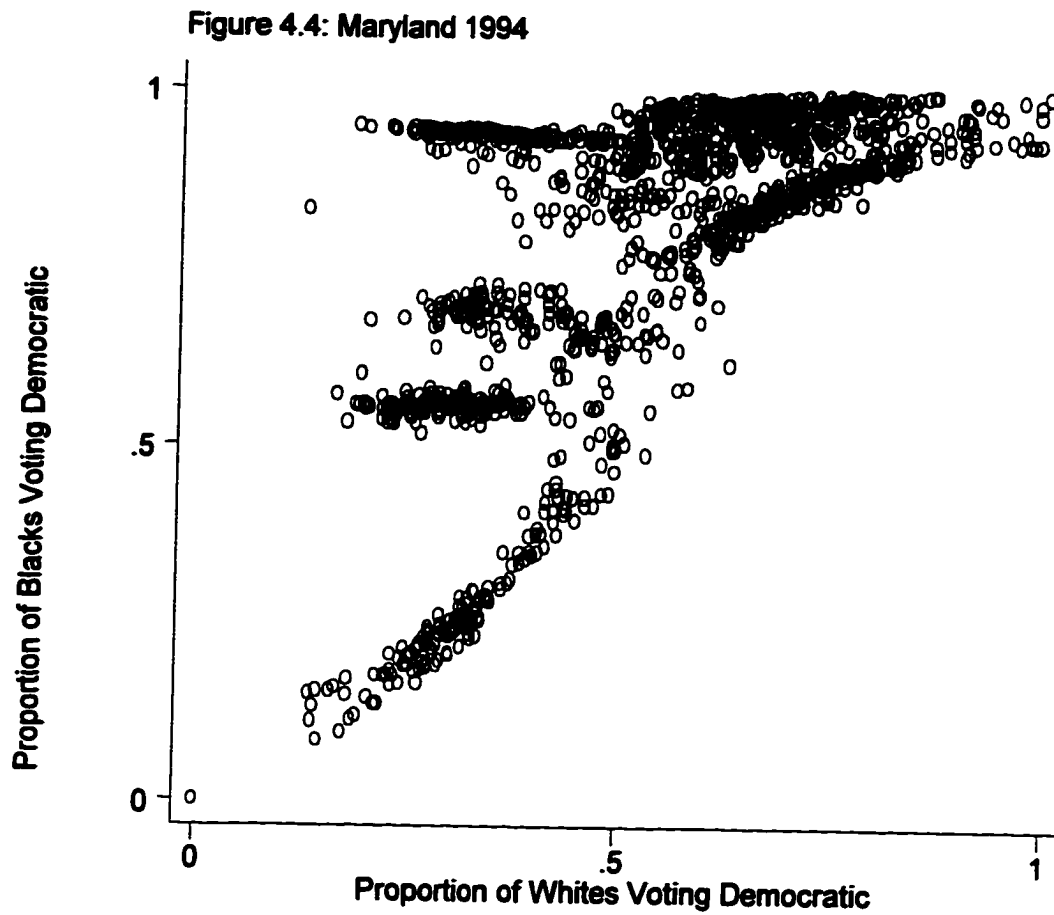


Figure 4.4: Maryland 1994. *Each point summarizes, for one precinct i , the proportions of white and black voters casting ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate.*

In the aggregate, five out of the state's eight congressional districts had black voters casting 82% to 97% of their ballots for the Democratic candidate. In two of the remaining three districts, Democratic voting exceeded 55% among African-American voters. This partisan bias was especially high in the districts represented by Albert Wynn and Kweisi Mfume, Maryland's two black House members. Ninety-three percent of black voters in Wynn's district, and 97% in Mfume's endorsed their reelection. Even white voters in their districts were enthusiastic about the Democrats. Wynn secured 60% of the white vote; Mfume, 56%. Though these do not represent the highest rates of Democratic voting among whites in Maryland, they do compare favorably to the four districts where Democrats claimed barely one-third of the white vote. In no district did white voters ever endorse Democrats as wholeheartedly as blacks; the highest proportion of white votes ever cast for the Democrats was 68%. In one district (the Sixth), blacks outvoted whites by almost 60%.

When compared to the four Republican strongholds, white voters in Wynn's and Mfume's districts appeared particularly enthusiastic about Democrats. But as compared to precincts long-represented by Democrats, and facing similar economic conditions, white voters in these black represented districts were less supportive than would have been expected. See Table 4.7. On average, Mfume's and Wynn's white constituents had Democratic voting rates 8% below those in similar precincts. Examined individually, each black incumbent experienced about the same level of defection: 8% for Mfume, 7% for Wynn.

Table 4.7
Democratic Voting in Maryland, 1994
White Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	-.08 (.01)	-.08 (.01)	-.02 (.02)
Albert Wynn		.01 (.01)	.06 (.01)
Party	.29 (.01)	.29 (.01)	.25 (.01)
Black Density	.04 (.01)	.04 (.01)	.05 (.01)
Income	-.09 (.01)	-.09 (.01)	-.08 (.01)
Education	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.04 (.02)
Clinton Vote			-.002 (.001)
Campaign Spending			.002 (.00)
Constant	1.25 (.10)	1.32 (.11)	1.24 (.11)
	N=1556 SER=.10 R²=.62	N=1556 SER=.10 R²=.62	N=1556 SER=.10 R²=.63

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

Wynn and Mfume were like their Democratic colleagues in the Third and Fifth districts, in so far as they benefited from the perks of incumbency advantage. But incumbents such as Benjamin Cardin, who spent over half-a-million dollars on his reelection campaign while his challenger spent \$10,000, also gained from their willingness to fund their efforts without restraint. This willingness was critical to their success in winning support from the white voters in their districts. The regression model presented in column three of Table 4.7 takes into account the power of a well-financed campaign. The results indicate that when you consider what Mfume spent on his reelection effort (\$161,285), as well as the disaffection among those who most supported the Clinton presidency, white voters in his district behaved no differently than would be expected. And, in Wynn's case, white voters were slightly more supportive than they would have been had they been represented by a white Democrat. [Note that the model in column three does not include a control for incumbency; all Democrats ran for reelection].

It was for black voters in Maryland that black representation proved to be the most significant. As noted earlier, Wynn and Mfume's black constituents had some of the highest rates of Democratic voting in the state. Even when compared with precincts in similar economic circumstances—for example, Wynn's neighbors in the Fifth district--the level of black support was exceptional. See Table 4.8. Democratic voting was generally 13% higher in the precincts of the Fourth (Wynn) and Seventh (Mfume) districts, all other things equal. Mfume's constituents were the more enthusiastic of the two; in his district black representation contributed to 14% more support for the Party. For Wynn, whose black suburban district was the product of the 1990 redistricting cycle, Democratic voting

Table 4.8
Democratic Voting in Maryland, 1994
Black Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	.13 (.02)	.14 (.02)	.33 (.03)
Albert Wynn		-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Party	.24 (.01)	.24 (.01)	.27 (.01)
Black Density	-.07 (.02)	-.07 (.02)	-.04 (.02)
Income	-.01 (.02)	-.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Education	-.06 (.03)	-.06 (.03)	.03 (.03)
Clinton Vote			-.01 (.00)
Campaign Spending			.001 (.00)
Constant	.74 (.18)	.69 (.19)	.72 (.19)
	N=1250 SER=.16 R²=.48	N=1250 SER=.16 R²=.48	N=1250 SER=.15 R²=.50

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

was 12% higher than it would have been had his constituents never had a black representative.

The consequences of black representation for Democratic voting in Maryland are all the more striking when you consider the electoral advantages enjoyed by other incumbents. The 12% to 14% gap originally estimated understates the influence of race, reflecting instead the ability of a well-financed campaign to compensate for the appeal of black representatives. With equal funding, Wynn's constituents would have outvoted similar constituents elsewhere in the state—for example, constituents from the neighboring Fifth out of which Wynn's district was carved—by 30%. (Column three, Table 4.8). Mfume attracted 33% more black voters to the Democratic party than would have been expected.

Having grown accustomed to black representation, white voters in Maryland were no less likely to support black Democrats than they were to support white Democrats. But for African-American with the same experience, “black faces” heightened the appeal of Democratic candidates.

4.5 Missouri

The 1994 mid-term elections in Missouri did little to disrupt the Democratic majority in the state's political lineup. Every House incumbent, Democrat and Republican, who sought reelection achieved it. Kansas City congressman Alan Wheat, one of two black congressional representatives and the only incumbent not to seek reelection, gave up his seat to launch an unsuccessful bid for the Senate. Democrat Karen

McCarthy won the campaign to succeed Wheat in the Fifth district, fighting off a challenge from black Republican Ron Freeman. At the end of the election cycle, Democrats continued to hold six of the nine seats in the congressional delegation.

Across Missouri, Democratic incumbents were generally more successful in winning over the black voters in their districts than they were in winning the white voters. Although there were only three Republicans statewide who managed to defeat Democratic candidates, there were many precincts in which Republican voting among whites was widespread. Taking a look at Figure 4.5, the amount of variability in the white vote is clear. There are observations spanning virtually the entire horizontal axis; and, in the many precincts to the left of the midpoint, Republican candidates won the bulk of the white vote. The racial polarization in vote choice noted earlier in states such as Illinois was evident in Missouri as well. With the exception of precincts in the Eighth district (bottom-half of the graph), there is only limited variability in the black vote. In most cases, 70% or more of black voters turned out to endorse Democratic candidates. In the precincts of the Eighth district, where seven term Republican Bill Emerson was running for reelection, most of the black voters turning out preferred the Republican.

In two-thirds of the districts in Missouri, over 78% of black voters supported the election, or reelection, of the Democratic candidate. By contrast, in the five districts where the majority of white voters endorsed Democrats, the level of support peaked at only 68%. Rep. Bill Clay, the black congressman from St. Louis, was the Democratic incumbent least popular among white voters. Clay secured only 43% of the white vote in his district. In fact, Clay was the only incumbent (Democrat *or* Republican) to be

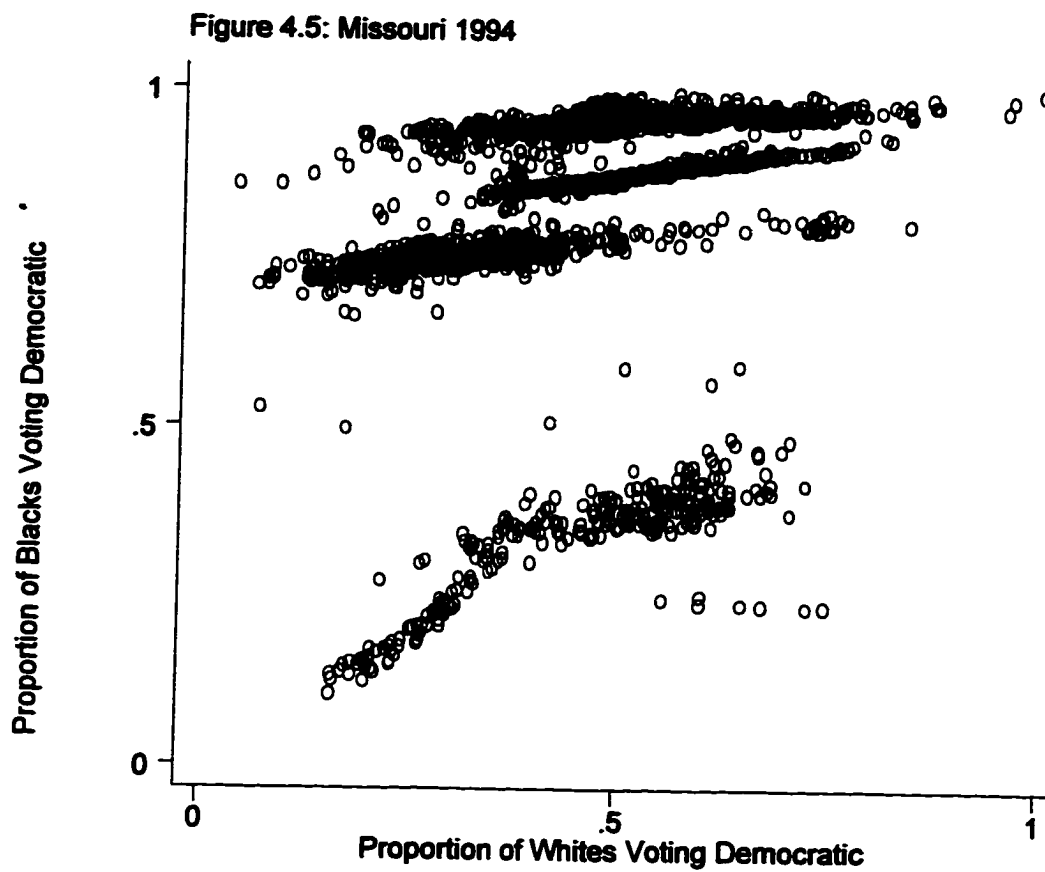


Figure 4.5: Missouri 1994. *Each point summarizes, for one precinct i , the proportions of white and black voters casting ballots for the Democratic congressional candidate.*

reelected with such a small proportion of the white vote. Other incumbents won anywhere from 52% to 74% of the white vote in their districts. Clay, however, won 96% of the black vote, the second highest margin in the state. (Richard Gephardt won 97% of the black vote in his district). In Kansas City, where the district's first and only black representative left to be replaced by a white Democrat, both blacks and whites exhibited average levels of Democratic voting.

Clay's relative unpopularity with white voters was evident even when compared to districts whose economic conditions would lead voters to favor Republicans. Taking into account the socioeconomic forces working to Clay's advantage, the defection of white voters looks even more dramatic. See Table 4.9. On average, white voters in the precincts of the First (Clay) and Fifth (Wheat) districts gave 13% less of their votes to Democrats than they did in other demographically similar precincts in Missouri. As suggested by the earlier findings, the decline was greatest in Clay's district, where the congressman won 17% fewer white votes than did his Democratic colleagues. In Wheat's (former) district, Democratic voting was 10% below what would have been observed elsewhere.

The picture changes somewhat when you consider expectations based not only on economics, but also on the electoral circumstances. Of particular importance is the fact that Karen McCarthy, who succeeded Alan Wheat, funneled much less money into her campaign, relative to her challenger, than did any other serious Democratic candidate. While candidates such as Gephardt spent thirteen dollars for every one dollar spent by the Republican challenger, McCarthy spent less than two dollars for every dollar spent on

Table 4.9
Democratic Voting in Missouri, 1994
White Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	-.13 (.01)	-.10 (.01)	.06 (.01)
Bill Clay		-.07 (.01)	-.12 (.04)
Party	.27 (.01)	.27 (.01)	.25 (.01)
Black Density	-.04 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
Income	-.06 (.01)	-.06 (.01)	-.07 (.01)
Education	-.10 (.02)	-.10 (.02)	-.11 (.02)
Clinton Vote			-.01 (.00)
Campaign Spending			.004 (.00)
Constant	1.04 (.08)	.99 (.08)	1.47 (.09)
	N=2653 SER=.10 R²=.45	N=2653 SER=.10 R²=.47	N=2653 SER=.10 R²=.50

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

Freeman's effort. Holding funding and other factors equal, Democratic voting in the Fifth was actually 6% *higher* among whites than it would have been elsewhere. Arguably this rise has less to do with Wheat's legacy, and more to do with enthusiasm in the state's only open seat race. With a black Republican challenger who proved to be more tenacious than originally anticipated, white Democrats may have felt more anxious about the need to turn out in large numbers. For Clay, electoral controls changes the magnitude of the decline (from 17% to 6%), but leaves the conclusion unaffected: black representation in St. Louis depressed interest in Democratic politics. [Note that the regression models do not include controls for Democratic incumbency; Wheat was the only Democrat who did not run for reelection.]

For black constituents, Democratic voting rates in Clay's and Wheat's districts were 41% higher than economics alone would have dictated. See Table 4.10. Not surprisingly, the voters in Clay's district were somewhat more enthusiastic about the Democrats than those in Wheat's. The gap between Clay's precincts and similar precincts represented by white Democrats was 44%; between Wheat and his counterparts the gap was 38%.

Wheat's successor made efficient use of her campaign dollars. In another district, facing similar economic and political conditions, Democratic voting among blacks would have been 53% lower than what was observed in the precincts of the Fifth (column three). For Clay, who spent \$47 for every \$1 dollar spent by his challenger, and whose district went overwhelmingly for Clinton in 1992, Democratic voting among blacks was 10% above levels expected from white-represented districts in similar circumstances. The

Table 4.10
Democratic Voting in Missouri, 1994
Black Voters

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Black Representation	.41 (.01)	.38 (.01)	.53 (.02)
Bill Clay		.06 (.01)	-.43 (.04)
Party	-.20 (.01)	-.20 (.01)	-.24 (.01)
Black Density	.11 (.02)	.09 (.02)	.04 (.01)
Income	.10 (.01)	.09 (.01)	.03 (.01)
Education	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.04 (.02)
Clinton Vote			-.03 (.00)
Campaign Spending			.03 (.00)
Constant	-.32 (.13)	-.29 (.13)	1.24 (.12)
	N=1894 SER=.14 R²=.55	N=1894 SER=.14 R²=.55	N=1894 SER=.10 R²=.77

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. "Income" is measured as the log of median household income in the precinct.

44% originally estimated was largely a function of the zeal with which Clay funded his reelection campaign.

In sum, the experience of black representation in Missouri did not eliminate the racial sensitivity of either white voters or black voters. Given the opportunity to vote for a black incumbent, white voters in Missouri were more likely (than would have been expected) to prefer the Republican challenger. Meanwhile, black voters--with the experience of black representation behind them--seized the opportunity to endorse black Democrats.

5 SUMMARY and IMPLICATIONS

With few exceptions, the price of black representation in 1994 could be measured in white votes lost to Republican candidates. While white representatives could place their hopes for reelection in the power of incumbency, black members of Congress could be equally confident in the alienating power of race. Insuring their electoral success was the support of African-Americans, whose allegiance to the Democratic Party was bolstered by black representation. However, neither the goodwill of African-Americans, nor the erosion of support among white voters could be guaranteed with certainty. From state to state, the significance of black congressional representation differed, in degree if not in kind. As we shall see, this variation, evidence that the salience of race is not transparent, is as revealing as the trends.

Table 4.11
Percent Change in White Democratic Voting Under Black Representation

Representative - State	Change in Voting	Change in Turnout	District History
Bobby Rush - IL	-37 %	+7%	Old
Bobby Scott - VA	-25%	0	New
Cardiss Collins - IL	-20%	+9%	Old
Harold Ford - TN	-14%	+5.2%	Old
Bill Clay - MO	-6%	-7.6%	Old
Kweisi Mfume - MD	0%	-7.2%	Old
Albert Wynn - MD	+4%	-2.8%	New
Alan Wheat - MO	+6%	-2.8%	Old*
Mel Reynolds - IL	+16%	-9.6%	Old

"District History" refers to the tradition of black congressional representation. Districts which had experienced more than 10 years of uninterrupted black congressional representation (either in the tenure of the current incumbent or in that of his predecessors) are identified as "old." *Alan Wheat, who served from 1982-1994, was the first and only black Congressman to represent the majority-white 5th district.

Table 4.11 summarizes the effect of black representation on vote choice among white constituents in the 9 districts (and 5 states) included in the sample. The table arranges the districts in decreasing order of magnitude, listing first those districts that experienced the most profound erosion in support among white voters. Also, included in Table 4.11 is the effect of black representation on white turnout, identified earlier in Chapter 3. Along with the variations observed in vote choice, the turnout information sheds light on the possible sources of racial polarization in black-represented districts. A number of interesting patterns emerge.

First, white defection from Democratic politics is clearly the rule. In five of the nine congressional districts represented by black Democrats, the Party's proportion of the white vote declined by anywhere from 6% to 37%. If the reelection of black Democrats depended on their cross-over appeal, these incumbents would face tremendous hurdles.

That race could alienate white voters from black incumbents challenges an assumption implicit in the literature on the electability of black politicians. Analyzing cases (either real or experimentally-manipulated) in which black candidates are usually challengers, and rarely incumbents, researchers imply that race primarily operates where information is scarce. Racial polarization results from an *inability* to distinguish a candidate on grounds other than race. Faced with limited information and high information costs, voters behave as "cognitive misers" (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997), looking for shortcuts to facilitate the decision-making process. These shortcuts typically involve assumptions based on the candidate's association with salient political and social groups. When confronted with unknown quantities, candidate demographics (data that is readily available) can be especially powerful, serving either as a source of voter bias against candidates, or as a source of political informative stereotypes.² In either case, political judgments become racially determined.

Incumbency, however, is supposed to counteract the determinative power of race in political judgments. Bullock (1984) maintains that Black incumbents should make inroads among white voters not only because of their fundraising ability and their name

² The literature on the electability of black politicians makes a distinction between bias (or, "simple racism") which is purely emotive, and stereotyping (or, "symbolic racism") which is content-based. In stereotyping voters accept or reject a candidate based on their agreement or concern with the ideologies and issue positions they attribute to the candidate due to his racial group membership.

recognition, but also because incumbency itself becomes the candidate's distinguishing feature. Furthermore, for black politicians, incumbency means an opportunity to "win over skeptics through performance in office" (1984, 250). However, the findings summarized in Table 4.11 indicate that race can compromise the appeal of a candidate--known or unknown, with or without a record. In general elections, where white voters were supplied with both an incumbency cue, as well as a partisan cue, race remained a decisive factor--to the detriment of black incumbents. Exploring the salience of race in electoral decisions obviously is relevant regardless of the context. Researchers should not limit their examinations of racial polarization to elections in which only the most attentive voters can identify more than just a candidate's racial attributes.

The recent events of November 1996 reinforce this conclusion. In November 1996, five black incumbents ran for and won reelection in districts redrawn to eliminate the black voting majorities that had brought them to office originally. Two of the five districts had gone from majority-black to majority-minority (with blacks and Latinos accounting for more than 60% of the voting age population); three of the five districts (two in Georgia, one in Florida) had become majority-white. Critics of racial gerrymandering hailed the results "as a major breakthrough in the tortured racial politics of the South" (Fletcher 1996). The three victories in majority-white districts were unassailable proof that whites were willing to vote for black contenders who run effective campaigns. But the reality suggests that this enthusiasm is premature. Early analysis of the election results has found that each of these three black incumbents garnered only one-third of the white vote in their districts (Sack 1996). Racial polarization is so deeply-

rooted that even with the benefits of incumbency, these black Democrats were unable to make significant headway in securing white political support. This is not to say that incumbency did not help. If these victories say anything at all, it is about the power of incumbency. The local and national contacts that come with incumbency enabled these black Democrats to raise the large sums needed to get their message out; and, the opportunity to prove themselves as members of Congress probably won them some white votes. Cynthia McKinney who won reelection in Georgia declared herself a "product of the Voting Rights Act":

Representing the old 11th district allowed me to run and win in the new 4th district, without having to change my views, my gold tennis shoes, or my braids.... (McKinney 1996)

Contrary to the best hopes of those eager to dismantle majority-black districts, the results of November 1996 should be more cause for concern (over the persistence of racially polarized voting) than celebration. Rather than an argument against the Voting Rights Act, the victories in Georgia and Florida should engender support for its provisions. Black incumbents were victorious because they had had the opportunity to serve. For social scientists, the results serve as an important reminder that issues of balkanization should be studied even in high-information races.

Secondly, the defection associated with black incumbency is visible in districts with and without long histories of black representation. In fact, every district with a long history of black representation (i.e. ten years or more) had white voters more willing to support Republican alternatives. (The one exception was Missouri's Fifth district. This

6% rise, however, has less to do with Alan Wheat—who stepped down to run for Senate—than it has to do with an election pitting a white Democrat against a black Republican. With a *black* Republican running for the House, Kansas City suddenly became more Democratic). There is no indication that the erosion of support among white voters declines—or grows worse—with more extensive experience of black representation. While Illinois' First district (the oldest black district in the country) did suffer the greatest loss in white voters, Virginia's Third (newly created in 1992) lost an impressive 25% of white voters to Republican candidates. This pattern is further evidence that time does not eradicate racially polarized voting. White voters never acclimate fully to black politicians.

Third, comparing the polarization results to the turnout results provides some leverage to understanding the dynamics in these black-represented districts. Three processes could have generated the patterns observed in the six districts where Democratic voting declined among whites: (1) self-identified Democrats stayed home on election day, leaving Republicans to account for a larger portion of votes cast; (2) constituents who typically vote Democratic cast votes for Republican candidates instead; or, (3) turnout among Republicans increased. The first two processes are of particular interest since they starkly reflect the ability of race to realign preferences, through "exit" (Democrats staying home) or "voice" (Democrats voting Republican). In all of the districts where turnout was higher than expected in November 1994, Democratic voting declined. This would be consistent with the third process where the increase in turnout was concentrated among self-identified Republicans. However, in these three districts (in Illinois and Tennessee) the decline in Democratic voting far exceeded the increase in

turnout, suggesting that a considerable number of white Democrats opted for Republicans. Democrats made similar decisions in Scott's Virginia district, where Democratic voting declined despite a stable rate of turnout. For Clay and Mfume in Missouri and Maryland, the erosion in Democratic voting among whites was most likely the result of Democratic voters staying away from the polls.

Finally, the 16% increase in Democratic voting in Reynolds district (partly the consequence of Republican "exit") should not be interpreted as an endorsement. Had the year been 1992, when Reynolds had unseated the notoriously unpopular Gus Savage, the enthusiasm for the black Democrat would have been comprehensible. Throughout his tenure, Savage invoked racism at nearly every turn, dismissing his black critics as "tools" and "Uncle Toms," urging his constituents to choose between "white and right," and attacking the "suburban Zionist lobby" (Johnson 1990, Holmes 1990, Schmidt 1990, Tolchin 1990). All while building a legislative career riddled with absenteeism. An Oxford-educated college administrator, focused on the delivery of goods and services to the district, was a welcomed change after six terms of racial demagoguery. But by 1994 a list of indictments against Reynolds had killed that euphoria. The fraction of his "success" unexplained by Republican "exit" is most likely the result of a campaign without any political opposition.

Thus, the patterns observed in Table 4.11 can be explained by the decisions of white Democrats to either passively (stay home) or actively (vote Republican) reject black representation.³ In only one case, Wynn in Maryland, did a black incumbent attract more

³ For Wheat, Wynn, and Reynolds, the increase in Democratic voting among whites was accompanied by lower than expected turnout. This would suggest that the increases were, in part, a function of Republican

white voters than would have been expected from his precinct. The success was modest, due in part to a decline in turnout among white Republicans. Race, more often than not, cost black incumbents the support of white voters.

The alienation of white Democrats sits in stark contrast to the support of black voters. Table 4.12 summarizes the effect of black representation on Democratic voting among blacks, arranging districts in decreasing order of magnitude. The table also includes information on relative turnout in these districts. Three points should be highlighted. First, in virtually every case, black incumbents secured a larger proportion of the black vote than expected for a Democrat. In seven of the nine congressional districts, Democratic voting increased by 6% to 53%. Just as it did among white voters, this relationship indicates that black voters continue to use race as a guide long after black candidates have established a name for themselves. Among Democratic incumbents--all with a record of performance in the district, all enjoying the benefits of black America's solidly liberal profile--black incumbents will always be more successful among African-Americans than other incumbents.

"exit" from the polls. As noted earlier, the dynamics in Wheat's district probably had more to do with a campaign pitting a white Democrat against a black Republican, than it had to do with Wheat himself.

Table 4.12
Percent Change in Black Democratic Voting Under Black Representation

Representative - State	Change in Voting	Change in Turnout	District History
Alan Wheat - MO	+53%	+17.9%	Old
Kweisi Mfume - MD	+33%	0%	Old
Albert Wynn - MD	+30%	-25.8%	New
Bobby Scott - VA	+25%	0	New
Harold Ford - TN	+19%	+14.2%	Old
Bill Clay - MO	+9%	+4.6%	Old
Mel Reynolds - IL	+6%	+10.8%	Old
Cardiss Collins - IL	-3%	+17.8%	Old
Bobby Rush - IL	-10%	+10.8%	Old

"District History" refers to the tradition of black congressional representation. Districts which had experienced more than 10 years of uninterrupted black congressional representation (either in the tenure of the current incumbent or in that of his predecessors) are identified as "old." *Alan Wheat, who served from 1982-1994, was the first and only black Congressman to represent the majority-white 5th district.

Secondly, old and new black districts were equally likely to witness a rise in Democratic voting. A long history of black representation had no noticeable effect on the reaction to black representation. Even after the novelty had died, black voters remained sensitive to race.

Lastly, with three exceptions (Scott in Virginia, and Wynn and Mfume in Maryland), Democratic voting increased wherever black turnout increased. This would suggest that some part of the rise in Democratic voting was a function of heightened mobilization among black Democrats. In Alan Wheat's Kansas City district, where the rise in Democratic voting exceeded the increase in turnout, black constituents who might

have voted Republican endorsed the Democratic congressional candidate instead. A similar dynamic unfolded during Mfume and Scott's reelection bids. In one case, Wynn in Maryland, the rise in Democratic voting was a by-product of Republican constituents choosing to stay home rather than go to the polls.

By applying new techniques in ecological inference to new data on electoral behavior, this chapter has brought to light the dynamics which characterize voting in black-represented districts. The analysis has moved past the limited perspective of prior survey research, demonstrating that questions of racial polarization and racial sensitivity are relevant outside of the low-information environments that have long been the focus. But for all of the questions answered about "what happens" in these districts, other questions are raised about "why" they happen. Are voters responding to black representatives as candidates or as incumbents? That is, how much of the erosion in white support amounts to retrospective, as opposed to prospective, evaluation? And what is responsible for the bias in white voting decisions? Is simple racism to blame for the reaction of white constituents? Or is it social and political stereotyping? Or possibly, does it reflect racial group competition, with white voters responding to increased black political power? Lastly how extensive is the bias triggered by the presence of black representatives? Are black and white voters evaluating only the candidate? Or, do they project on to the Democratic Party, at large, their sentiments towards black incumbents? Could other Democrats benefit, or suffer? At the aggregate level it is difficult to distinguish between competing interpretations of the behavior observed. Chapter 5 will

draw on survey data to identify the attitudinal dimension to electoral behavior, and provide some explanation for the political dynamics in black districts.

Black Representation and Political Attitudes

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 revealed that the political behavior of both black and white constituents is, to varying degrees, sensitive to the “color of representation.” The dominant trend in black-represented districts is one of white demobilization, with white constituents generally turning out at rates significantly below that of their counterparts elsewhere. Additionally, those who do cast ballots have shown themselves to be less willing to endorse black incumbents than white incumbents with similar credentials. Black turnout is more variable: in some cases descriptive representation enhances participation, in other cases behavior remains largely unaffected. In virtually every case, however, African-American voters are considerably more enthusiastic about black reelection bids, than they are about the reelection of white incumbents. What remains unclear, however, is the individual calculus that accounts for the aggregate patterns observed. Why do white constituents defect? What stimulates black politics? Through an analysis of the expressed opinions of constituents, this chapter interprets the behavioral response to black representation and identifies the attitudes which animate electoral politics in black districts. By posing the question, “How does black representation impact political attitudes?” this chapter answers the questions raised by Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The findings suggest that it is the symbolic dimension of black representation that accounts for the change in sociopolitical involvement. Individuals invest black representation with political meaning; black incumbency defines, from the perspective of constituents, the character of political life. These definitions, similar to the resources generally credited with influencing

political behavior, can make an individual more or less prepared for political engagement. Furthermore, the symbolic dimension of black representation is not transparent: black and white constituents differ in the political meanings they attribute to black representation.

This emphasis on attitudes builds on prior research which has made the case for the analytical link between attitudes and actions. For example, research has demonstrated that policy preferences, or how one perceives and evaluates government, are correlated with electoral participation (Converse 1966, Campbell et al. 1960, Verba and Nie 1972). On the issue of race, sociologists have attributed inter and intra-group differences in political participation to individual and group political orientations--namely, to the presence of racial group consciousness or group identification (Conover 1984; Miller, Gurin, Gurin and Malanchuk 1981; Shingles 1981). The literature on minority political empowerment has paid scant attention to the impact of empowerment on political attitudes (Gilliam 1996; Gilliam and Kaufmann 1996; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Evidence from the city-level suggests that minority office-holding may lead to a perception of greater policy responsiveness and sensitivity among minority residents. The confidence of white constituents is partly influenced by their ideological leaning. However, methodological shortcomings in the research (as well as its focus on the city-level), limits its utility for understanding the behavior documented in the previous chapters. For that reason, prior research on minority empowerment and political attitudes serves as a point of departure for the analysis presented below. In this way, the analysis moves us a step closer to understanding not only the full impact of black congressional representation and

the causal chain which leads to changes in behavior, but also the extent to which city empowerment and congressional empowerment generate different responses.

The following section will present the data on which this analysis is based. Section 3 will outline the central questions to be answered, and the attitudinal dimensions to be explored. Section 4 presents the results, discussing how black representation shapes political attitudes and perceptions. Section 5 concludes.

2 THE DATA

The data used for this analysis is drawn from several sources. The primary source is the American National Election Study Cumulative Data File (ANES), a collection which pools common variables from 21 biennial election surveys conducted since 1952 by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. This chapter relies exclusively on the 7 studies from 1980 to 1992. Each of the studies consists of between 1614 and 2176 pre- and post-election interviews (during presidential election years). During midterm elections, only post-election interviews are conducted. All of the respondents were of voting age (or would be at least 18 by November of the election year), but were not necessarily registered to vote. Fifteen hundred eighty-one (1581) respondents self-identified as black; 10, 718 respondents self-identified as white.

The white respondents tended to be older, better educated (20.3% of whites vs. 10.4% of blacks had college degrees), wealthier, and more suburban (44.9% vs. 21%) than the African-Americans in the survey. Politically, black respondents, maintained a uniformly liberal and overwhelmingly Democratic profile: a full 90.3% of black

respondents considered themselves Democrats. By contrast, white respondents were more conservative and more likely to identify as Republicans (47.4%).¹

Data regarding members of Congress were extracted from Politics in America and from the "Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders," an ICPSR dataset which compiles political and biographical information for every House and Senate member who served between 1789 and 1991. In addition, Black House members were identified using the Almanac of American Politics, Politics in America, and the *Congressional Quarterly*.

Respondents living in congressional districts represented by black members of Congress at the time of the interview (November of the election year) were coded as having black representation.² Black congressmen represented 4.6% of the respondents surveyed. These constituents, the majority of whom (59.3%) were African-American, were scattered across a number of states: California, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas. As compared to respondents living elsewhere, respondents with black representatives were more likely to be found in the Northeast and Northcentral regions of the country (60.5% vs. 45%). Additionally, these constituents were more heavily concentrated in central cities, than in the suburban areas that many others call home: 74.5% of respondents with black representatives lived in urban areas, compared to 22% of all other respondents.

¹ Liberalism is measured on a 7-point scale ranging from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). The average score for white respondents was 4.3; for black respondents, 3.9.

² The district code for each of the NES respondents reflects the district defined for that particular election cycle. In the majority of cases, the district boundaries are similar to those from the previous election cycle--making it easy to identify, and include information about the incumbent. In the case of redistricts where wholly new districts were created, I assumed no incumbent. Where redistricts changed the district code by not it's geographic boundaries, information about the incumbent from the former district was included.

While there was no significant difference in levels of education, respondents in black-represented districts tended to have slightly lower incomes. For example, only 16.7% of respondents in white districts had incomes in the 0 to 16th percentile, compared to 19% of those in black districts; and, 5% of respondents in white districts had incomes in the 96 to 100th percentile, compared to only 1.8% in black districts. Finally, the respondents in districts with black representatives were more likely to consider themselves Democrats (83.7%) than were their counterparts elsewhere (56.3%).

In addition to race, survey respondents were further coded for the tenure and party affiliation of their representatives. Tenure, in this analysis, refers to the number of consecutive years served by the member of Congress as of November of that election year. On average, respondents surveyed by the NES were represented by members of congress with 9.7 years of service in the House. The average for constituents with black representatives was slightly higher, 10.1 years. The majority of respondents, 63.1%, were represented by Democrats.

3 QUESTION AND MODEL

The central question of this chapter is "How does black representation impact attitudes?" More explicitly, what is the distribution of political attitudes between and within racial groups in black-represented districts? How do groups evaluate the presence of black incumbents? What are the important demographic and political correlates of how citizens respond to minority political leadership? In the answers to these questions is the link between black representation and political behavior. The aggregate patterns observed

in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 become more comprehensible when we understand the political significance that constituents attach to the race of their representative.

Broadly speaking, constituents can interpret the political significance of black representation in one of three ways: positively, negatively, or with indifference. Some have argued that there is no substantive difference in the representation or constituency service provided by black and white member of Congress. (The jury is still out on whether or not that is the case). As such, one might doubt whether constituents assign any significance at all to the presence of black elected officials. But given the behavioral changes observed previously, it would be difficult to argue that constituents do not assign any significance to the race of their representative. Rather, it is clear that whites and blacks, alike, use race as a sort of heuristic device when interpreting the political landscape (and, by extension, when deciding how to respond to it). Assuming, therefore, that race matters, black representation might indicate either (1) a more hospitable and responsive political landscape, or (2) a more hostile environment than would exist with a non-black member of Congress. Each of these perceptions suggests an unique interpretation of the behavioral changes documented earlier.

Concluding that the political landscape is either hostile or hospitable is the sum of many smaller assessments about politics, in general, and various political actors, in particular. In part, the conclusion reflects a constituent's perception of the responsiveness and integrity of those in political life: Does anyone look out for my interests? In part, the conclusion reflects a constituent's perception of his own role in politics: Is politics relevant? Does what I say matter? The literature on political participation has established

the influence of assessments like these on the decision to participate. This chapter explores attitudes towards politics along four dimensions : (1) the member of congress; (2) the Congress; (3) the political parties; (4) the constituent as political actor.³ Together these dimensions shape the final judgment on the character of the political landscape, and in turn the constituent's objective in participating in the political system. To what extent do these judgments differ in the face of black congressional representation?

3.1 Dimension 1: Member of Congress

Dimension One explores what Oppenheimer (1996) terms the “representational experience,” the relationship between representatives and their constituents. As he defines it, the “representational experience” does not refer to legislative behavior or policy representation; rather it consists of expectations about, and interactions with, elected officials. It is about members at home, as opposed to members in Washington. In fact, Oppenheimer (1996) presents the representational experience as “an extension of and complement to Fenno’s ‘homestyle’ (1978). Whereas ‘homestyle’ is primarily concerned with the behaviors members display as they ‘cultivate their constituencies’ in terms of allocation of resources, presentation of self, and explanation of Washington activities, representational experience is equally, if not more, concerned with the relationship’s constituent side.” Dimension One explores this experience from the

³ It is possible to imagine still more dimensions along which people form opinions when assessing the political environment (e.g. impressions of local government, opinions on interest groups, etc.). However, for the purposes of this research, emphasizing the above three dimensions is appropriate. Not only does the approach take into account precedents established by earlier work, but it also examines areas which may be influenced by congressional representation.

perspective of constituents: How does the representational experience of constituents with black incumbents differ from the relationships between white incumbents and their constituents?

An emphasis on the representational experience--that is, on expectations and interactions--is appropriate for a number of reasons. Constituents are limited in their access to information regarding the activities of their members of congress. For the most part few people have any window into the daily maneuverings of their representatives as they toil away in Washington. So it is unlikely that constituents base their opinions of their representatives on the leadership they exercise in committee, or their success in backroom negotiations. However, what constituents do know (or, at least feel they know) is what their MC has or can do for them, personally, and for the district generally. These are the issues constituents consider when evaluating their members of Congress, and the quality of their representation. It is the representational experience that matters. Furthermore, these are issues that are probably as much influenced by perception as by fact. Given the aggressiveness with which a member of Congress pursues reelection, it seems safe to argue that what constituents recall has less to do with a member's efforts to cater to the narrow interests of his districts and its resident, than it has to do with constituents' expectations. If constituents are predisposed to thinking that a particular MC will not serve them, then it is likely that they will be hard-pressed to recall any of the bacon brought home from Washington. Therefore, variance in the characterizations of the representational experiences with black and white incumbents can shed light on the significance attributed to race.

Three NES items measure opinion on this first dimension: (1) If you had a problem that [your current MC] could do something about, do you think s/he would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful? ⁴ (2) Do you happen to remember anything special that [your current MC] has done for his/her district or for the people of his/her district while s/he has been in Congress? (3) In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way [your current MC] has been handling his/her job?

3.2 Dimension 2: The Congress

Dimension Two evaluates impressions of Congress. This analysis allows us to consider whether race--namely, the race of the incumbent--can shape perceptions of the institution with which the incumbent is associated. Do constituents project on to Congress whatever good- or ill-will they feel towards their representatives? Or do they evaluate each separately? For black constituents, particularly, do "black faces" confer a degree of legitimacy on , and lead to greater trust in, Congress? In his research on Los Angeles, Gilliam (1996) found that during Mayor Tom Bradley's tenure, black city residents not only evaluated Bradley in positive terms, but also had significantly more confidence in the local government. Whether the political significance of black congressional representation is similarly wide-reaching remains to be seen. While Mayor Bradley was an executive, in a position to influence the direction of local government, a black representative is merely one of 435 legislators.

⁴ Note that the measures of representational experience only refer to House incumbents running for reelection. In only 3 surveys did the NES ask this question of all respondents, regardless of whether the incumbent was running for reelection or retiring.

One NES item measures opinion on this second dimension: Do you approve/disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?

3.3 Dimension 3: The Political Parties

The third dimension of the political landscape is the political parties. As the primary vehicles for aggregating diverse interests and translating them into coherent policy objectives, the political parties factor into a citizen's impression of the quality of political life. The degree to which they appear to be responsive and consistent advocates (of that citizen's priorities), rather than captive to some contrary set of interests, affects the sense of alienation and level of cynicism about the political landscape. Additionally, the extent to which parties satisfy the demand for political alternatives influences the character of politics. As institutions with whom members of congress are closely associated (and given the resources needed to acquire other information on which to base judgment), it stands to reason that a constituent's impression of her representative will color her impression of that representative's political party. With respect to race, just as anecdotal evidence has found that constituents are likely to assume that black representatives will defend black interests (Swain 1995, Conyers and Wallace 1976), they may similarly suspect that the party with whom the representative is affiliated is primarily concerned with the black community. Thus when the constituent and MC share the same party affiliation, the race of the MC may play a significant role in the constituents feelings about her political party and, by extension, her feelings about politics in general. This interaction is especially significant for the Democratic Party since all but two black members of congress since

1980 have been Democrats. In the NES sample, only the districts of black Democrats are included.

There are five NES items used to gauge attitudes towards the political parties: three which ask whether the political parties provide true alternatives, and two which measure the coherence between party positions and personal ideologies. (1) Do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for? (2) and (3) are composite scores which indicate the perceived distance between the Democratic party and the Republican party in liberalism, and on the issue of government aid to African-Americans.⁵ (4) and (5) are proximity scores which indicate the respondent's positions on liberalism and government aid relative to the positions s/he perceives each major party to hold. The proximity scales are scored from one to three, where one indicates that the respondent's position is closer to that of the Democratic party, three indicates greater coherence with the Republicans. These measures are particularly useful in identifying whether black representation can lead to a sense of alienation from one's own political party.

3.4 Dimension 4: The Constituent as Political Actor

⁵ **Liberalism:** We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place the Democratic Party on this scale? Where would you place the Republican Party? **Government aid:** Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special efforts to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place the Democratic Party on this seven-point scale? Where would you place the Republican party? The 'distance' is determined by calculating the absolute difference between the two party positions, and then adding 1 to this difference.

Dimension four measures the respondent's own sense of efficacy and political empowerment. Preston (1978) argued that descriptive representation is "not only desirable but necessary for Black Americans," because, in part, it fulfills a host of psychological needs. Descriptive representation supposedly influences African-American perceptions of the utility and personal relevance of politics. Whether it is the presence of "role models in government," or the assumption that "black faces" will be sympathetic to "black interests," black incumbency may convince black constituents of their own ability to affect politics and policy. Conversely, white constituents may consider black incumbency to have negative implications for their ability to affect politics. At its heart, Preston (1978) is an argument about group identification, and its role in translating the *fact* of political incorporation into the *feeling* of political incorporation.

Three NES questions allow us to weigh the psychological consequences of black representation. Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the following propositions: (1) People like me don't have any say about what the government does. (2) Sometimes politics seems so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on. (3) I don't think public officials care much what people like me think.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Member of Congress

On this first dimension, the political significance of black representation is clear, and racially determined. The evidence indicates that the relationships between white

constituents and black congressmen are notably weaker than those which exist between these constituents and white members of Congress. Meanwhile, for African-Americans, "black faces" enhance the representational experience, leading to more confidence in and more favorable impressions of congressional representatives.

Generally, 87.3% (+/- .42%) of white constituents approve of their representative's performance in office. And while only 18.7% (+/- .41%) can recall any particulars about their member's efforts on behalf of the district or its residents, almost one-third (31.9% +/- .55%) express confidence that the incumbent would be "very helpful" in addressing a problem of special concern to a constituent. However, this profile changes when one differentiates between constituents with and without black representatives. The representational experience for white constituents with black representatives is not as positive: Far fewer constituents (70.2% versus 87.7%) approve of their representative's performance. Only 12% (+/- 2.3%), as opposed to almost 19% , of white constituents are familiar with the records of black members of Congress.⁶ And, finally, only one-fifth of these constituents believe that a black representative could be a potentially valuable resource in addressing a problem. Thus, white constituents neither recall what black incumbents have done, nor are they as optimistic about what they can do. Race significantly alters the connection between white constituents and their congressmen.

⁶ There are several points to take note of here: (1) For all the talk of congressional "homestyle," the activities of members of congress do not seem to garner much attention; (2) Even during a campaign cycle (NES interviews take place in November of the election year), when constituents are bombarded with information about the incumbent's record, they do not retain much; and (3) the activities of black members of Congress resonate even less for white constituents.

Like white constituents, African-Americans on the whole are apt to view their representatives favorably. Close to 88% approve of their representative's performance on the job. This resonated with earlier research which found that whites and blacks tend to be equally satisfied with their congressional representatives (Ripley, Patterson, Maurer, and Quinlan 1992). Over 32% anticipate that the congressmen from their districts would be "very helpful" as problem-solvers. Of course, African-Americans are just as challenged as white constituents when it comes to listing specifics: only 15% indicated a familiarity with the representative's record of service in the district. Whereas black representation alters the representational experience of white constituents for the worst, it enhances the representative-constituent relationship with black constituents. Although there is no significant change in approval ratings, black constituents are more familiar with the records of black congressmen and they are more confident in the ability of these congressmen to be of service to them personally. The likelihood of recalling past efforts jumps to 23% (+/- 2.5%) for black congressmen, as compared to only 13% (+/- 1%) with other representatives; and, 40.5% (+/- 3.4%) of black constituents characterize black congressmen as "very helpful," while only 30.4% (+/- 1.6%) could say the same of other representatives.

This last finding, in particular, is consistent with both the statistical, as well as the anecdotal, evidence that blacks are more inclined to contact black public officials than they are to contact white officials (Verba and Nie 1972, Swain 1995, Conyers and Wallace 1973). In fact, this analysis determined that black respondents were twice as likely to contact black representatives, as they were to contact white representatives. (White

constituents were two-thirds as likely to contact black representatives). Black constituents assume--whether or not it's borne out in fact--that black representatives will tend to their own, making citizen contacting appear to be a more worthwhile endeavor. A "comfort-level" that may exist between constituents and representatives of the same race may also make contacting less daunting.

The variations in representational experience, as well as the variations in citizen contacting, reveal at least in part the use of race as a basis on which to form expectations and build connections. But, it may not be race alone which accounts for the representational experiences with black congressmen. Arguably, these experiences are also influenced by partisanship. Few would doubt that Republicans always will evaluate more positively other Republicans than they will Democrats; and vice versa. Given African-American's solidly Democratic profile, it is not surprising really that they should be so fond of black congressmen--all of whom, in this sample, are Democrats themselves.

Table 5.1 examines the relationship between race, partisanship, and the representational experience. With the exception of black Republicans, for whom there is too little data to come to any reliable conclusions, the table reveals an interesting pattern of relationships. First, partisanship--or more precisely, the partisan "match" between constituents and representatives--is a key determinant of the representational experience. As Table 5.1 makes clear, Democrats, regardless of race, rate other Democrats, more favorably than they do Republicans. Republicans behave similarly towards other Republicans. In each column, note that constituents are more optimistic about and more likely to recall the efforts of congressmen who share their party affiliation. In fact, the

Table 5.1
Partisanship and the Representational Experience

		Approval of MC	Recall of Record	MC as Resource
Respondent: White Democrat with:	<i>White Republican</i>	77.4 (1.4) N=879	14.0 (.97) N=1275	27.8 (1.4) N=994
	<i>White Democrat</i>	92.6 (.57) N=2089	25.5 (.84) N=2668	39.4 (1.0) N=2291
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	84.1 (4.4) N=69	14.9 (3.3) N=114	30.1 (5.0) N=83
White Republican with:	<i>White Republican</i>	94.3 (.63) N=1315	18.3 (.93) N=1733	34.5 (1.3) N=1431
	<i>White Democrat</i>	80.1 (1.1) N=1304	17.6 (.89) N=1843	25.9 (1.1) N=1497
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	47.8 (7.4) N=46	7.4 (3.2) N=68	6.1 (3.4) N=49
Black Democrat with:	<i>White Republican</i>	76.1 (4.5) N=88	7.9 (2.1) N=165	22.3 (3.8) N=121
	<i>White Democrat</i>	89.4 (1.4) N=445	15.4 (1.4) N=671	33.9 (2.1) N=522
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	90.5 (2.3) N=168	24.1 (2.7) N=249	42.4 (3.6) N=184

(Cont.)

Table 5.1 (cont.)

<i>Respondent:</i>		Approval of MC	Recall of Record	MC as Resource
Black Republican				
with:	<i>White Republican</i>	92.9 (6.9) N=14	14.3 (7.6) N=21	19.1 (8.6) N=21
	<i>White Democrat</i>	87.5 (4.7) N=48	8.7 (3.4) N=69	28.1 (6.0) N=57
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	85.7 (13.2) N=7	9.1 (8.7) N=11	22.2 (13.9) N=9

Note: The cell entries correspond to the percent of each respondent-representative category with favorable assessments of the representational experience. For example, the first cell entry indicates that 77.4% of white Democrats with white Republican congressmen approved of the performance of their members of Congress. Standard errors are in parentheses. 'N' corresponds to the sample size of each respondent-representative category.

highest approval ratings for Democratic congressmen--black or white--systematically come from Democratic constituents. And the constituents most likely to consider white and black Democrats "very helpful" in the solution of personal problems are other Democrats.

Secondly, race continues to exert an influence on the representational experience even after taking partisanship into account. Race, however, does not override partisanship (i.e. White Democrats do not favor White Republicans over Black Democrats). Race matters for everyone--even white Republicans distinguish between black and white Democrats. It is the dynamic among black and white Democratic constituents, though, that is of most interest, for it gets at the heart of arguments that dismiss the continued political salience of race. White Democrats systematically describe more positive representational experiences with white Democratic congressmen than they do with black Democrats. And among black Democrats, except for overall approval, there is a clear preference for black congressmen over white Democratic congressmen. As points One and Two would suggest, the most positive representational experiences exist where there is a perfect correspondence of race and partisanship: White Democrats most prefer white Democrats; Black democrats most prefer black Democrats; White Republicans most prefer white Republicans.

Finally, while the significance of a representative's party identification is fairly constant, his/her race is more important to some than to others. Namely, white Republicans are not only more sensitive to race than to partisanship, but are more sensitive to race than are other constituents. For example, approval ratings drop by over 30 points

(from 80.1% to 47.8%) when white Republicans compare black Democrats to white Democrats; these same ratings drop by less than 9 points (92.6% to 84.1%) when white Democrats compare these two groups. Among both black and white Democratic constituents the racial gap in knowledge of (column two) and optimism about (column three) Democratic representatives rarely exceeds 10 points. For white Republicans, the optimism gap approaches 20 points. The end result is that white Republicans have virtually no relationship with Black congressmen. Interestingly enough, on every issue black Democrats evaluate white Republican congressmen more generously than white Republicans evaluate black congressmen.

The racial gap in representational experience, particularly among white constituents, is consistent with earlier research that has identified a link between bias and stereotypes, on the one hand, and white attitudes towards black political figures, on the other (Conover and Feldman 1982; Williams 1990; Terkildsen 1993; McDermott 1996, 1997). McDermott (1996, 1997) identified candidate demographics (such as gender and race) as a source of politically informative stereotypes, shedding light on the beliefs and competencies of candidates and elected officials. Like bias, which is more emotive and less content-based, stereotypes can guide voting decisions and policy preferences. A secondary analysis of the data reveals that, among white constituents, attitudes towards Blacks, in general, are highly correlated with evaluations of Black representatives. White respondents who indicate greater warmth towards Blacks, as measured by a "feeling thermometer," are more likely to characterize the representational experience with black congressmen as positive, even after taking partisanship into account. More substantively,

attitudes towards issues associated with African-Americans (i.e. civil rights and equal opportunity) influence the relationship between white constituents and black congressmen, regardless of party affiliation.

Finally, time plays an interesting role in the representational experience. Over time, the relationships between black constituents and black congressmen do not change. Black constituents represented by new black congressmen are no more or less optimistic, knowledgeable, or approving of their representatives than are the constituents of older black incumbents. In this way, their experiences are similar to those of African-Americans elsewhere, for whom the representational experience does not evolve.

By contrast, the representational experiences of white constituents do change over time; the paths they take are influenced by the race of the representative. As Table 5.2 reveals, white constituents increasingly disapprove of the performance of black congressmen, all other things equal. Interestingly enough, these disapproving constituents are no more familiar with the records of their congressmen than are white constituents with relatively new black incumbents. This would suggest that the disapproval is not related necessarily to specific actions on the part of black congressmen. What makes the evolution of these representational experiences noteworthy is their comparison to similar relationships between white constituents and white congressmen. White constituents elsewhere do *not* become less approving of incumbents over time. They do, however, become more familiar with the records of incumbents. In this light, the attitude of white constituents with black representatives appears to signal a withdrawal from the representational experience.

Table 5.2
Time and the Representational Experience

		Approval of MC		Recall of Record		MC as Resource	
		Black Incumbent	White Incumbent	Black Incumbent	White Incumbent	Black Incumbent	White Incumbent
<i>Whites</i>							
	Tenure	-.12 (.05)	-.01 (.01)	.04 (.04)	.03 (.00)	.01 (.02)	-.00 (.00)
	Partisan Match	2.20 (.58)	1.31 (.09)	1.0 (.61)	.45 (.06)	-.90 (.24)	-.32 (.03)
		N=162	N=5163	N=158	N=6894	N=118	N=5662
<i>Blacks</i>							
	Tenure	-.04 (.04)	-.02 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)
	Partisan Match	.62 (1.15)	.73 (.27)	1.11 (1.07)	.64 (.27)	-.73 (.42)	-.21 (.10)
		N=154	N=553	N=221	N=842	N=173	N=670

Note: Table summarizes the results of logit (columns one through four) and ordered probit (columns five and six) models. All models control for socioeconomic status (age, education, and income). "Partisan Match" measures the correspondence in the party affiliations of the respondent and the House incumbent: '1' when respondent and representative are of the same party, '0' when they are not. 'MC as Resource' is coded on a 3-point scale, from Very Helpful (1) to Not Helpful (3). Standard errors are in parentheses.

Time does not appear to erode the significance of bias and stereotypes in the relationship between white constituents and black congressmen. Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman (1997) argue that stereotypes most influence judgment in "low information environments." Given sufficient individuating information, judgments that are normally "theory-driven" can be replaced by more data-driven reasoning. To the extent that time is a source of individuating information, one would anticipate that the negative representational experiences of white constituents with black congressmen would have less to do with stereotypes and biases. In fact, there is little evidence to support this. While white constituents with older black incumbents (in office for more than 8 years) are not influenced by their attitudes towards blacks, in general, they are influenced by their attitudes towards issues commonly associated with African-Americans. In the language of McDermott (1996, 1997) this would suggest the operation of "trait stereotypes," whereby constituents favor officials based on their own concern over issues on which the official is stereotyped to be especially competent. Thus the white constituents with the most positive relationships with older black incumbents are the ones who think civil rights issues need to be pushed more aggressively.

4.2 The Congress

Contrary to its effect on the representational experience, race does not cast a shadow on the larger institution of Congress. Neither white nor black constituents systematically reevaluate Congress on the basis of the race of their representative.

Over the period between 1980 and 1992, whites and African-Americans on the whole displayed similar levels of support for Congress. On average, 47.8% (+/- .5%) of white Americans and 48.5% (+/- 1.5%) of black Americans indicated that they approved of the way the U.S. Congress was handling its job. However, year-to-year there was a fair amount of fluctuation not only in the overall level of approval, but also in the gap between blacks and whites. Approval rates among African-Americans reached a high of 60.2% in 1988, and a low of 28.9% in 1992. Meanwhile white approval rates ranged from a high of 61.3% in 1984 to a low of 26.6% in 1992. During three election cycles (1980, 1984, 1990), African-Americans were significantly more enthusiastic about Congress than were their white counterparts. White support never exceeded black support.

Black representation was associated with no significant changes, among whites or blacks, in levels of support for Congress. Whether examined in the aggregate, or analyzed year-by-year, the proportions of respondents expressing approval of Congress is unaffected by the incumbent's race. Forty-six percent (+/- 3.2%) of black constituents with black congressmen were satisfied with the performance of Congress; elsewhere, the figure was 49.1% (+/-1.7%). Whatever significance constituents attach to race, they do not project this on to the institution with which their representatives are associated. Unlike the experience of black Angelenos who, under Mayor Tom Bradley, expressed a greater trust in local government (Gilliam 1996), black and white district residents do not use race to evaluate Congress.

The distinction that constituents make between Congress and its members has been documented in earlier research. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995) found that while

Congress is often held in low esteem, representatives are generally well-respected and well-supported. (Compare the 80% approval ratings discussed in Section 4.1 with the more modest figures here). Mann (1978) attributes this disconnect to a knowledge gap: Public knowledge about Congress is generally low, but a majority of people can recognize the name of and evaluate their representative.

If there is any characteristic relevant to evaluations of Congress, it is partisanship. Table 5.3 summarizes the relationships between race, partisanship, and Congressional support. Over the entire twelve year period, when Democrats controlled the House (as well as the Senate for six years), self-identified Democrats were consistently more supportive of Congress than were Republicans. On average, there was a 6 point partisan gap; however, in 1980 and 1984 the gap reached 15.6% and 14.3%, respectively. It is primarily among white Americans that the partisan gap is visible. Black Republicans were as satisfied with Congress as Black Democrats. By comparison, a slim majority (51%) of white Democrats approved of Congress, while only 44% of white Republicans over the period did the same. Partisanship, then, separated white Republicans, on the one hand, from white Democrats, black Democrats, and black Republicans, on the other.

Partisanship is significant in yet another way. Although constituents do not use the *race* of their incumbent to interpret Congressional performance, the incumbent's party affiliation does shape impressions of the legislature. Democrats were most optimistic about the Democratic Congress when represented by Democrats, whether the representative was white or black. Almost 53% of white Democrats in Democratic districts approved of the Congress, while 51% of the black Democrats expressed support;

Table 5.3
Partisanship and Congressional Approval, 1980-1992

Respondent	Representative	% Approval
White Democrats with:	<i>White Republican</i>	47.5 (1.4)
	<i>White Democrat</i>	52.6 (.99)
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	56.6 (4.8)
	<i>All</i>	51.0 (.80)
White Republicans with:	<i>White Republican</i>	43.6 (1.2)
	<i>White Democrat</i>	45.0 (1.2)
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	42.9 (6.2)
	<i>All</i>	44.1 (.81)
Black Democrats with:	<i>White Republican</i>	41.5 (3.9)
	<i>White Democrat</i>	52.3 (2.1)
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	47.0 (3.4)
	<i>All</i>	49.1 (1.6)

(Cont.)

Table 5.3 (cont.)

Respondent	Representative	% Approval
Black Republicans with:	<i>White Republican</i>	47.8 (10.4)
	<i>White Democrat</i>	59.3 (6.4)
	<i>Black Democrat</i>	40.0 (15.5)
	All	54.8 (5.2)
All Democrats		50.9 (.71)
All Republicans		44.7 (.80)

in Republican districts, less than half of these Democrats, 47.5% and 41.5% respectively, approved of Congress' performance. The dynamic is most likely the product of Democratic incumbents returning home to champion the session's legislative record. Only Democrats responded to this advocacy. For white Republicans, disapproval of Congress was the norm regardless of the party affiliation (or the race) of the incumbent. Black Republicans were similarly unresponsive, though generally more supportive than their white counterparts.

4.3 The Political Parties

The preceding discussion noted that Americans do not project on to Congress the attitudes they hold towards their members of Congress—at least, not those attitudes informed by race. Partisanship is the only incumbent characteristic of significance to that dimension. However, the definition of partisanship—that is, what it means to be a Democrat or a Republican—is influenced by race. To the extent that members of Congress represent their districts in the House, and their parties in their districts, constituents can look to incumbents to understand the priorities of their political parties. For black and white constituents alike, the race of their incumbent sheds light on these priorities.

The majority of people, regardless of race, recognize that there are “important differences” which distinguish the Republican Party and the Democratic Party from one another. Sixty-one percent of white respondents, and 60% of black respondents agreed that the two major parties represented two distinct alternatives. The differences exist not only in their general ideology, but also in their agendas. On a seven point scale, where ‘1’

indicates no difference and '7' a maximum difference, white respondents on average perceived a fair amount of difference (3.5) between the liberalism/conservatism of the Democratic Party and that of the Republicans. Black respondents also considered the ideologies to be distinct (3.6). On the policy of government aid to improve the social and economic conditions of African-Americans, white respondents tended to believe that the parties were more alike than different (2.9), while blacks again considered the agendas to be fairly distinct(3.6).

Given their understanding of the political parties, white respondents were more likely to be in-line with the politics and policies of the Republican party than those of the Democratic Party. In terms of liberalism, 43% of white respondents adopted positions closer to the Republicans than to the Democrats, while only 35% adopted positions more in line with the Democrats. As for the issue of government aid to minorities, white respondents tended to position themselves where they perceived the Republicans to be (41.6%), and rarely where they perceived the Democrats to be (27.4%). Not surprisingly, the story for black respondents was quite different. Black respondents routinely positioned themselves in the same league as the Democratic Party. For 59.6% of African-Americans, the respondent's own level of liberalism (or, conservatism) was consistent with where s/he considered the Democrats to be on the spectrum. The figure jumped to 66.3% on attitudes towards minority aid.

Black representation leads constituents to reevaluate the political parties, and their relationships to them. With Black representation--or, more accurately under Black Democrats--white and black constituents are more likely to recognize "important

differences" between the parties, including differences in levels of liberalism and on the issue of government aid to minorities. Furthermore, black constituents perceive an even greater coherence between their personal politics and that of the Democratic Party when the incumbent is black. In this way, black incumbents are quite unique among House members. For the most part, a constituent's impression of the political parties is not influenced by his/her experience with his incumbent. That is, constituents represented by Democrats think no differently about the Democratic party than do similar constituents represented by Republicans.⁷ Unlike attitudes towards Congress, an incumbent's party affiliation is largely irrelevant. But in the case of black incumbents, race transforms party affiliation into an informational cue. As Table 5.4 reveals, only when the Democrat is black does the fact that s/he is a Democrat matter. Only then does the incumbent shed light on the priorities of his party.

Table 5.4 disaggregates constituents and representatives by party affiliation in order to (1) demonstrate the general insignificance of incumbent partisanship, and (2) highlight the dynamic among Democratic constituents. The response to black representation among constituents who self-identify as Democrats is of particular interest. These are the constituents who, obviously, rely the most on the Democratic Party to advocate for their interests. The extent to which the Party succeeds will have a great effect on their perceptions of political life, and the openness of the political system in general. By contrast, Republican constituents have nothing invested in the Democratic

⁷ There is one exception. White Democrats revise their position on government aid to minorities when their House representative is also a Democrat. In those cases, they are more "in line" with the Democratic party.

Table 5.4
Evaluating the Political Parties

<i>Respondent:</i>	Important Party Differences (%)	Ideological Polarization (1-7)	Minority Aid Polarization (1-7)	Ideological Match with Democrats (%)	Minority Aid Match w/Democrat (%)
White Democrat with:					
<i>White Republican</i>	61.1 (1.7)	3.4 (.04)	3.0 (.05)	58.6 (1.5)	40.2 (1.7)
<i>White Democrat</i>	61.0 (1.2)	3.4 (.03)	3.0 (.04)	60.3 (1.1)	44.9 (1.2)
<i>Black Democrat</i>	71.4 (5.4)	3.9 (.13)	3.5 (.20)	62.9 (4.7)	50.7 (5.9)
White Republican with:					
<i>White Republican</i>	66.3 (1.4)	3.7 (.03)	2.9 (.04)	12.0 (.82)	12.6 (.96)
<i>White Democrat</i>	66.0 (1.4)	3.7 (.04)	3.0 (.04)	12.5 (.83)	11.7 (.92)
<i>Black Democrat</i>	69.2 (6.4)	4.3 (.15)	2.9 (.25)	15.3 (4.7)	9.7 (5.3)
Black Democrat with:					
<i>White Republican</i>	58.4 (5.2)	3.6 (.16)	3.7 (.19)	56.3 (5.1)	64.6 (4.5)
<i>White Democrat</i>	62.1 (2.4)	3.6 (.08)	3.6 (.10)	60.7 (2.3)	69.9 (2.3)
<i>Black Democrat</i>	71.9 (3.5)	4.1 (.12)	4.2 (.14)	74.7 (3.2)	76.7 (3.3)
Black Republican with:					
<i>White Republican</i>	52.6 (11.5)	3.7 (.41)	3.1 (.42)	10.5 (7.0)	29.4 (11.1)
<i>White Democrat</i>	44.7 (7.3)	3.4 (.25)	2.6 (.25)	40.5 (8.1)	35.4 (6.9)
<i>Black Democrat</i>	55.6 (16.6)	2.7 (.50)	3.3 (.45)	33.3 (15.7)	25.0 (15.3)

Note: "Ideological Match" and "Minority Aid Match" measure, on 3-point scales, the extent to which the positions of the respondent are closer to those of the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. The cell entries correspond to the percentage of respondents whose positions were closer to the Democratic Party. The "Polarization" scores measure the perceived amount of difference between the political parties. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Party. The perception that the Party caters primarily to the black community most likely will have little impact on their attitudes about the political landscape.

For black constituents identified with the Democratic party, party politics looks considerably different when the spokesman is a black Democrat rather than a white Democrat. African-Americans with black incumbents are 10% more likely than constituents with white Democrats to consider the parties to be distinct (62% vs. 72%). This gap extends to liberalism, in general, and to positions on minority aid, in particular. In fact, on the issue of government aid to minorities, black Democrats represented by white Democrats put the degree of difference between the parties at 3.6 (on a scale of 1 to 7); when represented by black Democrats, the average perceived difference jumped by almost 17% to 4.2. Most importantly, black incumbents convinced black Democrats of the coherence between their personal politics and that of the party. Black democrats are 14% more likely to consider themselves "in line" with the Democratic liberalism when the representative is a Black, rather than a white, Democrat.

For white Democrats, black representation primarily serves to accentuate the differences between the parties. A Democratic Party in the shape of a black incumbent has much less in common with the Republicans than does one in the shape of a white incumbent. The perceived gaps between the parties on liberalism and minority aid increase by almost 15% and 17%, respectively, with black Democratic incumbents. Race, however, does not affect the positions of these constituents relative to the positions of the political parties. Whites are no more in line with the Republicans when their Democratic representative is black than when s/he is white. Apparently, even with greater

party polarization, white constituents do not change where they stand relative to the parties.

As for Republicans, black and white, the race of the incumbent is almost as irrelevant as his/her partisan affiliation. The one exception is among white Republicans who consider black Democratic House members to signal a more extreme difference in the liberalism of the two parties.

4.4 Constituent as Political Actor

The political incorporation assumed by the presence of a black incumbent does not translate into a renewed sense of the utility and personal relevance of politics. Neither black nor white constituents revise their beliefs about their role in politics based on the race of their congressional representative.

White Americans, on the whole, have a much stronger sense of political efficacy than do African-Americans. Whereas 58% (+/- .5%) of whites believe that they have some say in what the government does, only 47% (+/- 1.5%) of blacks felt similarly empowered. Furthermore, 46% (+/- .5%) of whites believe that public officials care about their opinions, while only 36% (+/- 1.4%) of blacks could say the same. The gap is in part a reflection of racial differences in social and economic status. Yet even after taking into account the relationships between race and wealth, and wealth and political efficacy, whites continue to exhibit more confidence than blacks in their role as political actors. This is particularly interesting when one considers that both groups agree that politics can

“sometimes be too complicated to understand.” Despite the complexity, white Americans are convinced of their influence.

Black representation does not alter this profile. See Table 5.5. With one exception, black and white constituents with black representatives display the same degree of political efficacy as do their counterparts in white districts. On the question of whether they have any say about what the government does, whites appear more confident in their ability to exert influence when their congressional representative is black (71% vs. 58%). The relationship remains unchanged after controlling for the confounding effects of socioeconomic status. This finding is surprising when one considers that in most cases where there is a black representative there is also a majority-minority district. That whites would feel an even stronger sense of efficacy where they are so dramatically outnumbered defies easy explanation. It is possible that white constituents see “black faces” as evidence of the accessibility of government to “in-groups” and “out-groups” alike.

5 CONCLUSION: THE SYMBOLIC DIMENSIONS OF RACE

The preceding discussion explored four dimensions of political life in order to understand the impact of black representation on political attitudes, and uncover the link between black representation and political behavior. In the story that emerges, race becomes an abridged guide to politics. While neither white Americans nor black Americans assign broad political significance to the presence of black incumbents, both groups allow race to inform their impressions and expectations. The symbolic power of

Table 5.5
Black Representation and Political Efficacy

Variables:	Have Say in Government		Officials Value Opinions		Politics Is Complicated	
	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>Whites</i>	<i>Blacks</i>	<i>Whites</i>
Black Represent'n	.08 (.16)	.53 (.20)	-.12 (.16)	-.18 (.17)	.02 (.20)	.07 (.20)
Age	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.00)
Income	.07 (.06)	.13 (.02)	.07 (.06)	.15 (.02)	.21 (.08)	.15 (.03)
Education	.21 (.05)	.32 (.02)	.23 (.05)	.29 (.02)	.26 (.06)	.42 (.02)
Constant	-1.07 (.28)	-1.17 (.12)	-1.47 (.28)	-1.61 (.11)	-2.14 (.36)	-2.83 (.15)
	N=972	N=7106	N=1080	N=7783	N=837	N=6037

Note: Table presents results from logit models predicting political efficacy as a function of black representation ('Black MC') and socioeconomic status. In column three, the dependent variable 'Politics is Complicated' is coded as 1 if respondent *disagrees*, 0 if respondent *agrees*. Standard errors are in parentheses.

race dictates that the political landscape change shape when black Congressmen step into the picture.

For African-American constituents, black incumbency means an improved representational experience. It means a congressman sympathetic to their concerns; a congressman with a demonstrated record of service to the district and its residents. The good-will generated by descriptive representation is manifested in high approval ratings, as well as in a higher propensity to contact the elected officials. The significance of the representational experience between black congressmen and black constituents can not be overestimated. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1987) found that black constituents consider policy-making (i.e. Congressmen in Washington) the least important of a representative's activities, lagging far behind helping constituents (i.e. Congressmen at Home) and protecting the district. Given the priority that black constituent's assign to the representative's relationship with his constituents, the findings suggest that it is through black representation that black constituents come closest to obtaining the representation they want.

Black incumbents promise still more. Black representation implies not only a two-party system offering real choices, but a Democratic Party more "in line" with the priorities of black people. "Black faces" speak to the liberalism of the Democratic Party, and to its commitment to aiding minorities. On both dimensions, black constituents perceive a greater coherence between their personal politics and that of the Party.

African-Americans do not, however, extend to the Congress the goodwill they feel towards black legislators and the Party they represent. Black representation may promise

new friends in politics, but it does not contribute to a new appreciation of Capitol Hill. Approval falls strictly along party lines. Possibly this limited reaction reflects a recognition that, for all his/her symbolism, a black representative is but 1 in 435. His influence is limited, and thus so is his promise.

The new landscape confronted by white constituents with black representatives is more bleak. These constituents are reluctant to view black members of congress as resources, and problem-solvers. Although they are unfamiliar with the records of these House incumbents, they are more likely to disapprove of their performance. The dissatisfaction only increases over time, driven by white attitudes towards blacks and towards minority issues. White Republicans are the most disaffected of the group, alienated by both the race and the partisan affiliation of the incumbent.

White constituents limit the conclusions drawn on the basis of the race of their representative. Like black constituents, they share the impression of a more polarized two-party system. They stop short, however, of revising their positions in relation to the parties. Even a more distinctive Democratic Party does not undermine the perceived coherence between personal and party politics. White constituents also do not project on to Congress their attitudes towards black members of Congress.

The relationship between black representation and political attitudes reveals just how extensive an impact black Congressmen have on politics in their districts. Not only do they transform patterns of political behavior, they are also agents of opinion change. How much of this opinion change is the product of perceptions (informed by expectations), rather than an accurate assessment of political life, is not entirely clear.

Abney and Hutcheson(1981) argued that minority political leaders may be significant “simply as a result of the images they project,” regardless of the policies they pursue. Race can, and does, send strong messages of inclusion, for blacks, and alienation, for whites.

The messages of black representation have real consequences. The dissatisfaction and skepticism characteristic of the representational experience of white constituents in black districts is consistent with the patterns of electoral demobilization, and Republican voting, in these districts. Black representatives give white constituents no reason to turn out for congressional races, and plenty of reason to doubt the merits of political engagement. Black members of Congress also do not provide whites with a representational experience they consider to be worthy of their political support. And while the representational experience of black constituents may be enough to convince them that they have a friend in politics, it apparently is not always enough to convince them of the utility of the political life. The costs of participation dictate that images can more easily turn people off, than they can turn people on to politics.

6 Conclusion

The election of African-Americans to Congress is among the primary achievements of the post-civil rights transition from protest to politics. Through it the black community has come to wield greater direct power than ever before in the political and governmental life of the United States. Some have argued that the “descriptive representation of blacks [has guaranteed] only black faces” (Swain 1995); others maintain that descriptive representation is black America’s “principal guarantor” of substantive political influence (Conyers and Wallace 1976). But what many have either ignored or denied is that black congressional representation has dramatically reshaped the contours of electoral politics. The preceding chapters have explored the impact of black congressional representation by looking past the policy activism of legislators to the political behavior and political attitudes of constituents. Three critical findings emerge from this book:

First, the most striking regularity associated with black congressional representation is not its effect on the African-American community, but its implications for white political behavior. White constituents are unambiguous in their reactions to black members of Congress. In virtually every case, black congressional representation precipitates a decline in white political engagement, and a realignment in the voting preferences of the participant community. The defection from politics, and the reluctance to endorse black incumbents in subsequent elections, is not tempered over time. Black incumbents never overcome the barriers commonly associated with black challengers or

unknown black political candidates. Meanwhile, among African-Americans, black congressional representation enhances political engagement only in the districts where it is firmly rooted--and even this is not guaranteed. The only certainty in regards to these constituents is that when it comes to winning the black vote, black incumbents always secure a larger proportion than do other incumbents.

The consistency of white reactions to black congressional representation is ironic. Questions regarding the significance of black electoral success are typically framed within the context of a "Black Politics" research agenda--the assumption being that it primarily has implications for blacks. In fact, in the research on minority office-holding at the city level, the dominant trends do concern the reactions of black city residents. Yet, on the issue of congressional representation, the real action is taking place among whites. The significance of black congressional representation is best measured in white constituents alienated from politics, and white votes lost to Republican challengers. Just as a strict emphasis on policy consequences neglects the full relationship between constituents and elected officials, a similar emphasis on black Americans would be equally misleading. In the end, we learn far more about black electoral success by looking outside the black community, and far more about American politics by considering black electoral success.

Secondly, black electoral style is a key determinant of white political behavior. This is particularly the case when it comes to political engagement. Black representatives have some control over the magnitude of white defection from politics. In districts represented by black incumbents with more provocative, and racially divisive representational styles, white constituents turn away from the polls in very large numbers.

These representatives, incumbents such as George Crockett and John Conyers in Detroit, or Gus Savage in Chicago, create (and created) a climate in which whites might consider themselves at best irrelevant, or at worse under siege. Neither perception encourages political involvement. Another class of black House members--representatives such as Donald Payne of Newark, or Bill Gray of Philadelphia-- adopt a style more collegial, more reliant on coalition-building and racial moderation, and based more heavily on issues with broad appeal. (In part, the difference in styles reflects a generation gap). The efforts of these black congressmen do not compensate entirely for the barrier presented by race; white political engagement still declines in their districts. However, far fewer white constituents choose not to participate.

Lastly, black congressional representatives are agents of opinion change, as evidenced by the attitudes that animate electoral politics in their districts. It is opinion change that forms the link between black representation, on the one hand, and political behavior, on the other. Neither whites nor blacks assign broad political significance to the presence of a black incumbent. (This is similar to observations made at the city-level where local empowerment did not lead to the reevaluation of the character of national government and national political actors). But both allow for the race of their representative to inform their impressions and expectations. For whites, black congressmen compromise the representational experience: they are considered less sympathetic and less helpful to the constituent, and less active in serving the district. Even white constituents who share their representative's party affiliation are unhappy with the quality of representation they receive. The disapproval only increases over time, but it is

not fueled by the actions of the congressmen--white constituents are generally unable to cite specifics about the records of black congressmen. Rather the disapproval is tightly related to the constituent's attitudes towards blacks, in general, and minority issues. Contrary to prevailing arguments, even with the availability of individuating information political judgments can remain "theory-driven" (i.e. dictated by bias and stereotypes), rather than become "data-driven." For African-Americans, descriptive representation enhances the representational experience. Black representatives enjoy the high approval, and high confidence of their black constituents. The positive affect neither deepens, nor is it eroded, over time. Furthermore, black constituents project on to the representative's party their positive experience with the representative. Thus, for example, blacks perceive a greater coherence between their personal politics and that of the representative's party.

The findings in this book reinforce the logic of the "black concentration" hypothesis. Like the size of the black community, black congressional representation is a contextual cue, suggesting the potential for (or, reality of) black political dominance. In such an environment racially-conscious thinking, in which actions are weighed based on the perceived consequences for one's racial group, gains new relevance. Whereas typically white Americans might evaluate politics along a number of dimensions, in districts with black representatives race becomes a primary lens through which these constituents interpret the political landscape. As a consequence, white constituents greet black political dominance with hostility, believing their interests (as whites) to be at stake. (Recall that the "black concentration" hypothesis assumes a model of racial group competition in which white Americans perceive their interests and the interests of African-

Americans to be inherently incompatible). The defection and realignment documented here is analogous to the support for racist politics and candidates documented by V.O. Key in 1949.

The findings on black political behavior provide more qualified support for the “political reality model.” Black congressional representatives do communicate to African-Americans a message of inclusion, solely by virtue of being black. And they enjoy the benefits of this opinion change when they secure a disproportionate amount of the black vote. However, what Gilliam and Kaufmann (1996) refer to as a “reservoir of psychic benefits” does not always translate into more profound behavioral changes, remaining in some cases only an intangible good. Having a friend in politics, as the presence of black incumbents suggests, is not necessarily enough to offset the costs of participation and promote greater political engagement. Black congressional representation can be decisive at the ballot box, but not meaningful enough to get people there.

It was the significance of minority empowerment at the city level that initially motivated the questions pursued in this book. Though the previous literature served as a useful point of departure, it left unclear how much the observed relationships were unique to local government--and, therefore, what we could expect to find when looking at black congressmen rather than black mayors. As it turns out, despite their differences, black congressmen and black mayors have much in common. Black members of Congress are not executives; black members of Congress do not have the power to directly impact the daily lives of constituents. But even though the relationship is more distant, and their

power more limited, their race remains a tremendously salient characteristic. And in a congressional district, where the possibilities of "flight" available in a city do not exist, the behavior of white constituents differs only in degree, not in kind.

After a generation of exposure to black members of Congress, when one might anticipate an erosion in the significance of race, constituents--black and white--remain highly responsive to it. Swain (1995) argued that no substantive racial differences exist among congressmen in, for example, the provision of constituency services, or even in policy representation. This observation, whether accurate or not, appears to be largely irrelevant. As students of urban empowerment found some years ago, constituents' impressions of their political leaders are influenced more by the "images they project," than by the "policies they pursue." And these impressions go on to influence political behavior.

Black congressional representation has reshaped electoral politics by essentially changing the face of the participant community. The significance of this can not be overstated. Politicians attend to the participant community. Behavioral changes can influence the quality of policy representation, so long as the congruence of representatives' and constituents' goals relies on the ability of constituents to communicate their preferences through all modes of political participation. If there are characteristics of representatives which make constituents more inclined to raise their political voices, then these same characteristics effectively determine the extent to which constituents can get the representation they want. Thus, the instrumental value of political

engagement suggests that the consequences of black congressional representation should be fully appreciated.

Even in the absence of behavioral change, black congressional representation is significant for its impact on political attitudes. For black constituents, in particular, black congressional representation confers a degree of legitimacy on politics. In a representative democracy, where levels of trust and confidence are critical to systemic stability, how citizens orient themselves towards politics is very important.

Finally, the arguments and evidence put forward in this book bring some much needed clarity to the political debates raging over the issue of minority voting rights. It is a debate in which there are countless charges and counter-charges, but very limited concern for empirical evidence and very little understanding of what precisely is taking place in black districts across the country. The focus of the debates has been the enactment and interpretation of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (and its subsequent extensions in 1970, 1975, and 1982). At the onset narrowly concerned with the denial of the franchise to blacks, the VRA was later expanded to address the principle and practice of minority vote dilution more generally. It is this expansion that has proved most controversial, with critics arguing that the Supreme Court effectively reshaped the VRA into "an instrument of affirmative action in the electoral sphere" (Thernstrom 1987).

In recent years, critics have charged that the primary tool of the VRA, the creation of the majority-black or majority-minority districts from which most black members of Congress come, works only to the advantage of black candidates and incumbents. It is not only unnecessary, but counter-productive and unfair. Unnecessary because (1) black

candidates can run and win in non-minority districts; and (2) black representatives do not make a unique contribution to politics. Counter-productive because majority-black districts actually depress black turnout. And unfair in that majority-black districts deliberately dilute non-minority voting strength. The evidence presented in this book, however, contradicts several of these charges.

First, the low turnout observed in majority-black districts, and commonly assumed to reflect black political behavior, is actually a product of *white* defection from politics. These districts never depress black turnout; in some cases, the descriptive representation they guarantee can inspire black political participation. Furthermore, black representatives do bring something unique to politics through their impact on the political attitudes of black constituents.

Lastly, the analysis in Chapter 4 makes clear that black incumbents (let alone unknown black candidates) face tremendous obstacles in trying to attract the support of white voters. As compared to their white counterparts, black incumbents can lose nearly 40% of the white vote due to their race alone. The case against minority-districting can not rest on the colorblindness of white voters. There is no evidence to support that line of argument. Election from non-minority districts remains a challenge. In November 1996, the reelection of three black incumbents in newly-white (formerly-black) congressional districts was only possible because of incumbency, not because of a willingness among whites to support black candidates. Unfortunately the Supreme Court has misread these results. In *Abrams v. Johnson*, Justice Anthony Kennedy used the victories of Representatives Cynthia McKinney and Sanford Bishop, Jr. to uphold a court-ordered

redistricting plan that left Georgia with only one black-majority Congressional district instead of the two demanded by the Justice Department. The election results, he said, “underscore the weakness of the Justice Department’s methodology of calculating the likelihood of a black-preferred candidate winning based on strict racial percentages” (Greenhouse 1997). To the contrary, the election results--coupled with the findings from this book--provide new credibility to the Justice Department’s presumption of racially-polarized voting. No black candidate is immune to race; only incumbency can level the playing field. November 1996, much like November 1990 and 1994, exposed the faulty reasoning and misplaced optimism of critics. If anything, these elections highlight the *need* for majority-black districts.

The VRA has enabled African-Americans to elect representatives of their choice--more specifically, to elect black representatives. As the voices of dissent grow louder, contributing to an erosion of popular, political, and judicial support for the provisions of the VRA, it becomes increasingly important to appreciate the full consequences of black representation. The story is more complicated than either the critics or the proponents suggest it to be. Before the VRA can be championed or dismantled, we need to weigh the merits and demerits of its chief accomplishment. The analysis presented in this book sheds light on the significance of black representation, making clear how it has (for better *and* for worse) reshaped the contours of mass politics.

Appendix A: Description of Data

1994

The 1994 data discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 was provided by the National Committee for an Effective Congress. The data is proprietary information assembled to aid political candidates and other organizations. The data consists of 1994 election results aggregated at the precinct-level. Additionally, the data includes demographic information based on the 1990 Census, but updated to 1995.

1990

The 1990 data discussed in Chapter 3 is drawn primarily from two sources: The Record of American Democracy Project (ROAD) and the US Bureau of the Census.

Lead by Gary King at Harvard, ROAD is a large-scale effort to assemble a nationwide database of voting results for federal and state elections held between the years 1984 and 1990. (In some cases, this data also includes referenda results). Unlike prior data on voting behavior which relied heavily on statistics from the county-level or higher, ROAD provides these vote totals at the precinct-level--the smallest political unit. The data for Chapter 3 consists of precinct-level counts of "total ballots cast" in the November 1990 General Election.

The 1990 demographic data was provided by the US Bureau of the Census via the Harvard Libraries. This data consists of two elements: precinct-level counts of various racial and ethnic populations; and, more elaborate socioeconomic statistics for the minor-civil divisions (MCD) in which precincts are located. The precinct data is extracted from PL94-171, a dataset constructed to assist the states during the 1990 Redistricting cycle. (Compliance with PL94-171 was optional, thus there are states for which precinct data is incomplete or unavailable). The MCD data is extracted from STF3A, more commonly known as “the long form.” Information from the long form is not aggregated at the precinct level.

Merging Procedure

The process of merging the US Census data , both PL94-171 and STF3A, with the voting data from ROAD is complicated, but can be roughly divided into three steps.

- **Merging PL94-171 with ROAD:** The purpose of this merge is to match the precincts’ voting behavior with its racial and ethnic makeup. The process is made difficult by the absence of a common numeric (or alphanumeric) identifier. Instead precincts are tracked across the two datasets on the basis of the precinct names included in each file. Naming schemes differ; adjustments are made to remove features which are not critical to distinguishing one precinct from another, but which can enable tracking across datasets. (For example, the same Detroit precinct that ROAD references as “Detroit Pct-1”,

might be coded as "Detroit Precinct 1" in PL94-171). The two files are merged on the basis of the adjusted names.

- **Assigning Precincts to MCDs:** The purpose of this procedure is to identify which minor-civil divisions contain which precincts. In the final step, this correspondence will be used to merge socioeconomic data with the precinct data created in step one. For several Northeastern states, MCD numeric identifiers are included originally for each of the precinct observations in the ROAD data. These MCD codes are identical to those used in the census STF3A file. Thus, no more work is necessary. Where MCD codes are not included in the ROAD data, precincts are assigned to MCDs by taking advantage of the hierarchical structure of the PL94-171 file. On the basis of the location of a precinct observation within the PL94-171 master file, it is possible to identify the minor-civil division in which it is nested.
- **Merging the PL94-171/ROAD data with STF3A.** The purpose of this procedure is to match the racial makeup and voting behavior of the precincts' with the socioeconomic characteristics of the MCD in which it is located. Having assigned Census-defined MCD codes to the precincts in PL94-171/ROAD (step two), these codes facilitate a merge with the MCD data in STF3A.

In each of these steps, some observations are invariably lost. Precincts in the ROAD dataset do not always have counterparts in the PL94-171 data. Similarly, there are Census-defined precincts whose voting information is not recorded in ROAD. Though there was no conscious effort to select certain precincts to track across datasets--success at tracking is largely dependent on spelling inconsistencies and other identification errors--a post-merge analysis reveals that, in some states, there are qualitative differences between those precincts successfully tracked, and those not included in the final dataset. An apparently random process generated less than random results. As a consequence, summary statistics for the state and the congressional districts within the state may be biased. The relationship between black representation and turnout is accurate, to the extent that it is not conditional on the bias. I have no reason to suspect that the joint distribution would differ with the precincts sampled. Below I discuss the specifics of the various state datasets created, addressing where necessary the possibility of selection bias.

Final 1990 State Datasets:

Pennsylvania:

The Pennsylvania data consists of 8376 precincts. This corresponds to 88% of the total number of ROAD precincts in the November 1990 election, and 88.3% of the total number of PL94-171 precincts. The data includes precincts from each of Pennsylvania's 23 congressional districts. The precincts successfully merged are not perfectly representative of the precincts in Pennsylvania. The merged PL94-171 precincts tend to be smaller, with a higher proportion of black residents, than the precincts not included in

final dataset. The minor-civil divisions in which the merged precincts are located tend to have a higher proportion of college-educated African-Americans.

Michigan:

The Michigan data consists of 4464 precincts. This corresponds to 65.6% of the total number of ROAD precincts in the November 1990 election, and 75.3% of the total number of PL94-171 precincts. Precincts from each of Michigan's 18 congressional districts are included. The precincts successfully merged are not perfectly representative of the precincts in Michigan. The merged PL94-171 precincts tend to be larger, with a higher proportion of black residents, than the precincts not included in the final dataset. The minor-civil divisions in which the merged precincts are located tend to have a higher proportion of college-educated whites.

New Jersey:

The New Jersey data consists of 5343 precincts. This corresponds to 82.1% of the total number of ROAD precincts in the November 1990 election, and 92% of the total number of PL94-171 precincts. Precincts from each of New Jersey's 14 congressional districts are included. The precincts successfully merged are not perfectly representative of the precincts in New Jersey. The merged PL94-171 precincts tend to be larger, with a lower proportion of black residents, than the precincts not included in the final dataset. The minor-civil divisions in which the merged precincts are located tend to have a higher proportion of college-educated whites and African-Americans.

Georgia:

The Georgia data consists of 763 precincts. This corresponds to only 22.2% of the total number of ROAD precincts in the November 1990 election, and 24.2% of the total number of PL94-171 precincts. Precincts from each of Georgia's 10 congressional districts are included. The precincts successfully merged differ in only two respects from those not included in the final dataset. The merged precincts are larger and have a lower proportion of black residents. The minor-civil divisions in which the merged precincts are located are representative of the minor civil division in the state at large.

Appendix B: Ecological Inference Model

For the last 40 years, the most widely used statistical approach to ecological inference (in 2 x 2 tables) has been Goodman's Regression. Briefly, the method involves a regression of total vote on the proportion of the population that is black and the proportion that is white, with no constant term. The coefficients generated from this least squares regression are assumed to be estimates of the district aggregates, B^b (the proportion of black residents who vote in the district) and B^w (the proportion of white residents who vote in the district). There are a number of problems with this method. Among them:

- The regression coefficients are not estimates of the quantities of interest, B^b and B^w . Since Goodman's model does not take into account differences in precinct size, the regression coefficients are, at best, an *unweighted average* of the precinct parameters, B_i^b and B_i^w .
- Goodman's procedure incorrectly assumes that the precinct-level parameters, B_i^b and B_i^w are constant over the precincts.
- Goodman's model does not take into account information from the "method of bounds," which would constrain the value of estimates even prior to the application of any statistical techniques. As a consequence, the model often

gives estimates outside of the known bounds. On occasion, the estimates even violate the $[0, 1]$ bound.

- Goodman's model ignores the heteroskedasticity common in aggregate data.

The method of ecological inference developed by Gary King, and applied in this book, addresses the shortcomings of Goodman's regression, significantly improving the accuracy of the estimates. The relationship between the marginals and the cell entries in Table 3.1 is summarized in the basic accounting identity on which this model of inference is based:

$$T_i = B_i^b X_i + B_i^w (1 - X_i)$$

This model not only allows for the precinct parameters, B_i^b and B_i^w , to vary across precincts, but it also produces estimates of these precinct parameters. (Goodman's regression only produces estimates --and not very good ones--of the aggregate quantities of interest. Only if the precinct parameters were, in fact, constant would Goodman's model be able to estimate them). Furthermore, the King model incorporates information from the "method of bounds," eliminating the possibility of non-sensical results (i.e., turnout rates above 100%) and reducing the possibility of inaccurate ones. The King model also generates more reliable estimates of uncertainty. Lastly, the approach adopted here deals explicitly with the heteroskedasticity common to aggregate data, and it is robust to aggregation bias.

Appendix C: Description of Weighted Least Squares Model

The Stage Two analysis discussed in Section 3 of Chapter 3 uses the precinct estimates of black and white turnout as dependent variables in regressions predicting turnout as a function of black representation. The analysis employs a weighted least squares regression model, which takes into account the degree of uncertainty in the estimates of B_i^b and B_i^w . The model weights the regression by the variance in these dependent variables, thus solving the problem of heteroskedasticity.

The basic model is:

$$B_i^{b,w} = X_i\beta + w$$

where,

$$w = u + e_i$$

$$B_i^{b,w} = \text{turnout rate, for either whites or blacks in precinct } i$$

$$X_i\beta = \text{vector of independent variables}$$

$$V(u) = \sigma^2$$

$$V(e_i) = \sigma_i^2$$

$$C(u, e_i) = 0 \quad \forall i$$

There are two sources of variability in the turnout rate $B_i^{b,w}$: $V(u)$ measures the fundamental variability in the random variable $B_i^{b,w}$, either white or black turnout. Note that I assume homoskedasticity. $V(e_i)$ measures the variability in the estimate of $B_i^{b,w}$; estimates of $V(e_i)$ are generated in stage one along with the turnout rates for each

precinct. In this model, $V(B_i^{b,w}|X_i)$ is thought to be proportional to the true weight, W .

That is,

$$\begin{aligned} V(B_i|X_i) &= V(u) + V(e_i) \\ &= \sigma^2 + \sigma_i^2 \\ &\propto W_i \end{aligned}$$

Note that there is no covariance term in the variance formula; the model assumes independence between the variance of the random variable and the variance of the estimates of $B_i^{b,w}$. To weight the regression, then, I divide through by the $\sqrt{\sigma^2 + \sigma_i^2}$ (which is proportional, though not equal, to the true weight, W_i).¹

¹ Since calculating the true value of σ^2 is not possible, I approximate using the formula:

$$\hat{\sigma}^2 = \sigma_{ols}^2 - \bar{\sigma}_i^2$$

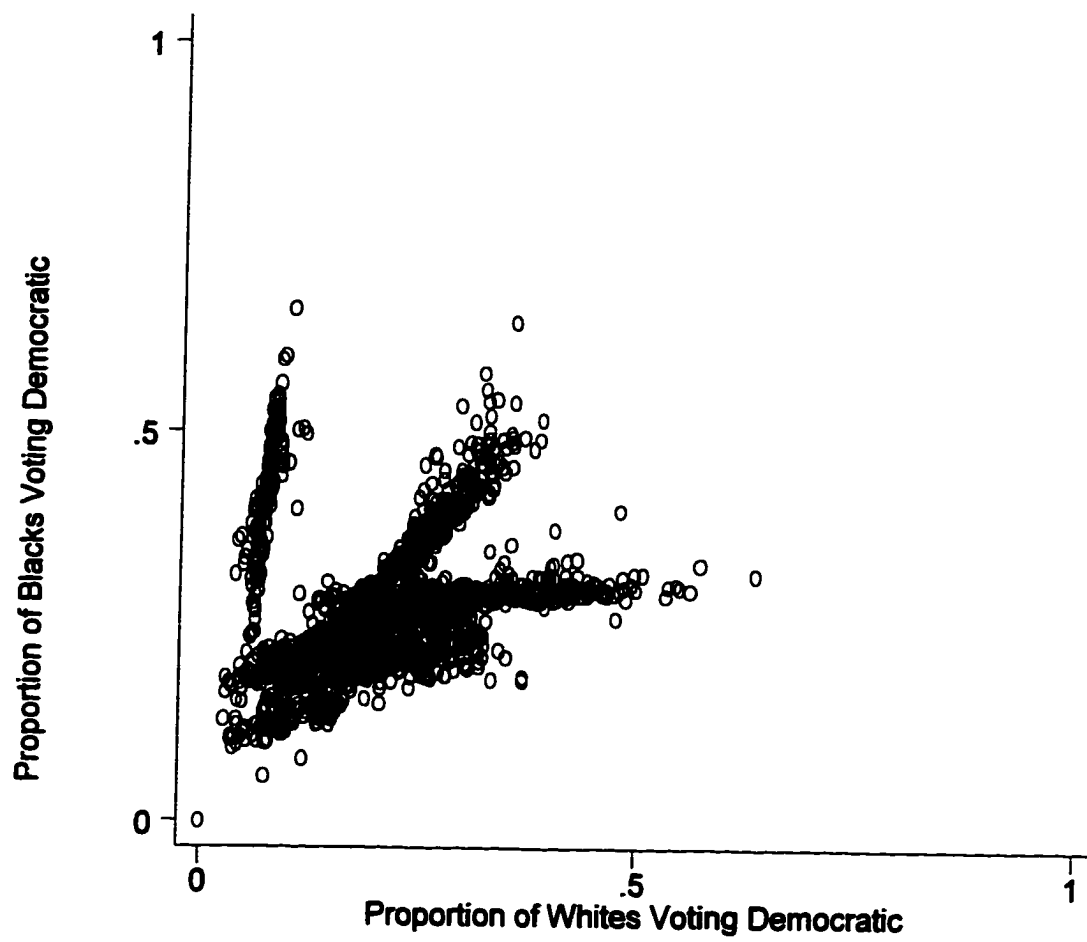
where σ_{ols}^2 is the mean square error of an ordinary least squares regression, and $\bar{\sigma}_i^2$ is the mean variance in the estimates of B . Weighted least squares is performed by weighting the regression by $\sqrt{\hat{\sigma}^2 + \sigma_i^2}$. The approximation appears to be fairly robust; fractional changes in the value of $\hat{\sigma}^2$ leave the coefficients and standard errors of the weighted least squares regression virtually unchanged. Where there are changes, they occur in the third or fourth decimal place.

Appendix D

Estimating Vote Choice in Tennessee

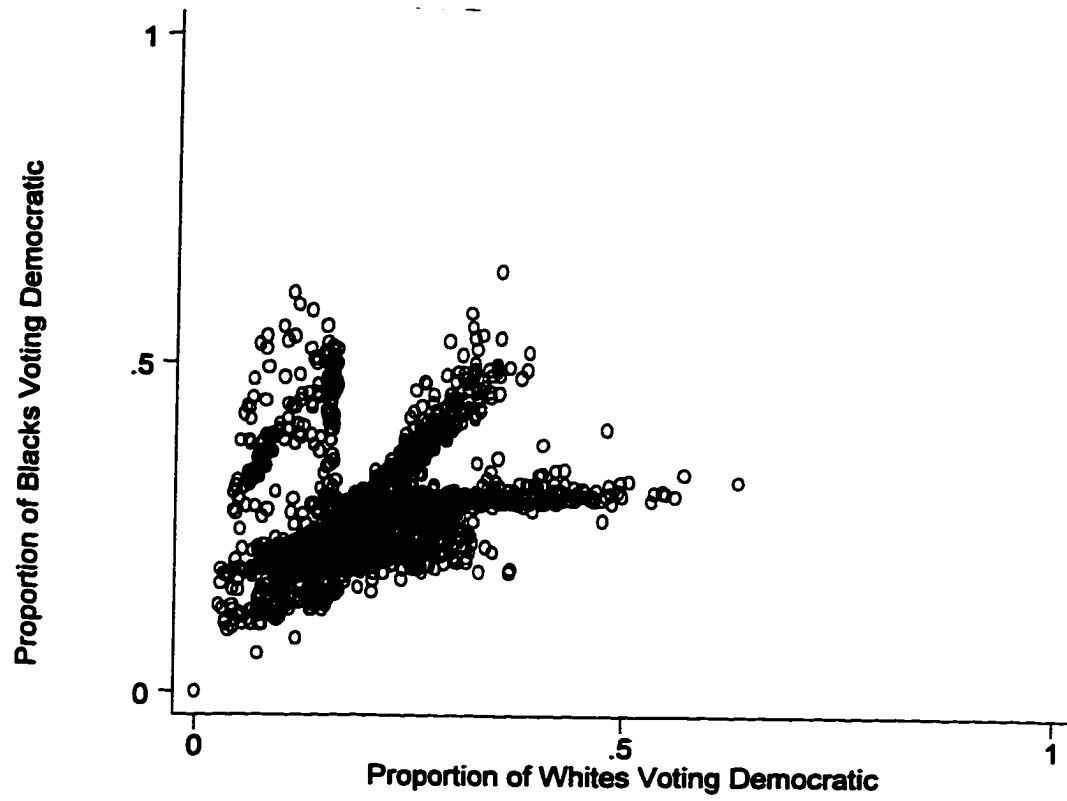
The ecological inference model applied to the estimation of vote choice in Tennessee's Ninth Congressional District differs from the basic model applied elsewhere in that state and other states. In the basic model, whose parameters are summarized in Table 4.2, λ_i^b (proportion of black voters voting Democratic) and λ_i^w (proportion of white voters voting Democratic) are assumed to be uncorrelated, and independent of B_i^b (the proportion of voting age black turning out to vote) and B_i^w (the proportion of voting age whites turning out to vote). (Additionally, in the model estimating turnout, B_i^b and B_i^w are assumed to be mean independent of X_i , the proportion black). In most cases, the assumption is appropriate; at the very least, the model is sufficiently robust that the assumption of independence typically does not compromise the accuracy of the estimates. In the case of Tennessee, the basic model generated the following graph which plots λ_i^w by λ_i^b for the precincts in all nine of the state's congressional districts.

Immediately apparent is the vertical band of precincts, tightly clustered to the left of the main group of observations for this state. The precincts in this group are all drawn from Tennessee's Ninth district. Democratic voting among blacks and whites appears to be highly correlated in this congressional district; the process that generates Democratic voting in the Ninth differs from what takes place in other districts. This observation suggested a need to more explicitly model the relationship in order to generate more accurate estimates, and ameliorate any potential bias.



Tennessee's Ninth district is unique among the state's congressional districts not only because it is majority black, but primarily because it has only a *narrow* black majority. African-Americans make up 54% of the voting age population; elsewhere in the state, the majority racial group accounts for 80% or more of the voting age population. With such a narrow majority, a highly mobilized and unified minority (i.e. white) electorate could pose a serious challenge to the ability of the majority to elect the representative of its choice. As a consequence, one could imagine that white voting patterns in the Ninth might be particularly sensitive to the (perceived) degree of mobilization and racial bloc voting among blacks in the district. Unlike minorities in other Tennessee districts, whites in the Ninth might use the political behavior of the majority group to gage the utility of voting Democratic.

For this reason, the ecological inference model applied to the estimation of vote choice in the Ninth relaxes the assumption of independence, and allows for white Democratic voting to be related to black voting participation. Included in the model is a covariate equal to the proportion of black voters in the total voting population. By conditioning on black political behavior, the previously constant means are allowed to vary over the observations. Thus, not only does the model allow for white Democratic voting to vary according to factors such as wealth, or education levels, but it also allows for the possibility that whites vote more (or less) Republican depending on the makeup of the voting pool. Doing so produced Figure 4.3 (reprinted below) in which the λ_i^w and λ_i^b estimates for the Ninth district are less highly correlated.



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