

*Majority Black Districts, Republican Ascendancy,  
and Party Competition in the South, 1988-2000*

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This article analyzes the impact of race-based redistricting and the Republican trend on party competition in races for the U.S. House of Representatives in the South from 1988 to 2000. The region is divided into sub-regions (Deep and Peripheral) in order to show that the combination of reapportionment and newly created majority black districts disproportionately crowds out white Democratic representatives in the Deep South. It is argued that race-based redistricting serves as an accelerating mechanism that hastens the secular realignment of whites into the Republican Party. Aggregate and individual level data are presented to illustrate the effect of the Republican trend and majority black districts on party competition and voting behavior in congressional elections.

### **Introduction**

The increase in African-American representatives in the South after the 1992 U.S. House elections has taken place alongside a drastic reduction in white Democratic representatives. There were 69 white Democrats in 1988. After the 2000 elections there are 32 white Democrats. What can account for the massive decline of white Democrats, and by extension, the Democratic Party in the South? It is my contention that a secular realignment of whites into the Republican Party is the answer. Race-based redistricting is a vital component of this realignment because it has served to expedite the process, especially in the Deep South<sup>1</sup> where a lack of seat-gains combined with race-based redistricting has pushed white Democrats to the brink of extinction.

This study proceeds in four sections. Section one presents an overview of party competition from 1988 to 2000. I present electoral data to highlight the Republican trend in southern House races. In section two I present a model of vote choice to provide micro-level support for the Republican trend. The effects of race-based redistricting are discussed in section three. I argue that the combination of reapportionment and race-based redistricting account for the relatively greater reduction of white Democrats in the Deep South. And in section four, I present a model of vote choice to illustrate that white southerners living in the Deep South are significantly more likely to favor Republican candidates even after controlling for several variables that

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affect party preference. I split the South into Deep and Peripheral states because the decline in the electoral fortunes of southern Democrats is not proportional across sub-regions.

Generally speaking, the southern electorate is racially polarized. This means that in congressional elections a majority of whites prefer candidates opposed by a majority of blacks. In partisan terms, most whites vote Republican and most blacks vote Democratic. The reduction in the black voting-age population (BVAP) of districts adjacent to majority-minority districts severely handicaps white Democratic representatives by taking away their most loyal voters. White Democrats also suffer because majority-minority districts are altered to ensure the election of a minority candidate, and the packing of blacks in these majority-minority districts aids Republicans in bordering districts with reduced BVAPs. In other words, there is not a one-to-one exchange between the parties: black Democrats replace white Democrats, and Republicans defeat additional white Democrats running in districts with higher white voting-age populations as a consequence of race-based redistricting. Therefore, the direct and indirect effect of race-based redistricting reduces the total number of Democrats in the South.

My central contention in this study is that race-based redistricting prior to the 1992 U.S. House elections has served to accelerate the extant realignment of southern whites into the Republican Party. Race plays an essential role in deciding the outcomes of southern House elections, and majority-minority districts, in effect, enhance the importance of race with respect to vote choice.

### **Party Competition, 1988-2000: The Republican Trend**

At the start of the 1990s there was scant evidence of an impending partisan realignment that would by the end of the decade leave the Democratic Party firmly in the minority. In this section I document the ascendancy of the Republican Party in southern House races by presenting data on party competition in general elections from 1988 to 2000. In 1988 and 1990, the southern House delegation consisted of 39 Republicans and 77 Democrats. After the 2000 elections, there were 71 Republicans and 53 Democrats.

Table 1 shows a net gain of nine seats for Republicans in 1992 which is the first election held after reapportionment and the creation of 12 new majority black districts. In hindsight it is clear that 1992 was the election that triggered a punctuated change leading to a new electoral balance with the Republican Party maintaining majority status since 1994. By dividing the southern House seats by sub-region, it is evident that the Democratic Party

**Table 1. Realignment in the Southern House, 1988-2000**

Representative	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
<b>Republicans</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>
Deep South	10	9	13	18	25	24	24
Peripheral South	29	30	35	46	46	47	47
<b>Democrats</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>53</b>
Deep South	26	27	23	18	11	12	12
Peripheral South	51	50	54	43	43	42	41
Total	116	116	125	125	125	125	124*

Source: Data compiled by author from *The Almanac of American Politics (1989-2001)*.

\*Rep. Virgil H. Goode switched from Democrat to Independent in 2000 and this accounts for the loss of a seat.

**Table 2. The Changing Face of the Southern House, 1988-2000**

Representative	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
<b>White Republicans</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>
Deep South	10	9	13	18	25	24	24
Peripheral South	29	29	32	43	43	44	44
<b>Hispanic Republicans*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>White Democrats</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>
Deep South	24	24	15	10	4	5	5
Peripheral South	45	44	41	30	29	28	27
<b>Black Democrats</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
Deep South	2	3	8	8	7	7	7
Peripheral South	2	2	9	9	9	9	9
<b>Hispanic Democrats*</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Total	116	116	125	125	125	125	124

Source: Data compiled by author from *The Almanac of American Politics (1989-2001)*.

\*All Hispanic members are in the Peripheral South states of Florida and Texas.

suffers the most in the Deep South. In 1992 there were 23 Democrats in the Deep South. The number of Deep South Democrats is now 12, a 48 percent reduction. By contrast, Deep South Republicans went from 13 in 1992 to 24 in 2000, an eighty five percent increase over these five elections. In the Peripheral South since 1992, there has been a 24 percent reduction in Democrats whereas the number of Republicans has increased by 34 percent.

Viewing the composition of the southern House delegation in terms of race and party affiliation reveals an even starker contrast in the rise of

Republicans and the concomitant decline of Democrats. We see in Table 2 that the surge in the number of black Democrats (from 5 to 17) occurs in 1992 as a direct result of majority-minority redistricting. There is a slight increase in the number of Hispanic representatives after 1992 because of the creation of Hispanic majority districts in Florida (FL 21) and Texas (TX 28).<sup>2</sup> What is most notable is the increase in white Republicans and the decline in white Democrats. Between 1992 and 2000, there is a 43 percent decline in white Democrats and a 51 percent increase in white Republicans. In the Deep South white Republicans are almost five times as numerous as white Democrats (24 vs. 5). And since 1996, black Democrats outnumber white Democrats in the Deep South.

Table 3 documents two-party competition among Republicans and Democrats in general elections from 1988 to 2000.<sup>3</sup> Two-party competition is presented for elections with incumbents and elections with open seats (see Hill and Rae 2000, 11). In 1992 and 1994, not one Republican incumbent loses to a Democratic challenger, but 11 Democratic incumbents are denied reelection by Republican challengers. The pattern is the same in open seat contests for 1992 and 1994. All open seats previously held by Republicans are maintained while Democrats lose control of 14. Table 3 reveals that the Republican ascendancy is a result of the electoral victories of 1992 and 1994 and the retention of these seats in subsequent elections.

What is striking is the speed of this partisan realignment. In only two elections Republican advancement results in majority control of the southern House delegation. 1992 is the critical election that triggers the change resulting in a new balance, with the Republican Party finally obtaining control of the House in 1994. The steady secular realignment in favor of the Republican Party, which began in 1964 at the presidential level with Goldwater's "southern strategy" (see Phillips 1969; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Davidson 1990; Aistrup 1996; Black and Black 2002), gave way to a sudden electoral flashpoint with the Republican Party taking control of the House in a span of two elections.

### **The Republican Trend and Voting Behavior**

In this section I present two multivariate vote choice models that include election years as dummy variables in order to measure the Republican trend in southern congressional elections. My assumption is that after controlling for a host of variables that are expected to impact vote choice, the election year variables will remain significant if there is a Republican trend in southern House races. I use the National Election Studies Cumulative File (1948-2000) because it provides an adequate number of cases and

**Table 3. Two-Party Competition: Incumbents and Open Seats, 1988-2000**

	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1988	2000
<b>Victorious Incumbents</b>							
Republicans	94.6 (37)	95.0 (40)	100.0 (33)	100.0 (44)	95.3 (64)	100.0 (69)	98.4 (64)
Democrats	98.6 (72)	98.6 (71)	93.4 (61)	89.2 (65)	100.0 (38)	100.0 (52)	100.0 (52)
<b>Defeated Incumbents</b>							
Republicans	2	2	0	0	3	0	1
Democrats	1	1	4	7	0	0	0
<b>Retention of Open Seats</b>							
Republicans	66.7 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (5)	100.0 (4)	100.0 (4)	50.0 (2)	100.0 (7)
Democrats	75.0 (4)	100.0 (5)	58.3 (12)	25.0 (12)	68.4 (19)	50.0 (2)	0.0 (1)
<b>Lost Open Seats</b>							
Republicans	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Democrats	1	0	5	9	6	1	1
<b>Total</b>	116	116	111*	125	125	125	124

Source: Data compiled by author.

\*The 14 newly created districts for the 1992 House elections (Barone and Ujifusa 1993) are excluded from the total. All representatives who won special elections prior to the general election are classified as incumbents. An open seat is designated as belonging to party of last incumbent. If a member switches parties, the seat is of the party switched to before the election. In June 2001, a special election was held in VA 4 after the death of incumbent Democrat Norm Sisisky on March 29 (Barone et al. 2001). The Democrats lost this open seat to Republican Randy Forbes. I do not account for this lost open seat in the table because the election occurred after 2000. All defeated incumbents lost to candidates of opposing party, and likewise for lost open seats.

makes it possible to include dummy variables for election years. The relevant years for the data are 1988 to 2000.

In order to avoid the complication of presidential elections, I run two models, the first for midterm elections (1990, 1994, and 1998) and the second for presidential election years (1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000). In both models, the dependent variable equals 1 for a vote in favor of a Republican House candidate and 0 for a Democrat. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous, I run logistic regression. The midterm equation is as follows:

$$1) \frac{\Pr(\text{Rep})}{\Pr(\text{Dem})} = b_0 + b_1(\text{Income}) + b_2(\text{Black}) + b_3(\text{Dem}) + b_4(\text{Rep}) + b_5(\text{RepInc}) + b_6(\text{DeepSouth}) + b_7(1994) + b_8(1998)$$

This equation states that the probability an individual voter votes for a Republican House candidate (as opposed to a Democratic candidate) is a function of income, race (Black = 1, White = 0), party identification (PID), whether there is a Republican incumbent running for reelection, whether the respondent lives in the Deep South (as opposed to Peripheral South), and the year of the election. Independent is the baseline (omitted) category for party identification. The reference year from which 1994 and 1998 are measured against is 1990.

The presidential years equation is as follows:

$$2) \frac{\Pr(\text{Rep})}{\Pr(\text{Dem})} = b_0 + b_1(\text{Income}) + b_2(\text{Black}) + b_3(\text{Dem}) + b_4(\text{Rep}) + b_5(\text{RepInc}) + b_6(\text{RepPres}) + b_7(\text{Deep South}) + b_8(1992) + b_9(1996) + b_{10}(2000)$$

The only difference in equation 2 is the inclusion of a dummy variable for whether the respondent voted for the Republican presidential candidate<sup>4</sup> (Rep = 1, Dem = 0) and the dummy variables for presidential years 1992, 1996, and 2000, compared with 1988, the omitted category. For the midterm model, after accounting for income, race, party identification, Republican incumbency, and sub-region, respondents were still significantly more likely to vote for a Republican House candidate in 1994 and 1998 compared to respondents in 1990. For example, holding all the remaining variables at their mean values, the probability that a white Democrat living in the Peripheral South in a district with a Republican incumbent running for reelection votes Republican in 1990 is 55.3 percent. In 1994, a respondent with these characteristics has a 77.1 percent probability of voting Republican. And in 1998, the probability is 87.2 percent.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 4. The Republican Trend in Midterm House Races and Presidential Years, 1988-2000**

Dependent Variable (Rep=1, Dem=2)	Midterm 1990-1998	Presidential Years 1988-2000
Intercept	-1.280 (.677)	-3.166** (.592)
Income	.155 (.124)	.188* (.093)
Black	.051 (.381)	-1.076** (.337)
Democrat	-2.098** (.605)	-.978* (.409)
Republican	1.002 (.613)	.642 (.388)
Republican Incumbent	2.694** (.326)	3.115** (.267)
Republican President	—	1.560** (.310)
Deep South	.276 (.357)	.667** (.236)
1990	—	—
1992	—	1.254** (.289)
1994	.701* (.323)	—
1996	—	.835** (.299)
1998	1.375** (.410)	—
2000	—	.768* (.303)
Log Likelihood	-167.074	-322.424
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.487	.471
Number of Cases	472	884

Source: American National Election Studies 1948-2000 Cumulative Data File.

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$  significance level.

Coefficients are logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses.

The results for the presidential years model are more promising. Every coefficient has the correct sign. Whereas just two variables (Democrat PID and Republican Incumbent) apart from the year dummies are statistically significant in the midterm model, the Republican dummy is the only covariate that is not significant in the presidential years model. Controlling for all the variables in the presidential years model, individuals in 1992, 1996, and 2000 are significantly more likely to vote Republican in House elections compared to persons in 1988.

It makes intuitive sense that 1992 makes the strongest impact on the probability of voting Republican in House races because Republican candidates had the most success in this presidential election year (see Table 3). Take for example a white Democrat in a district with no Republican incumbent who lives in the Peripheral South and votes for George Bush in 1992. There is a 47.4 percent chance this individual votes for the Republican House candidate. Given these same characteristics, an individual has only a 14.7 percent probability of voting for a Republican House candidate in 1988. Compared to 1988 (the presidential years model) and 1990 (the midterm model), and controlling for many factors expected to influence vote choice, the election year variables highlight the Republican trend in voting behavior in southern House elections.

### **Race-Based Redistricting**

After the 1992 congressional elections, the number of black U.S. House of Representatives in the South more than tripled, increasing from five to seventeen members. The explanation for this explosion is closely related to a position taken by the Justice Department: the 1982 amendments (Sections 2 and 5) to the Voting Rights Act (VRA), as interpreted by the Reagan and Bush administrations (Department of Justice), required the creation of a maximum number of majority-minority districts following the 1990 Census (Clayton 2000). Although the latest legal interpretation backs off of this position (*Easley v. Cromartie* 2001), because race can no longer be the “dominant and controlling”<sup>6</sup> consideration in drawing the lines for a district, there nonetheless remain sixteen<sup>7</sup> black representatives in the South, and most of them represent majority black districts (MBDs).<sup>8</sup>

If we hold all other factors constant, Democratic candidates have an electoral advantage in districts with high black and Hispanic voting-age populations (Lublin 1997; Handley et al. 1998). Conversely, Republican contenders have a definite edge in districts that have a large proportion of white (non-Hispanic) residents. The 1992 redistricting revealed the importance of race in regard to vote choice as congressional boundaries were

drawn to favor Democratic contenders in newly created majority-minority districts. In the South, as a byproduct of race-based redistricting, Republican candidates received an electoral boon in several districts that bordered majority black districts because the white voting-age populations in the former were substantially increased.<sup>9</sup>

White Democrats have suffered their greatest losses in the Deep South, with a net loss of nine seats in 1992. In 1988 there were 24 white Democrats in the Deep South. After the 2000 elections there are five. By way of comparison, in 1988 there were ten white Republicans in the Deep South. Now there are 24. As mentioned previously, black Democrats outnumber white Democrats in the Deep South (7 to 5).

I propose two interdependent explanations as to why white Democrats have lost more seats in the Deep South: (1) race-based redistricting has its greatest negative impact on white Democrats in the Deep South because of the greater scarcity of seats (relative to the Peripheral South), and (2) the reduction in the black voting-age populations (BVAPs) of districts bordering newly created MBDs favored Republican candidates. Race-based redistricting constitutes a direct loss of white Democratic seats, whereas the resultant decline in the BVAPs of surrounding districts is the indirect loss, because so-called “bleached” districts favor Republican candidates (see Hill 1995; Petrocik and Desposato 1998).

Table 5 displays all of the newly created majority black districts in the South by sub-region for the 1992 congressional elections. As shown in the table, with a gain of nine seats after apportionment, the more populous Peripheral South states were more capable of absorbing newly created majority black districts. In other words, none of the MBDs in the Peripheral South had boundaries drawn at the direct expense of incumbents. This was not the case in the Deep South states of Alabama (AL 7), Georgia (GA 2), and South Carolina (SC 6). These states had newly created MBDs that comprised the greater portion of existing districts presided over by white Democrats (and thus these districts are not designated as “Newly Created Districts” in the table even though all districts presented are by definition newly created MBDs). Nonetheless, and to a lesser extent (compared to the Deep South states), some of the Peripheral South states were also spread too thin (especially North Carolina, which gained one seat but had to set aside two districts as MBDs), with several Democratic candidates in the surrounding districts losing too many black voters to be able to hold the line in the face of a powerful Republican tide.

The Deep South states broke even with respect to their total number of seats following the 1990 Census. Georgia was the only state to add a seat, Louisiana lost a seat, and the number of seats remained the same in

**Table 5. Newly Created MBDs by Region, Apportionment, and Seat Acquisition in 1992**

MBDs by Region	Seats Gained 1992	How Seat Was Won
<b>Deep South</b>		
Alabama	0	
AL 7		White Democratic Incumbent Retired
Georgia	1	
GA 2		Defeated White Democrat Incumbent
GA 11		Newly Created District
Louisiana	-1	
LA 4		Newly Created District
South Carolina	0	
SC 6		White Democratic Incumbent Retired
<b>Peripheral South</b>		
Florida	4	
FL 3		Newly Created District
FL 17		Newly Created District
FL 23		Newly Created District
North Carolina	1	
NC 1		Newly Created District
NC 12		Newly Created District
Texas	3	
TX 30		Newly Created District
Virginia	1	
VA 3		Newly Created District

Source: Data compiled by author from *The Almanac of American Politics* (1993) and *Congressional Elections: 1946-1966* (CQ 1998).

Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Mississippi is the only Deep South state that did not create a new majority black district. Although Georgia added a seat, it was also required to form two MBDs. Louisiana, the only southern state to lose a seat, created one MBD (LA 4).<sup>10</sup> Alabama and South Carolina each had to add one MBD. In Table 5 it is evident that race-based redistricting, coupled with a lack of population growth (newly created MBDs that are not “Newly Created Districts”), resulted in the direct loss of three white Democrats in the Deep South, two who decided to retire and one who lost to a black candidate in the Democratic primary.

Now I turn to the second part of the explanation for Republican gains and Democratic losses as a consequence of race-based redistricting. To see if it is indeed the case that Republican success stemmed from a reduction in

the BVAPs of districts bordering newly created MBDs, I evaluate all eight seats won by white Republicans in 1992.<sup>11</sup> Since white Democrats held these seats in 1990, I present the percent Democratic vote (two-party), white voting-age population (WVAP), and BVAP in 1990. These figures are contrasted with the percent Republican vote, WVAP, and BVAP in 1992. I also indicate whether the seat bordered a newly created MBD as well as the status of the seat for the 1992 House races.

The results from Table 6 are consistent with the finding (see Hill 1995) that, in the South, the 1992 redistricting favored the electoral fortunes of white Republicans at the expense of white Democrats by significantly reducing the BVAP in several districts that bordered newly created MBDs. In 1992, the average increase in WVAP for the districts bordering newly created MBDs is 10 percent and the average decline in BVAP is 37 percent. The large gains in WVAP and even greater reductions in BVAP all come from districts that border newly created MBDs. The white Democrats who held these seats in 1990 lost an indispensable portion of their voting base as a consequence of race-based redistricting.

#### **Vote Choice and Sub-region, Support for Realignment at the Individual Level**

Given the decline of white Democrats in the Deep South, an analysis of voting behavior should provide evidence that white voters residing in the Deep South are more likely to vote Republican compared to their counterparts in the Peripheral South. In this section I present a model of vote choice that controls for several factors known to influence voter preference in House races. This model serves as a behavioral linkage to the aggregate level data I presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in order to document the ascendancy of the Republican Party in southern House elections. Because the Republican trend is stronger in the Deep South (see the presidential years model in Table 4), I expect that whites in the Deep South are significantly more likely to vote Republican versus whites in the Peripheral South even after controlling for a host of variables that influence vote choice.

The model is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Pr}(\text{Rep})}{\text{Pr}(\text{Dem})} = b_0 + b_1(\text{Dem}) + b_2(\text{Rep}) + b_3(\text{DemInc}) + b_4(\text{RepInc}) + b_5(\text{Income}) + b_6(\text{Black}) + b_7(\text{White\&DeepSouth})$$

In this equation, the probability that one votes for a Republican House candidate as opposed to a Democrat depends on party identification, whether a Democrat or Republican incumbent is running for reelection, income, and

Table 6. White Republican Gains and White Democratic Losses in the South, 1990–1992

District 1990	% Dem Vote 1990	WVAP 1990	BVAP 1990	% Rep Vote 1992	WVAP 1992	BVAP 1992	Border New MBD?	Status of Seat
<b>Deep South</b>								
AL 6	100.0	68.0	31.5	53.8	90.6	8.4	Yes	Incumbent
GA 1	71.2	68.9	30.1	57.8	77.9	20.3	Yes	Open seat
GA 3	63.2	67.2	31.4	54.8	82.0	16.3	Yes	Incumbent
GA 4	52.4	87.5	11.0	50.5	84.4	10.8	Yes	Open seat
SC 4	61.5	82.3	17.2	51.5	81.3	17.8	No	Incumbent
<b>Peripheral South</b>								
AR 4	72.4	74.8	24.6	52.3	75.3	23.7	No	Open seat
FL 4*	72.7	73.8	24.6	56.8	92.4	5.1	Yes	Open seat
VA 6	100.0	89.7	9.8	60.1	88.5	10.6	No	Open seat
<b>Average</b>	74.18	76.53	22.53	54.70	84.05	14.13		

\*FL 3 in 1990.

Source: Data compiled by author from the U.S. Census, *The Almanac of American Politics* (1991, 1993), and *American Votes* (23) (1999).

**Table 7. Vote Choice in House Races, 1992-2000**

Dependent Variable (Rep=1, Dem=2)	1992-2000
Intercept	-.398 (.420)
Democrat	-1.588** (.331)
Republican	1.101** (.331)
Democratic Incumbent	-.800** (.249)
Republican Incumbent	1.743** (.257)
Income	.209** (.076)
Black	-.656** (.250)
White & Deep South	.523* (.245)
Log Likelihood	-433.794
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.417
Number of Cases	1077

Source: American National Election Studies 1948-2000 Cumulative Data File.

Note: \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$  significance level.

Coefficients are logit estimates with standard errors in parentheses.

race. The variable of interest is “White & Deep South” because it is expected that, after controlling for the other covariates, whites living in the Deep South will be more likely to vote Republican compared to whites living in the Peripheral South (the reference category). The model utilizes pooled data from the National Election Studies Cumulative File for the 1992-2000 U.S. House elections (South only), the critical period of realignment in southern House races.

The results in Table 7 confirm my expectations. All of the variables in the model are of the proper sign and attain statistical significance. Most importantly, after controlling for party identification, incumbency, and income, whites living in the Deep South are significantly more likely than Peripheral South whites to vote Republican in House elections from 1992 to 2000. Table 8 presents selected probabilities of voting Republican for southern

**Table 8. Probability of Voting for Republican House Candidate, 1992-2000**

Selected Characteristics	White (PS)	White (DS)	Difference (DS - PS)
Democrat and Dem Incumbent	.2835	.3691	8.6
Democrat and Rep Incumbent	.6307	.7163	8.6
Republican and Rep Incumbent	.8753	.9121	3.7
Republican and Dem Incumbent	.6192	.7062	8.7
Independent and Open Seat	.5562	.6495	9.3
Democrat and Open Seat	.2982	.3858	8.8
Republican and Open Seat	.6358	.7208	8.5
Variables set to mean values	.5838	.6747	9.1

Note: Probabilities derived from logit coefficients in Table 7, PS = Peripheral, DS = Deep South.

whites according to sub-region for certain values selected on the independent variables. The last row of the table sets all of the covariates to their mean values. In this case, Deep South whites are nine percent more likely than Peripheral South whites to vote Republican.

### Conclusion

Since 1994, Republicans have maintained a solid majority of southern U.S. House seats. By 1996, white Republicans outnumber white Democrats more than two to one. White Republicans have benefited from the creation of majority black districts, because, unlike white Democrats, they do not rely upon a racial coalition to win elections (Lamis 1988; Black 1998; Black and Black 2002). Unfortunately for white Democrats, following the 1990 reapportionment, the boundaries for majority black districts were created primarily from portions of districts that were presided over by white Democrats. A high plurality to majority BVAP practically guarantees victory for black candidates (see Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). Similarly, racial polarization aids white Republican candidates because the reduction in black population in majority white districts translates into more Republican support (Petrocik and Desposato 1998).

In Key's masterpiece *Southern Politics*, he states: "[w]hatever phase of the southern political process one seeks to understand, sooner or later the trail of inquiry leads to the Negro" (Key 1984 [1949], 5). Over half a century

has passed since these famous words were recorded and yet they still hold true. From 1988 to 2000, race plays a central role in deciding the outcome of southern House races. Court decisions mandated the creation of 12 majority black districts in 1992. The resultant increase in black members has exacted a heavy toll on the Democratic Party. More black representation has meant less Democratic representation because too many blacks remain concentrated in majority black districts (Swain 1993). In short, the concentration of black constituents in majority black districts has had the effect of crowding out white Democratic representatives because they are more dependent upon a mixture of black and white support to win House races. The biracial coalition that worked so effectively for white Democratic candidates (see Glaser 1996) has been severed by the creation of majority black districts.

The secular realignment of southern whites into the Republican Party took on the unmistakable look of a critical realignment in 1994. Republican ascendancy was hastened by the 1992 redistricting because it had the effect of displacing white Democrats (especially in the Deep South) who represented the greater parts of districts set aside for black candidates. In addition, the reduction of black voting-age populations in districts bordering newly created MBDs advantages Republican candidates. In the Deep South there are more black Democrats than white Democrats. Given the scant number of white Democrats, it is no wonder that the voting behavior of Deep South whites reveals a strong preference for Republican candidates. It will certainly be interesting to investigate the next phase of southern House races with the next election being the first with the new district lines based on the 2000 census. I make no predictions for 2002, but suffice it to say that pretty soon Republicans will only be able to move in one direction.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Deep South includes Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The Peripheral South includes Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The most obvious distinction between the Deep and Peripheral South is the relatively larger population of blacks in the former sub-region (see Black and Black 1987, 14).

<sup>2</sup>TX 29 is majority Hispanic but white Democrat Gene Green has held the seat since its inception in 1992 (Barone and Ujifusa 1993).

<sup>3</sup>In Louisiana, I consider a contested primary as tantamount to a contested general election.

<sup>4</sup>For the presidential vote variable, including respondents who chose to vote for a major third party candidate (i.e., Perot in 1992 and 1996) does not change my findings.

<sup>5</sup>Income is a categorical variable measured on a five-point scale and held at its mean value for these derived probabilities.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted from Linda Greenhouse, “Justices Permit Race as a Factor in Redistricting,” *The New York Times*, 19 April 2001, p.1.

<sup>7</sup>After the 2000 House elections, ten of the sixteen black members reside in majority black districts.

<sup>8</sup>By definition, a majority black district has a black population over 50 percent. There are nine majority Hispanic districts (MHDs) in the South. Hispanic Republicans represent three, Hispanic Democrats five, and a white Democrat represents one MHD (TX 29).

<sup>9</sup>Petrocik and Desposato (1998) emphasize that it is not just a larger white voting-age population that benefits Republican candidates, but rather voters are more inclined to vote Republican in these “bleached” districts.

<sup>10</sup>According to census data, redistricting before the 1996 election reduced the BVAP in LA 4 to 29.2 percent.

<sup>11</sup>The remaining southern seat won by Republicans in 1992 is TX 23, a Hispanic Republican challenger (Henry Bonilla) defeated the Hispanic Democratic incumbent (Albert G. Bustamante).

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