

The Politics of Resentment in the Post-Civil Rights Era: Minority Threat, Homicide, and Ideological Voting in Congress¹

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This study assesses whether racial and ethnic resentments still influence U.S. politics. Tests of hypotheses derived from minority threat theory and minority voting power stipulating quadratic relationships between minority presence and roll call votes for liberal legislation in the House of Representatives are conducted. In addition to these nonlinear associations, the political influence of the most menacing crime the public blames on underclass minorities is assessed as well. Fixed-effects estimates based on analyses of 1,152 state-years in the post-civil rights era indicate that the expected U-shaped relationships are present between minority population size and roll call votes for liberal legislation. Additional findings suggest that expansions in the murder rates produced decreased support for liberal policies. Statements by Republican campaign officials on how they deliberately used mass resentments against minorities to gain normally Democratic votes provide evidence about the intervening connections between the threat to white dominance posed by larger minority populations and reduced support for liberal legislation.

What is the relationship between the threat to majority group dominance posed by larger minority populations and support for liberal legislation? Findings suggest that expansions in minority populations produce harsh outcomes in the criminal justice system (Liska, Lawrence, and Benson 1981; Jacobs and Carmichael 2002; Behrens, Uggen, and Manza 2003) because threatened resentful whites vote for conservative candidates who

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endorse such measures.² Additional votes for political candidates who are hostile to minorities occur in communities with larger African-American proportions (Heer 1959; Giles and Buckner 1993; Giles and Hertz 1994). Such results suggest that enhanced minority presence and increases in the most menacing street crimes that whites blame on minorities (Chambliss 1994; Chiricos, Welch, and Gertz 2004) produce diminished support for liberal candidates and policies (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Gans 1995).

Although strong links between social arrangements that produce minority threat and severe criminal justice policies often have been detected, there is little systematic research on whether such explanations account for legislation. Yet throughout U.S. history, relations between the races have been exceptionally antagonistic. These now largely latent conflicts may still be the most important fissure in U.S. politics. In his pathbreaking account of politics in the South, Key (1949) observed that despite sharp economic differences, the allocation of public resources was rarely debated. Instead, racial politics undermined policies that helped the least affluent. Less prosperous whites were diverted from pursuing their economic interests by their desire to maintain their position above African-Americans in the Jim Crow caste system. Recently, however, researchers seem to have paid more attention to racial attitudes and public opinion while focusing less on links between the relative size of minority populations and public policy. While we do not ignore survey data, this study fills a different void by focusing on the threat from large minority populations that is likely to produce greater support for conservative legislation.

There is additional backing for claims about strong relationships between expansions in minority presence, white resentment, and conservative legislation. Policies that help the least prosperous are less likely if underclass minorities are seen as the primary beneficiaries (Jacobs 1978; Jacobs and Dixon 2006; Quadagno 1994; Soule and Zylan 1997; Zylan and Soule 2000). These conclusions suggest that the presence of large minority populations should reduce legislative votes for liberal policies. We assess such claims, but we do not restrict this analysis only to racial or redistributive issues. This study instead seeks to discover if hypotheses developed by specialists in race relations and by conflict theorists in criminology have sufficient power to account for a broad range of ideological votes in the House of Representatives. We analyze a comprehensive index

² We deliberately use the term *resentful* because many working- and lower-middle-class whites who work hard for modest pay and make other costly efforts to follow social convention are offended by and probably somewhat envious of the underclass, whom they view as choosing street crime over hard work to enjoy drugs, promiscuity, and other venal pleasures (Edsall and Edsall 1991).

to gauge the determinants of votes for an inclusive sample of liberal as opposed to conservative measures.

In light of the intense political emphasis on street crime throughout the post-civil rights period, it is equally plausible that growth in the most horrific and threatening crime will have similar political effects. Although few crimes are interracial, the conventional wisdom sees violent street crime as almost entirely the responsibility of underclass minorities who, it is erroneously believed, often victimize whites (Chiricos et al. 2004). With the crime rates held constant, fear of crime is closely related to the size of minority populations (Liska, Lawrence, and Sanchirico 1982; Quillian and Pager 2002). Reduced votes for liberal legislation in the House therefore can be expected after increases in the homicide rates because majority whites erroneously see themselves as the likely victims of such crimes and blame minorities (Beckett 1997; Jacobs and Helms 2001; Chiricos et al. 2004).

Close relationships between minority threat and political outcomes should be especially likely in the post-civil rights era after many conservatives followed Nixon's example and gained votes by covertly stressing race. Some vivid quotes capture the spirit of these tactics: "John Ehrlichman, special counsel to the president, described Nixon's campaign strategy of 1968. 'We'll go after the racists. That subliminal appeal to the anti-black voter was always present in Nixon's statements and speeches'" (Ehrlichman 1982, p. 233, quoted in Beckett 1997, p. 42). "Kevin Phillips, another Nixon aid who was an 'expert on ethnic voting patterns' claimed to be a specialist in *'the whole secret of politics—knowing who hates who'*" (as told to Wills 1969, pp. 264–65, emphasis added). And appeals based on such resentments persisted. In a debate about a crime bill 26 years later, "House Republicans seized on a minor provision that designated grants for midnight basketball. 29 Republican legislators spoke derisively about midnight basketball on the House floor . . . characterizing the program as 'hugs for thugs'" (Hurwitz and Peffley 2005, pp. 99–100).

In part because the literature in political sociology and movements has focused on the sometimes effective but nevertheless fleeting alliances among the dispossessed in the 1930s or in the early 1960s, we have overlooked more enduring political alliances. If we focus only on these brief coalitions between less prosperous groups and ignore alliances between social conservatives who resent underclass lifestyles and economic conservatives, we will continue to have difficulty explaining the conservative political resurgence after the 1960s. Perhaps the literature offers so little insight about recent liberal failures because we have not paid enough attention to "wedge" issues such as race and violent crime that conser-

vatives have used to divide the liberal coalition that briefly dominated national politics in the 1960s.

In this study we seek to fill this and other voids in the literature by discovering if racial threat and the most menacing crime that is largely blamed on minorities help explain reductions in legislative support for liberal measures after 1970. We address another gap by analyzing the threat posed by Hispanic populations to find out if this menace helps explain these political outcomes as well. To eliminate bias from unobserved effects, we estimate these relationships with a pooled time-series fixed-effects design using state-level data from 1970 to 2002. Inasmuch as single-factor explanations are suspect, we test many hypotheses, but this inclusive strategy means the next section cannot present theoretical justifications for just a few accounts.

THEORY

Minority Threat and Political Outcomes

Disputes about race once were and may still be the most politically important fissure in U.S. politics (Myrdal 1944; Key 1949; Goldfield 1997). The primary hypotheses we evaluate concern the political consequences of the menace posed by larger minority populations. Strong theoretical foundations for this threat hypothesis exist (Key 1949; Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Ethnocentric views and majority inclinations to view minorities as trespassers enhance dominant group presumptions that they should retain exclusive claims over important rights and prerogatives (Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Unfavorable majority views about minorities and increasingly entrenched beliefs about their “rightful” position are solidified by the struggles that result when the minorities in question use political tactics to end these inequitable arrangements (Blumer 1958). Because comparatively large minority populations jeopardize their political and cultural ascendancy, whites frequently react by supporting conservative policies and candidates who will help them retain their dominant position.

Negative views about African-Americans (Fosset and Kiecolt 1989; Quillian 1996; Taylor 1998) or immigrants (Quillian 1995) are more widespread where minority populations are most substantial. But a focus only on racial attitudes without paying close attention to the social arrangements that provide the foundation for these attitudes can be misleading. “If racism is not regarded as society-wide but as a property of individuals who are ‘racist’ or ‘prejudiced,’ then (1) social institutions cannot be racist and (2) studying racism is simply a matter of clinically surveying populations to assess the proportion of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ individuals” (Bonilla-

Silva 2001, p. 34; also see Redding, James, and Klugman 2005). And since the empirical links between racial attitudes and behavior could be stronger (see Pager and Quillian 2005 for a review), we study the political consequences of minority threat by focusing instead on minority proportions. In that spirit, Heer (1959), Giles and Buckner (1993), and Giles and Hertz (1994) show that increases in the percentage of minorities led to increased votes for antiminority, conservative candidates.

A quote from Lee Atwater—who became perhaps the primary tactician in the 1988 Bush presidential campaign—shows how some conservatives took advantage of the resulting antiminority sentiments. “You start out in 1954 by saying nigger, nigger, nigger. By 1968 you can’t say nigger; that hurts you. Backfires. You’re getting so abstract now [that] you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a by-product of them is [that] blacks get hurt worse than whites” (Lamis 1999, pp. 7–8). This and the prior quotes from Republican operatives show how conservatives successfully used racial threat and the concomitant resentments to reduce support for a broad set of liberal policies and candidates.

Yet the influence of such threat explanations on *legislation* rather than on attitudes or voters has not been well researched.³ Many authors claimed that the increased prominence of race (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Quadagno 1994) and street crime (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Gans 1995) after the civil rights era led to diminished support for liberal legislation, but findings have been largely restricted to redistributive policies such as welfare (Soule and Zylan 1997; Zylan and Soule 2000), tax progressivity (Jacobs and Helms 2001), labor law (Jacobs 1978; Jacobs and Dixon 2006), or civil rights legislation (Burstein 1998; Santoro 2002). Carmines and Stimson (1989) trace the resolution of racial issues in Congress from 1950 to 1980, but they do not test hypotheses about links between African-American presence and roll call votes.⁴ To fill this gap we focus on the relationship between shifts in minority presence and voting for a comprehensive index of liberal versus conservative legislation in the House.

³ Multiple studies of racial attitudes have appeared in political science (Kinder and Sears 1981; Kinder and Saunders 1996; Gilens 1999; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000), but region-based studies about the relationships between such attitudes and policy or other political outcomes are extremely unusual because regional data on racial attitudes with sufficient respondents for plausible analyses are extremely uncommon (see Miller and Stokes [1963] for an exception, although the congressional district samples used in this analysis could have been far larger).

⁴ Edsall and Edsall (1991, pp. 64–65) provide another instance of racial politics on the House floor: in 1967 the House voted against “a modest administration proposal to spend \$40 million on rat eradication in the nation’s slums. Southern Democrats and Republicans joked that the measure was a ‘civil rats’ bill.”

We deliberately analyze an inclusive indicator to discover if minority threat has sufficient political force to account for roll call votes for a broad spectrum of ideological policies.

Racial divisions also undercut class-based coalitions intended to resist conservative legislation. Discrimination against minorities creates split labor markets that hurt the interests of all workers (Bonacich 1976; Szymanski 1976; Jacobs and Dixon 2006). This disparate treatment and the resulting antipathies reduce the political effectiveness of the labor movement and its allies. Case studies (Ratcliff and Jaffe 1981; Gall 1988, 1998; Roediger 1999) suggest that racial divisions hurt efforts to create minority-labor alliances to defeat antiunion policies. Research on the determinants of labor legislation (Jacobs 1978; Jacobs and Dixon 2006) supports claims that larger minority populations reduce the prospects for politically effective classwide coalitions (although two relatively large minority populations in combination may have opposite effects).

Three complementary considerations thus provide the conceptual basis for two core hypotheses. First, the threat to majority dominance resulting from larger minority populations should produce additional votes for conservative representatives who are likely to resist the changes sought by minorities. After they are elected, these conservatives are likely to oppose other liberal measures that do not directly affect minorities. Second, conservative politicians harness this threat by using rhetoric about law and order that highlights underclass deviance and acts as an added cause of majority resentments against minorities (Beckett 1997; Hurwitz and Pefley 2005). Third, these enhanced racial or ethnic divisions undercut efforts to form political coalitions to resist conservative political agendas. These three reinforcing claims supply the basis for expectations that

HYPOTHESIS 1.—Larger African-American populations will produce diminished support for liberal policies in the House.

In some states, the underclass minority that inspires the greatest majority hostility is Hispanic. The same logic suggests that

HYPOTHESIS 2.—House delegations from states with larger Hispanic populations will be less likely to vote for liberal legislation.⁵

⁵ Using survey data, Kinder and Sears (1981), their coauthors (Sears et al. 2000; Kinder and Saunders 1996), and other political scientists (Gilens 1999) have attempted to isolate the underlying dimensions of racist attitudes. But no state-specific surveys apparently exist. This means that we cannot assess the effects of various kinds of racist views on votes by state delegations to the House. Yet the political effects of these attitudes should reinforce the racial threat effects we measure using minority proportions (see Behrens et al. 2003 for similar claims). Hence, our inability to gauge dimensions of racist views that may have intervening effects between changes in minority presence and roll call votes in the House should not reduce the plausibility of these results.

But these relationships may not be linear (Blalock 1967). When minority populations reach thresholds and their political influence becomes sufficient, the negative relationship between minority proportions and liberal legislation should reverse. Further growth in African-American or Hispanic proportions past such thresholds should give these minorities enough potential votes to produce increases in their House delegation's support for liberal policies. Hence,

HYPOTHESIS 3.—The relationship between the percentage of blacks or Hispanics and liberal voting in the House of Representatives should be negative as long as minority presence is modest, but after the size of the minority population expands past a threshold, these relationships will become positive.

For this reversal to occur, it will not be necessary for the minority in question to outnumber other groups. Minority proportions need only expand to the point at which their votes may help decide elections, but this proportion can be modest, particularly if other voting blocs are evenly matched. After a threshold in the growth of minority populations, the competition for votes may trump the majority resentments that result from minority threat. The combination of these offsetting forces can be expected to produce U-shaped quadratic relationships between minority presence and roll call votes for liberal legislation in the House. This study will offer evidence about the relative weight of these opposing forces.

These relationships also need not be additive. Political outcomes often are historically contingent because they depend on the joint appearance of more than one set of conditions that each must be present in sufficient strength before an outcome can occur. The *joint* political influence of African-Americans and Hispanics may produce added votes for liberal legislation in the House if the combined size of both minority groups is sufficient. Thus,

HYPOTHESIS 4.—When the proportion of African-American and Hispanic residents are both substantial, greater support for liberal legislation from House members should be present.

It follows that an interaction term based on the product of the percentages of blacks and Hispanics should be positively associated with liberal roll call votes.

One of the few studies on the relationship between constituency views and legislative outcomes shows that a strong association exists between attitudes about race and roll call votes on racial issues. In fact this association is far more substantial than the relationships between pertinent constituency attitudes and roll call votes on other policies such as spending or foreign relations (Miller and Stokes 1963). Such results enhance the plausibility of hypotheses that threats generated by larger minority populations should reduce legislative votes for liberal policies.

Crime and Political Support for Liberal Measures

In light of the intense conservative emphasis on law and order during the post-civil rights era, it is just as reasonable to think that dreaded criminal acts, which are blamed on underclass minorities, will have explanatory power as well. An equally plausible hypothesis about the politics of resentment and diminished support for liberal legislation is based on the political consequences of the most horrific crime. Claims that greater public hostility against a criminal underclass that is seen as vile and pernicious led to reduced votes for liberal measures are common (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Chambliss 1994; Gans 1995; Beckett 1997; Davey 1998; Garland 2001). Many citizens view violent street crime as the malicious work of the members of a purportedly amoral minority underclass with much to gain but little to lose from such vicious acts (Garland 1990; Edsall and Edsall 1991; Chambliss 1994; Gans 1995; Beckett 1997).

Violent crimes are almost always intraracial. Few crimes that victimize whites are committed by African-Americans or by Hispanics, yet mass anxieties about criminal victimization increase after expansions in minority presence. With the crime rates held constant, Liska et al. (1982) and Quillian and Pager (2002) find positive relationships between the percentage of African-Americans in cities or in neighborhoods and fear of crime. The media's preoccupation with violent crime magnifies public resentment against what are seen as hedonistic underclass lifestyles that generate these predatory acts (Beckett 1997). Particularly after the murder rates expand past a critical point, it is plausible that this menacing crime should trigger diminished roll call votes for liberal measures that are seen as benefiting this undeserving criminal underclass (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Gans 1995). Probably for these reasons, Jacobs and Helms (2001) find that after increases in street crime and riots, the national income tax became less progressive and less beneficial to the least affluent.

The media's coverage has been discontinuous as well. When crime rates are modest, these events are given less attention, but expansions beyond critical levels lead to sharp increases in media coverage, added public concerns, and reduced sympathy for racial groups perceived as dominated by the underclass (Beckett 1997). Despite a reduction in crime, fear of crime grew sharply during the latter years in our sample. Dramatic, readily understood appeals about villains and heroes and the ineluctable struggle between good and evil probably are the most effective way to win elections (Lakoff 1996). It did not require much effort by conservatives to use these Manichean public images about the correspondence between minority depravity and street crime to enhance support for their candidates with law and order campaign appeals (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Chambliss 1994;

Beckett 1997).⁶ Inasmuch as murder is the most threatening (and best measured) crime:

HYPOTHESIS 5.—As homicide rates expand, the resulting menace and the antiminority resentments that result should make votes for liberal candidates and legislation increasingly unlikely.

Particularly because media attention expands sharply after a threshold in the amount of crime, this logic suggests that a nonlinear relationship that becomes increasingly negative can be expected between the murder rates and roll call votes for liberal measures in the House.

Additional Controls

Joblessness.—Higher unemployment rates put pressure on political representatives to enact ameliorative, liberal policies. When slack labor markets strengthen management's hand in the workplace, labor's political efforts often become increasingly intense (Boswell and Dixon 1993; Jacobs and Dixon 2006). The liberal labor and welfare legislation that appeared during the Depression is a particularly apposite example. In this exceptional period, yearly unemployment rates above 24% helped trigger what probably was the sharpest expansion in legislation beneficial to labor and to the least affluent in U.S. history, but there are other reasons to expect that liberal policies will become increasingly likely after a growth in joblessness.

Even the most conservative office holders will face significant political costs if they appear indifferent to the suffering caused by unemployment. Political resistance to liberal measures therefore should weaken as unemployment becomes increasingly severe. And during recessions, public attitudes about workers, the labor movement (Miller and Ware 1963), and probably the least prosperous become more favorable, so increased unemployment rates should generate enhanced support for liberal policies.

⁶ Examples of conservative tactics that relied on perceptions about the link between underclass minorities and violent street crime are common. According to Carter (1996, pp. 76–77): “A Republican group called ‘Americans for Bush’ . . . blanketed Cable News Network with an ad declaring that ‘Dukakis not only opposed the death penalty, he allowed first-degree murderers to have weekend passes from prison,’ . . . [as the] clearly black [offender]—Willie Horton stared dully into the camera. Forty-eight hours after the initial ‘Americans for Bush’ commercial, the California Committee for the Presidency released a second, even more devastating radio ad featuring a [victim]. ‘Mike Dukakis and Willie Horton changed our lives forever. . . . Horton broke into our home. For twelve hours, I was beaten, slashed and terrorized,’ he told listeners. ‘My wife Angie was brutally raped.’” Another quote (Carter 1996, p. 76) about the 1988 election is almost as vivid. “One Georgia Republican described [Bush aide Lee] Atwater as almost manic in his glee at the prospect of pairing photos of Dukakis and Jesse Jackson with ads featuring the Horton case.”

Inasmuch as the highest unemployment rates may have greater effects on such political outcomes, this relationship also may not be linear.

Union density.—Labor's organizational strength should be an important determinant of votes for liberal policies as well. In addition to their effective representation of employee interests in the political arena, unions probably were the most potent political organization that acted on behalf of the least affluent (Greenstone 1977; Freeman and Medoff 1984). Political organizations and candidates who endorse liberal measures should be increasingly influential in states with the strongest unions because unions assist their allies with campaign workers and financial contributions as well as votes. But the positive relationship we anticipate should be restated as union strength has not been expanding. These considerations suggest that support in the House for liberal legislation should become less likely as the percentage of workers in unions declines. This relationship may become stronger at the most extreme values of union strength, so a nonlinear relationship should be assessed as well.

Agricultural dominance.—Pressures on House delegations to vote for conservative policies that benefit employers but hurt labor and the poor should be magnified in agricultural states. In comparison to other economic endeavors, much farming continues to be labor intensive. In addition to relatively high wage bills as a proportion of total costs, the operators of agricultural enterprises face exceptionally competitive product markets. This intense competition means that farm operators' ability to pass higher labor costs forward to their customers is severely restricted. Such factors combine to make the operators of these enterprises fiercely resistant to legislation that helps labor (Jenkins and Perrow 1977). And policies that raise the incomes of the less affluent undercut the ability of farm managers to hold wage costs down by threatening to hire replacement workers at lower wages. This logic suggests that agricultural managers should not favor liberal policies. Especially since the pressure groups that represent agricultural interests are extremely influential, particularly in some jurisdictions, we can expect that greater employment in this sector will reduce votes for liberal legislation in the House.

Partisanship.—Many political scientists who specialize in voting claim that most citizens are rationally ignorant about politics because they see political matters as having little direct influence on their daily lives. This psychological perspective suggests that voter support for candidates is mostly driven by socially inherited identification as a Democrat or as a Republican (for a summary, see Keith et al. 1992). According to this predispositional account, these primordial identifications endure despite nontrivial shifts in social or economic conditions. If this explanation is correct, partisanship should determine legislative voting for liberal or conservative policies, and social or economic influences should not have

as much explanatory power. These considerations suggest that changes in majority-minority group relations, street crime, or economic factors ought to have reduced effects after the partisanship of House delegations is held constant. We can further explore the explanatory power of such psychological accounts by analyzing measures that gauge respondent self-identification as a Republican or as a Democrat and their self-identification as liberals or conservatives with data from state-specific surveys. Support for liberal legislation, of course, should be diminished in states with the most self-identified conservatives or Republicans. In what follows, we test each of the hypotheses presented in this section.

Time-dependent interactions.—In an important work, William J. Wilson (1980) claimed that the deleterious social effects of race were diminishing. We can test a central political consequence of Wilson's analysis by using the dynamic features of our pooled data to discover if significant trends in the strength of two fundamental relationships are present. If an association between minority threat and conservative votes in the House exists, analyses that reveal shifts in the strength of this threat also may provide insight about its future. To discover if the relationships at issue have recently become more or less influential, we construct period-specific interactions and test for historically contingent differences in these effects. Such an analysis will show if Wilson (1980) was right when he implied that racial effects would continue to weaken.

METHODS

Research Design

Estimation.—In contrast to random effects used in almost all pooled time-series analyses in sociology (Halaby 2004), fixed effects holds constant any unchanging and unmeasured case attributes by (in effect) including separate dummy variables for each case (or state) in the models. For this reason, fixed-effects estimates are unbiased when otherwise unmeasured time-invariant state characteristics—that are correlated with the explanatory variables—influence the dependent variable. In contrast to random effects, stronger claims can be made that omitted variable bias is not present in fixed-effects models (Johnston and DiNardo 1997; Wooldridge 2002; Allison 1994; Kennedy 2003; and Halaby 2004 list added benefits). We estimate with fixed effects because Hausman tests suggest that random effects will not produce consistent estimates.⁷

⁷ The Hausman test rejects the null hypothesis that the differences between fixed- and random-effects coefficients are not systematic with a chi-square value of 107.7 resulting in a probability beyond the .00001 level when this test is conducted on the variables

The case-specific dummy variables in these fixed-effects models can be viewed as separate intercepts that capture any unchanging state differences in state delegation voting records in the House. The additive effects of influences such as culture that remain constant are automatically controlled in such models. In part because incumbents typically hold their seats for many terms, tests suggest that serial correlation is present at lags of one, two, seven, and eight years, so we include four auto regressive (AR) terms at these lags using the Fair (1984) approach provided in EViews version 5.1 (see Quantitative Micro Software 2004, p. 484 for details). Other tests and residual plots suggest that cross-sectional heteroskedasticity is present, so the EViews estimates are corrected with estimated generalized least squares cross-sectional weights. To verify these results, we present panel corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995) random, fixed, and two-way fixed-effects estimates as well.

Sample.—Partly because they must face the voters every two years, House members should respond quickly to district changes, but their votes early in each year should be influenced by state conditions in the prior year. We transform all explanatory variables save the mean party of members of the House from each state with two-year moving averages. In light of this solution's plausibility, it is not surprising that experiments with other lags or moving averages produce weaker results. These voting records are measured from 1970 to 2002. We drop Alaska and Hawaii as a result of the exceptional racial mix in these states, but the results persist if they are retained. Corrections for serial correlation at various lags and the two-year moving averages remove early years. These deductions mean that this study will assess ideological voting scores using 24 yearly cross-sections based on 48 states yielding an N of 1,152 state-years.

We must use a state-level analysis, as important data from House districts apparently do not exist from the 1970s. But this necessity eliminates a formidable difficulty. House district boundaries are frequently altered, *but a state-level analysis makes these within-state changes irrelevant. Such repeated shifts in district definitions would make the indispensable corrections for lagged effects impossible in any analysis based on House districts.* This gerrymandering to create safe seats undoubtedly helps incumbents win reelection, but we remove this disturbance by correcting for serial correlation.

used in the best model (model 4 of table 4). The greatest contrasts occurred between the coefficients on the unsquared percentage of African-Americans, the unsquared percentage of Hispanics, and employment in agriculture. Fixed-effects estimation only captures changes in variables and ignores cross-sectional differences, but change in explanatory variables can be modest without harming the estimates (Wooldridge 2002). In this instance, changes in variable values clearly are substantial enough to produce accurate estimates.

Measurement and Specification

Explanatory variables.—We capture minority presence with the percentage of African-Americans and with the percentage of Hispanics in the states.⁸ To assess quadratic relationships, we enter these terms in untransformed and squared form. Agricultural influence is measured by the natural log of the percentage of employment in this sector. Compared to other specifications, this log transformation sharply increases this control variable's explanatory power as modest nonlinearities and outliers are present if it is not logged. In 51 state-years after 1975, farm employment remained above 10%. Agriculture's importance in some states and its formidable political influence suggest that employment in this sector should matter. We gauge respondent self-identification as a Republican or as a Democrat and self-identification as a liberal or conservative with measures from state-specific surveys conducted by CBS News/the *New York Times* covering a subset of years (from 1977 to 1999) in the analysis period (see Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993 and McIver, Erikson, and Wright 2001 for analyses).⁹

We use Uniform Crime Report murder rate statistics and the percentage of the nonagricultural workforce in unions to capture union strength. Joblessness is measured with the unemployment rates. Theory suggests that these variables should have nonlinear relationships with liberal voting records that become stronger as these indicators reach extremes, but there is no reason to think that these relationships should shift direction. Extremely high murder rates, for example, can produce increasingly greater reductions in liberal voting, but it is difficult to see how growth from low to somewhat higher murder rates would have an opposite signed relationship, so murder rates would produce *added* votes for liberal legislation. When a priori considerations suggest that nonlinear associations are present that do not change direction, power transformations are most

⁸ State data on Hispanic presence apparently only exists in the decennial census before 1990. We use interpolations between 1970 and 1980, and between 1980 and 1990, to assess Hispanic effects in noncensus years before 1990. But when we restrict analyses (not shown) only to yearly data after 1989, the theoretical implications of all results that involve Hispanics are identical to those shown in the tables. The Hispanic presence has the same U-shaped quadratic effects when analyses are limited to noninterpolated data. The explanatory power of the interaction between Hispanic and African-American presence also persists. Inasmuch as fixed-effects estimates are robust when change in explanatory variables is modest (Wooldridge 2002), the Hispanic findings are not based on measurement artifacts.

⁹ The partisan measure is, "Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?" The ideology question is, "How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as a liberal, moderate, or conservative?" See <http://socsi.colorado.edu/~mciverj/wip.html> for these data.

apposite (Cohen et al. 2003, pp. 225–54). Theory indicates that a single exponential transformation will be best. To avoid repeated searches for the best exponent and overfitting, we squared the union strength, murder, and unemployment rates. This power transformation approach is unconventional in sociology (but not in psychology). To reassure readers, we present otherwise identical models with and without these power transformations.

We discover if the combined influence of both minority populations produces enhanced legislative support for liberal measures by computing an interaction term by multiplying the percentage of African-Americans and the percentage of Hispanics. We gauge trends with interaction terms based on three period dummies scored “1” for the 1970s, the 1980s, or for years after 1990. Two explanatory variables are then multiplied by these three period-specific dummy variables. Significant differences between the coefficients on these product terms would indicate contrasting trends. This procedure tests Wilson’s (1980) claims, and it may provide insight about the future of these relationships.

Dependent variable.—Berry et al. (1998) assess ideological voting in the House by treating ideology as a continuum between liberalism and conservatism. To construct a measure that varies over time and across states, Berry et al. identify the degree to which the voting records of House members on multiple issues are liberal or conservative with ratings compiled by the Americans for Democratic Action and the political division of the AFL-CIO based on indicative role call votes selected by these interest groups.¹⁰ Berry et al. create their comprehensive ideological voting index that is closely linked to constituency preferences by combining the incumbent representative’s voting scores with estimates of how the incumbent’s opponent in the last election would have voted weighted by the incumbent’s victory margin in that election. Statewide scores are based on the mean of these House district scores with liberal voting records given the highest values. We analyze the most recent version that gauges roll call votes until 2003 and adds a few corrections to the scores originally published in 1998.

Multiple facts suggest that this index is valid. The state with the third highest liberal delegation score is Massachusetts in 1985, with Rhode Island and Massachusetts tied for second in 1988. It is especially indicative that the sole Vermont representative in the House—who probably was

¹⁰ Researchers specializing in legislative politics have largely accepted the use of vote-based indices to identify legislator ideology (Fowler 1982; Poole and Rosenthal 2000). Indices developed by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and the AFL-CIO’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) are the most widely used and have withstood much scrutiny (Shaffer 1989; Herrera, Epperlein, and Smith 1995). See appendix A for figures listing issues selected in many years.

the only member of Congress who claimed to be a socialist in the post-civil rights period—in 2002 earned the highest liberalism score on this index. Other scores support this picture. Mississippi in 1972 had the least liberal voting record, followed by Virginia in 1974, Kentucky in 2002, and Virginia again in 1974. States with scores closest to the mean of this unskewed variable include Wisconsin in 1984, Ohio in 1979 before this state became almost completely Republican, and Florida in 1993 with its mix of liberal representatives from the Miami area and conservatives from the northern districts nearest to south Georgia and Alabama.

Specification.—One of the more general specifications of these fixed-effects models corrected for heteroskedasticity and for first and higher-order serial correlation therefore is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Legislative voting index} = & \mathbf{b}_0 + \mathbf{b}_1\%black + \mathbf{b}_2\%black^2 \\ & + \mathbf{b}_3\%Hispanic + \mathbf{b}_4\%Hispanic^2 \\ & + \mathbf{b}_5\%agricultural\ employment + \mathbf{b}_6\%unemployed^2 \\ & + \mathbf{b}_7\text{murder rate}^2 + \mathbf{b}_8\%union^2 \\ & \mathbf{b}_9(\%black \times \%Hispanic) + \mathbf{b}_{10}\%Republican\ representatives \\ & + \mathbf{b}_{11}\text{respondent party ID} + \mathbf{b}_{12}\text{respondent ideology} \\ & + \mathbf{b}_{13-60}(47\ \text{state dummies}) + e, \end{aligned}$$

with variables operationalized as described above and with all explanatory variables except the party of state representatives in two-year moving average form. All relevant main effects are included in the models that assess statistical interactions. Theoretically based expectations about the direction of these relationships have been stipulated, so significance tests on all coefficients save the intercept and the coefficients on the two period main effects are one tailed.

ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics and Cross-Tabulations

Figure 1 shows how scores on this comprehensive index of liberal voting in the House of Representatives have shifted by region. The decrease in conservative roll call voting by southern representatives from the early 1970s to the 1980s to a level almost the same as western representatives is consistent with the growth in African-American voting that resulted from the protections embodied in the 1965 voting rights act. Table 1 shows the predicted signs, the variable means, and their standard deviations.

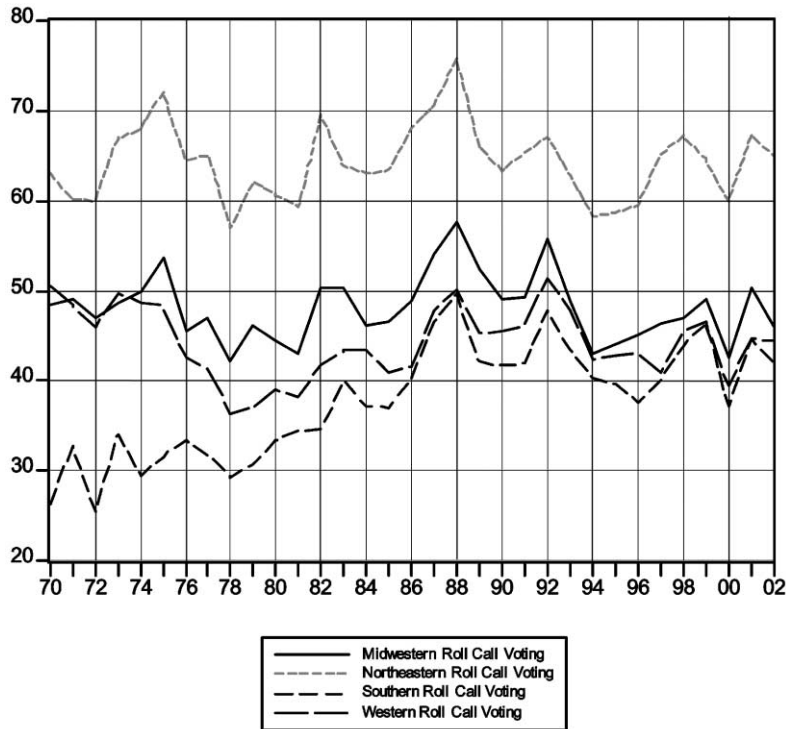


FIG. 1.—Liberal roll call voting in Congress over time by region

Table 2 shows the intercorrelations. As one might expect from the large number of state-years in this pooled design, if we disregard the relationships between the same variables in squared and untransformed form, the intercorrelations between variables are modest. Note as well that the less conventional explanatory variables such as the murder rates and agricultural employment have strong associations with the dependent variable.

To provide a sense of how this outcome varies in response to these two somewhat unconventional explanatory variables, in table 3 we present the means of state roll call voting scores cross-tabulated by the murder rates and by the percentage employed in agriculture. Prior considerations suggest that these legislative voting scores should become less liberal and fall in states with higher murder rates and greater employment in agriculture. The four departures (out of 24 possibilities) from this expected direction are modest, and two of these exceptions are based on less than a one percentage point difference. Compared to the effects of other ex-

TABLE 1
EXPECTED SIGNS, MEANS, AND SDs

	Sign	Mean	SD
Ideological House roll call voting		47.267	14.939
%black	-	9.990	9.386
%black ²	+	187.816	292.675
%Hispanic	-	5.752	7.847
%Hispanic ²	+	94.617	261.597
Murder rate	-	6.557	3.662
Ln % employed in agriculture	-	.885	.897
%unemployed	+	5.990	2.042
% in unions	+	15.388	6.718
% Republican representatives	-	48.212	28.233
Self-identification as Republican ^a	-	-.021	.132
Self-identification as conservative ^a	-	-.144	.109

NOTE.—All explanatory variables but %Republican are in two-year moving average form; *N* = 1,152 state-years.

^a Statistics for these self-identification variables from state-specific surveys are based on 672 state-years.

planatory variables in equivalent cross-tabulations that are not shown, these two indicators have the strongest predictive power. And the differences in legislative voting in the highest murder rate categories imply that a nonlinear relationship may be present as the most extreme murder rates apparently lead to sharper reductions in liberal voting. Although these contrasts may not hold in the more definitive fixed-effects analyses, they nevertheless are suggestive.

Fixed-Effects Analyses

In table 4 we start with a basic model that includes quadratic terms to gauge the expected nonlinear relationships between African-American or Hispanic presence and state delegation roll call voting. Agricultural employment, unemployment, the murder rates, and union strength are entered as well. Model 2 is identical to model 1 but we use power transformations by entering the square of the murder rates, the unemployment rates, and the union measure. In model 3 we include the interaction between the percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics, and we add the percentage of Republicans in House delegations in model 4. The last model in table 4 includes the two indicators that capture respondent

TABLE 2
CORRELATION MATRIX ($N = 1,152$ State-Years)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. House roll call voting	1.000								
2. %black	-.195	1.000							
3. %black ²	-.241	.948	1.000						
4. %Hispanic	-.059	-.134	-.183	1.000					
5. %Hispanic ²	-.068	-.129	-.145	.938	1.000				
6. Murder rate	-.314	.678	.588	.265	.239	1.000			
7. Ln % employed in agriculture	-.440	-.168	-.064	-.257	-.108	-.103	1.000		
8. %unemployed	-.005	.156	.148	.010	.058	.347	.107	1.000	
9. % in unions	.458	-.222	-.309	-.122	-.154	-.063	-.198	.358	1.000
10. % Republican Congress	-.366	-.146	-.115	.138	.110	-.140	.055	-.194	-.181

responses to questions from state-specific surveys about their party identification and their self-identification as a conservative.

The results in model 1 suggest that the relationship between the percentage of African-Americans in a state and legislative support for liberal measures is negative as long as the percentage of African-Americans is modest, but after this percentage expands beyond a threshold, this relationship becomes positive. Hispanic presence has the same nonlinear relationship with liberal roll call voting. The findings also suggest that agricultural dominance has an extremely strong negative relationship with House votes for liberal legislation, but unemployment and union strength have positive effects. It is noteworthy—particularly in light of our theoretical focus on majority resentments against what is seen as a venal, crime-prone racial underclass—that higher murder rates produce diminished votes for liberal measures in this national legislative body.

Because we introduce power transformations to the murder rates, union strength, and unemployment in model 2, this model’s explanatory power is superior to its otherwise identical predecessor. A few point estimates suggest that some of the relationships we have uncovered are not trivial. For example, a 1% increase in the percentage of African-Americans in a state leads to about a 3.4% decline in support for liberal legislation as long as the proportion of African-Americans remains below a threshold. The coefficients on the percentage of African-Americans suggest that after this minority population expands past about 26.7% or about three times its mean, the relationship between African-American presence and liberal roll call voting shifts from negative to positive. The equivalent inflection

TABLE 3
 MEAN HOUSE IDEOLOGICAL VOTING SCORES CROSS-TABULATED BY % EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE AND BY STATE MURDER RATES

	% Agricultural Employment below Twenty-fifth Percentile	% Agricultural Employment between Twenty-fifth and Fiftieth Percentiles	% Agricultural Employment between Fiftieth and Seventy-fifth Percentiles	% Agricultural Employment above Seventy-fifth Percentile	Row Means
Murder rates below twenty-fifth percentile	57.2 (93)	54.8 (54)	49.6 (72)	47.4 (188)	51.0 (407)
Murder rates between twenty-fifth and fiftieth percentiles	64.7 (124)	49.7 (82)	50.5 (110)	39.9 (79)	52.7 (395)
Murder rates between fiftieth and seventy-fifth percentiles	51.5 (93)	44.6 (120)	40.2 (110)	37.5 (70)	43.7 (393)
Murder rates above seventy-fifth percentile	51.7 (70)	43.2 (132)	29.4 (112)	28.3 (75)	37.9 (389)
Column means	57.2 (380)	46.6 (388)	41.7 (404)	40.8 (412)	

NOTE.—*N* of state-years in parentheses. Anova F-test=123; *P*< .000; *R*² (corrected)=.317.

TABLE 4
FIXED-EFFECTS ESTIMATES OF LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE CONGRESSIONAL VOTING SCORES IN THE HOUSE CORRECTED FOR SERIAL
CORRELATION AT MULTIPLE LAGS AND HETEROSKEDASTICITY

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
%black	-3.3613*** (1.0506)	-3.4762*** (1.0793)	-3.5496*** (1.0418)	-3.7006*** (1.0479)	-4.3505*** (1.3355)
%black ² .....	.0617** (.0216)	.0651** (.0220)	.0487* (.0219)	.0547** (.0222)	.0607* (.0281)
%Hispanic	-.8346* (.4112)	-.7353* (.4045)	-1.7156*** (.5069)	-1.6056*** (.5102)	-.5075 (.6642)
%Hispanic ² .....	.0178* (.0086)	.0155* (.0085)	.0241** (.0089)	.0216** (.0088)	.0041 (.0116)
Ln % agricultural employment	-15.2508*** (1.9230)	-13.2679*** (1.7468)	-13.8000*** (1.6953)	-13.9373*** (1.7025)	-6.7985** (2.7718)
%unemployed .....	.9027*** (.1486)				
%unemployed ² .....		.0546*** (.0095)	.0538*** (.0093)	.0519*** (.0094)	.0046 (.0166)
Murder rates	-.7508*** (.1611)				

TABLE 4 (Continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Murder rates ²		-.0378*** (.0077)	-.0295*** (.0080)	-.0318*** (.0081)	-.0315** (.0116)
% in unions .....	.2887** (.1049)				
% in unions ² .....		.0043* (.0022)	.0033 (.0022)	.0038* (.0022)	.0148*** (.0041)
%black × %Hispanic .....			.0738*** (.0234)	.0749*** (.0236)	.1072*** (.0313)
% Republican representatives				-.0327** (.0118)	-.0328** (.0138)
Self-identification as Republican .....					.2306 (3.3940)
Self-identification as conservative					5.8069 (4.0453)
Intercept	81.2231*** (7.5552)	83.2562*** (7.5308)	88.7165*** (7.4867)	90.3886*** (7.5286)	84.1004*** (10.1579)
R ² (corrected) .....	.926***	.928***	.932***	.932***	.955***

NOTE.— $N=1,152$ state-years save for model 5 which is computed on 672 state-years. Except for the measure of congressional partisanship, all explanatory variables are in two-year moving average form. SEs in parentheses.

* $P < .05$, one-tailed tests except for intercepts.

** $P < .01$.

*** $P < .001$.

point for the relationship between the percentage of Hispanics and liberal voting by state delegations is about 23.8% or a bit less than four times the Hispanic proportion mean.

When we add the interaction between the two minority presence variables in model 3, we find that the joint effect of larger Hispanic and African-American populations produces additional votes for liberal policies. All other findings are similar to those in prior models save that union strength no longer is significant. After the percentage of Republicans in House delegations from the states is included in model 4, however, we find that union strength again has a positive effect on liberal voting. But it is interesting that the inclusion of partisanship did not reduce the explanatory power of the threat or economic effects. When we enter state-specific survey measures that assess respondent's party identification and their self-identification as a liberal or conservative in model 5, the findings suggest that neither self-report measure has explanatory power (McIver et al. [2001] attribute the failure of these indicators to explain their measures of state policy to the small state-specific samples). Probably the reduction in cases made the quadratic main-effect relationship between Hispanic presence and ideological voting in the House nonsignificant in model 5 although all other minority effects persist.

An illustration of the interactive nonlinear relationships should be helpful. Figure 2 shows predicted roll call voting based on the coefficients from model 4 on the two quadratic terms that assess the nonlinear relationship between African-American presence and liberal voting and the coefficient on the interaction term that captures the combined effects of African-American and Hispanic presence. Because these associations are interactive, the relationship between African-American presence and these votes should differ depending on the percentage of Hispanics. The top relationship in figure 2 shows the predicted association between the percentage of African-Americans and liberal roll call votes when the percentage of Hispanics is equal to its nintieth percentile; the lower alternative illustrates this relationship if the percentage of Hispanics is at its twenty-fifth percentile. These contrasts show that African-American presence has modest positive influence on House votes for liberal legislation only when the percentage of Hispanics is extremely high. Such results provide greater support for racial threat rather than voting power accounts as they suggest that the predominant effect of African-American presence on House votes for liberal legislation is negative.

Yet it is possible that these results are an artifact of our fixed-effects approach. Because this estimation approach ignores between-state differences, we present random-effects results as well. And we need to discover if the results hold if we include year as well as the state fixed effects in two-way fixed-effects models. If the same implications persist when

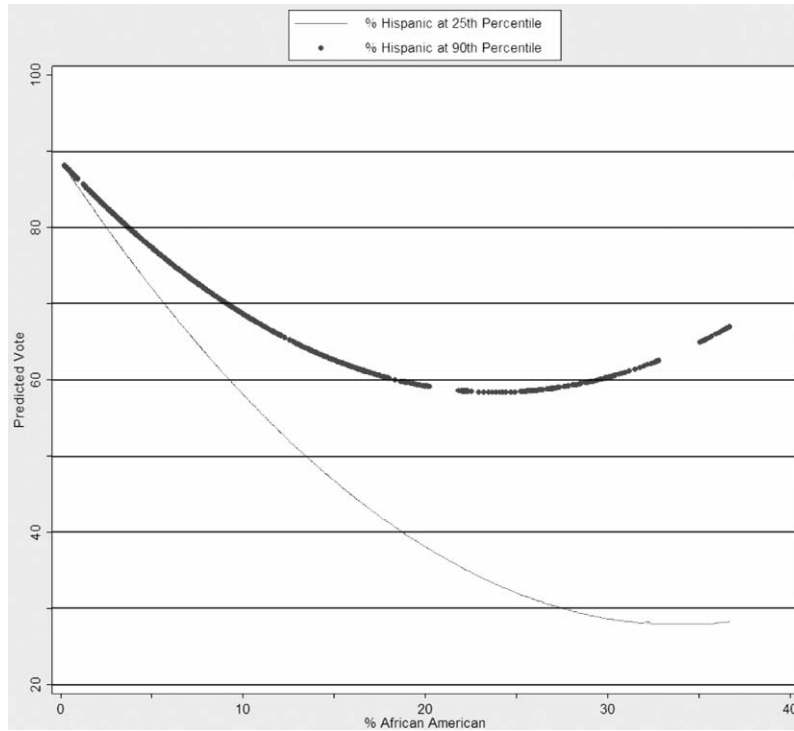


FIG. 2.—Predicted liberal House voting scores with the percentage of Hispanics set at the twenty-fifth percentile and the percentage of Hispanics set at the ninetieth percentile.

dummy variables for all years as well as states are included, competing accounts that rest on any national changes that affect all states would be eliminated. But the random-effects and the two-way fixed-effects estimator in the EViews program cannot correct for serial correlation with AR terms. To provide this correction, we reestimate the best model (model 4 in table 4) using a PCSE estimator (from Stata 9.1; see Beck and Katz 1995) that corrects for serial correlation at one lag, heteroskedasticity, and contemporaneous correlation between panels.

Table 5 shows the random, one-way, and two-way fixed-effects PCSE results. These findings largely replicate the results in table 4 as the same theoretically interesting variables still matter. The first model shows that a random-effects approach provides less conservative estimates. The third model shows that the same theoretical implications persist when the coefficients are estimated with a two-way fixed-effects approach that removes all national influences that could alter these roll call votes. Such findings, for example, suggest that alternative stories based on changes

Politics of Resentment

TABLE 5
PCSE RANDOM, ONE-, AND TWO-WAY FIXED-EFFECTS ESTIMATES OF LIBERAL-
CONSERVATIVE HOUSE VOTING SCORES

	Random Effects	One-Way Fixed Effects	Two-Way Fixed Effects
%black	-.7524*** (.1665)	-3.7706** (1.5348)	-3.1324** (1.2544)
%black ² .....	.0079* (.0041)	.0554* (.0289)	.0560** (.0234)
%Hispanic	-2.2608*** (.2353)	-1.9728** (.7689)	-.7044 (.4376)
%Hispanic ² .....	.0468*** (.0056)	.0368** (.0132)	.0241** (.0090)
Ln % agricultural em- ployment	-9.3402*** (.8552)	-15.4695*** (3.6118)	-15.9283*** (2.4817)
%unemployed ² .....	.0470 (.0323)	.0610* (.0265)	.0141 (.0131)
Murder rates ²	-.0645*** (.0156)	-.0305* (.0147)	-.0226** (.0093)
% in unions ² .....	.0107** (.0043)	.0009 (.0046)	.0046* (.0025)
%black × %Hispanic .....	.0907*** (.0119)	.0661** (.0226)	.0539** (.0197)
% Republican represen- tatives	-.1030*** (.0206)	-.0503*** (.0146)	-.0453*** (.0110)
Intercept	69.2086*** (3.0963)	119.3881*** (26.9486)	62.2787*** (5.6226)
R ² .....	.413***	.736***	.823***
State dummies included	No	Yes	Yes
Year dummies included	No	No	Yes

NOTE.—Scores are corrected for serial correlation at one lag, heteroskedasticity, and contemporaneous correlations across panels. $N=1,152$ state-years. Except for the measure of congressional partisanship, all explanatory variables are in two-year moving average form. SEs in parentheses.

* $P<.05$, one-tailed tests except for intercepts.

** $P<.01$.

*** $P<.001$.

in partisan control of the House or the presidency and national macro-economic changes probably cannot explain these results. It follows that the findings in tables 4 and 5 largely corroborate the theoretical expectations that prompted this study, but it would be equally useful to discover if trends in the most important relationships are present.¹¹

¹¹ In both analyses in table 5, the three periodized African-American presence variables

Analyses of Time-Varying Effects and Model Sensitivity

Time-varying effects.—Table 6 shows the results when the coefficients on two explanatory variables are not forced to be equal across periods. We interact African-American presence and the murder rates with period dummy variables because (in analyses not shown) the contrasts we find when we gauge time contrasts in the influence of other variables do not approach significance. Recall that these period interactions are created by multiplying explanatory variables with dummy variables coded “1” for different periods. If period-specific interaction terms differ significantly from others, we can conclude that the explanatory variable in question had dissimilar relationships in different periods. We begin (see model 1) with a specification that departs from model 4 in table 4 because the percentage of blacks is replaced by three period-specific African-American interaction terms.¹² Model 2 differs from model 1 only because the square of the murder rates is replaced by three periodized versions of this variable.

The first findings show that although the coefficients on the African-American presence explanatory variables always are significant, the evidence suggests that the threat associated with larger African-American populations is diminishing in its political influence. Yet this contrast may be based on the close association between murder rates and race. In model 2 after we add the periodized murder rates to the variables in model 1, we find that the coefficients on the period interaction terms that gauge the time-dependent influence of the presence of African-Americans no longer differ significantly, but the contrasts in the relationships between the murder rates and roll call voting show that the political influence of this crime is diminishing. The coefficients on the remaining explanatory variables that are not interacted by period are similar to those in the less inclusive models in tables 4 and 5. Such consistencies, despite quite different specifications, suggest that these results are not biased by collinearity.

combine to equal the African-American presence main effect that must be entered to properly assess the African-American/Hispanic interaction term. Since the percentage of Hispanics had to be interpolated in the noncensus years before 1990, contrasts in this variable's period effects cannot be gauged.

¹² For readers who prefer two-tailed significance tests even after theoretical justifications for signs have been presented, we list coefficients that reached one-tailed significance but did *not* reach the two-tailed .05 level: in table 4, model 2 the two Hispanic terms did not reach this threshold; in model 4 union strength did not reach the two-tailed level. In table 5, the percentage of African-Americans, squared, did not reach this threshold in the first two models, and union density did not reach this level in the third model. In table 6 union density did not reach the two-tailed limit in either equation. Note as well that the corrections for serial correlation typically made the estimates more conservative.

TABLE 6
FIXED-EFFECTS ESTIMATES OF TIME-VARYING ANALYSES OF LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE
HOUSE VOTING SCORES

	MODEL 1		MODEL 2	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
%black × 1 if				
1970s	-1.6795**** ^a	.5305	-1.3264** ^b	.5126
%black × 1 if				
1980s	-1.5599*** ^a	.5262	-1.2964** ^b	.5033
%black × 1 if after				
1990	-1.4397*** ^a	.5183	-1.2555** ^b	.4930
%Hispanic	-1.5013***	.4850	-1.2460**	.4711
%Hispanic ² .....	.0252***	.0080	.0194**	.0079
Ln % agricultural em-				
ployment	-15.0291***	1.9798	-15.2102***	1.9179
%unemployed ²	-.0530***	.0098	-.0513***	.0099
%black ×				
%Hispanic .....	.0592**	.0243	.0517*	.0235
% Republican repre-				
sentatives	-.0353**	.0116	-.0372***	.0115
% in unions ² .....	.0041*	.0021	.0036*	.0021
Murder rates ²	-.0290***	.0081		
Murder rates ² × 1 if				
1970s			-.0631*** ^c	.0148
Murder rates ² × 1 if				
1980s			-.0390*** ^c	.0091
Murder rates ² × 1 if				
after 1990			-.0182* ^c	.0089
1 if 1980s	-.4440	1.1119	-1.8789	1.4533
1 if after 1990	-3.0958**	1.2992	-5.4923***	1.5802
Intercept	81.1276***	6.1505	80.7042***	5.9323
R ² (corrected) .....	.931***		.932***	

NOTE.—Scores are corrected for serial correlation at multiple lags and heteroskedasticity. *N* = 1,152 state-years. Except for the measure of congressional partisanship, all explanatory variables are in two-year moving average form.

^a Coefficients differ at the .0175 level.

^b Coefficients differ at the .7393 level.

^c Coefficients differ at the .0047 level.

* *P* < .05, one-tailed tests except for intercepts.

** *P* < .01.

*** *P* < .001.

Sensitivity.—These findings are robust. Interactions that assess the presence of African-Americans in the ex-Confederate states or Hispanic presence in states that border Mexico are nonsignificant. Other interactions based on the products of minority presence, the murder rates, or Republican strength in House delegations do not account for these votes, and the violent crime rates have no effects if they are used in place of the murder rates. Results (also not shown) indicate that estimating the

models that assess survey measures or period-specific shifts with a PCSE fixed-effects approach produces results theoretically identical to those in the tables. To discover if the findings are driven by small states with few representatives, we removed states with populations below two million, but the results persisted. When we remove the 11 ex-Confederate states, however, we find that the interaction between African-American and Hispanic presence no longer matters. This finding suggests that this combined minority effect has its greatest influence on House members from the deep southern states.

Another possibility concerns the legislative issues selected to create the ideological voting index. It could be that multiple votes on targeted legislation mostly applicable to minorities drive the results, so this analysis is not capturing the explanatory power of the determinants of a broad sample of liberal measures. To address this possibility, appendix figures A1 and A2 list the issues and their proportions selected by the ADA and by COPE in many years. It is apparent that there is great diversity in these selections and that issues directly applicable to African-American or Hispanic interests represent only a tiny fraction of these choices.¹³

The strength and persistence of these results after diverse specifications in fixed-effects analyses that automatically hold constant any unchanging state attributes support our hope that these models have captured the primary processes that determine ideological voting in one congressional body. The results suggest that as minority populations expand, the enhanced threat to white dominance leads to diminished national support for liberal legislation. And the repeated finding that growth in the murder rates generates reduced roll call votes for liberal measures makes the evidence about the political consequences of minority threat even more convincing.

DISCUSSION

Results

Although the theoretical concerns that provided the impetus for this project led to a focus on the relationships between minority threat and ideo-

¹³ The diversity of these issues may cause some readers to wonder if this ideological voting index is statistically reliable. We cannot compute reliability coefficients to address this concern directly, yet other considerations make this potential objection unlikely. It is difficult to explain much variance in an unreliable scale, but the explanatory power of the models in this study is substantial. A statistically unreliable scale is unlikely to contribute to explained variance, but this scale has had considerable predictive power when it was used as an explanatory variable in other investigations (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001, 2002).

logical voting in the House, the findings are informative about other determinants. Most results suggest that higher unemployment rates and stronger unions led to increased support for liberal legislation. Strong findings always show that representatives from states dominated by farming were less likely to vote for liberal measures. And, although the partisanship of state representatives in the House clearly had important effects on their roll call votes, this indicator's inclusion had little influence on the relationships between other explanatory variables and ideological roll call voting. The added finding that respondent self-identification as Republicans in state-specific surveys does not matter also does not support claims that the social and economic forces that affect democratic representation only operate through partisanship.

The Hispanic results indicate that until this population grew to beyond about 23% or 24%, expansions in this population led to fewer votes for liberal policies. Yet after Hispanic proportions grew past this level, this relationship became positive probably because candidates realized they could no longer ignore the interests of this expanding voting bloc. The racial findings are equivalent as the models suggest that a similar U-shaped relationship is present between African-American presence and support for liberal measures in the House. The joint effects of the proportions of both minority populations show that African-American presence has a positive influence on liberal roll call votes when this percentage is interacted with Hispanic presence. Added legislative votes for policies favored by the moderate left therefore can be expected after expansions in the size of both minority groups.

As threat theorists would expect, the results always show that diminished support for liberal legislation occurs after expansions in either minority population, but measurement problems make the findings about racial effects more reliable than those for Hispanics. Almost all results indicate that at least in the post-civil rights period, racial politics remained influential, but illustrations (see fig. 2) that depict these nonlinear interactive relationships suggest the negative effects of racial threat on votes for liberal legislation in the House are more important than the positive effects of increases in the African-American vote. And it is just as noteworthy that the most complete analysis (see model 2 in table 6) implies that the negative relationship between African-American presence and votes for liberal measures in the House is not diminishing.

Consistent with the new political emphasis in studies of conflict explanations for criminal justice outcomes (Jacobs and Helms 1996; Jacobs and Carmichael 2002; Behrens et al. 2003; Stucky, Heimer, and Lang 2005), these findings also show that a strong positive relationship between the most menacing crime and conservative voting in the House is present. If conservatives could transform the mass antipathies against what the pub-

lic views as the venal criminal predispositions of the underclass (Chiricos et al. 2004) into diminished support for liberal policies, a negative relationship between this most threatening crime and votes for liberal measures should be present, and that is exactly what the results show.

This interpretation is strengthened by the nonlinear relationship we find as the results suggest that expansions in the murder rates produced increasingly reduced probabilities that national representatives will vote for liberal policies. Yet the final model that assesses trends in this association's strength implies that the political effects of this violent crime have diminished. The reduction in this relationship occurred only after both the violent crime and the murder rates had fallen. Such long-term trends made street crime less prominent and probably less politically influential. If these trajectories persist, perhaps in the not too distant future representatives in the House will no longer be influenced by criminal acts that are so often seen as a result of purportedly amoral underclass lifestyles.

Wider Implications

While these results may be controversial, they are robust. The statistical models contain a substantial list of controls. And an additional two-way fixed-effects model that holds constant any national-level shifts that could be relevant reduces the plausibility of alternative explanations for the findings. Because the coefficients were not forced to be equal in different periods in the models that assessed period interactions, our estimates should be more accurate than those based on more conventional specifications. And this approach let us assess change by gauging trends in the explanatory power of two of the most theoretically interesting relationships.

These tests of hypotheses about the links between minority presence and roll call votes on ideological measures suggest that minority threat accounts for legislative outcomes should not have been overlooked in the literature. The concomitant finding that there is a close negative relationship between the most menacing crime that majorities blame on underclass minorities and support for liberal policies in this national legislature increases the plausibility of such threat explanations for democratic representation in the United States. And because these accounts explain support for a broad sample of ideological legislation, the findings are not limited to targeted policies that mostly affect minorities.¹⁴

¹⁴ Our use of survey measures lets us address a debate. Many political scientists seem wedded to the idea that public opinion drives policy perhaps because they wish to support their discipline's consensus that the U.S. polity is fundamentally democratic

Such results and the vivid admissions by Republican operatives that spelled out how they took advantage of majority resentments against the minority underclass have additional implications. One is that in contrast to the mannerly, institutionalized disputes about economic interests that seem to be given the most emphasis in political science, legislative behavior in the United States appears to be at least as responsive to primordial racial and ethnic divisions emphasized by analysts as diverse as Key (1949) and Wacquant (2000). The findings reported in this article do not contradict claims that “the whole secret of politics is knowing who hates who.” Perhaps such considerations should be given greater weight when we seek to understand democratic representation at least in the United States.

A third implication concerns the importance of overlooked alliances. As long as sociologists focus on the short-lived political coalitions between the dispossessed and largely ignore the more enduring alliances between social and economic conservatives, the dominance of conservatism after the 1960s probably will remain inexplicable. If we overlook coalitions between economic conservatives and less affluent social conservatives preoccupied by deviant behavior and underclass lifestyles, we will have difficulty explaining what happened in most of the presidential elections after 1964. Perhaps the literature would provide more insight about why Nixon, Reagan, and the two Bush presidents got so many votes from less prosperous citizens if we paid greater attention to issues such as race and street crime that Republicans have used to divide the Democratic coalition. In any case, the findings reported here suggest that racial and ethnic threat and the resilient political alliances that have been built on the resulting antipathies help account for the recent resurgence in conservative politics.

A potential objection, however, is that this message is too pessimistic. But realistic findings can be valuable. The persistence of the racial effects we have uncovered suggests that attempts to create a just polity should

(Burawoy 2005). But citizens have little knowledge about political issues. Skeptics claim that using public opinion to explain policy is questionable, as attempts to measure these uninformed opinions produce statistically unreliable reifications (Converse 1964; Bishop 2005). Other researchers (Burstein 2006) find that sampling bias is present because the availability of survey questions forces researchers to pick issues most likely to be decided by public opinion. We take the middle ground in this debate. It is probable that some divisive moral issues are largely decided by mass opinion because the public cares about these matters. Racial issues (Miller and Stokes 1963) and capital punishment (Erickson 1976) are good examples. But economic or foreign policy is too esoteric for the public (Miller and Stokes 1963). If accurate state-level measures existed, the close relationship between attitudes about civil rights and roll call votes (Miller and Stokes 1963) probably means that racial attitudes would help explain ideological roll call votes.

not ignore the hostilities produced by these fissures. And not all of the implications are negative, as the results suggest that the political influence of criminal threats blamed on the underclass is diminishing. Another finding that enhanced support for liberal legislation can be expected in jurisdictions where combined African-American and Hispanic proportions become substantial provides added good news for progressives. In any event, and as one would expect with the insights of exemplars such as Tocqueville (1948), Myrdal (1944), and Key (1949) in mind, this evidence suggests that U.S. politics is still influenced by divisions between majority whites and disprivileged minorities, but the findings suggest that the criminal component of this relationship is receding.

Appendix A

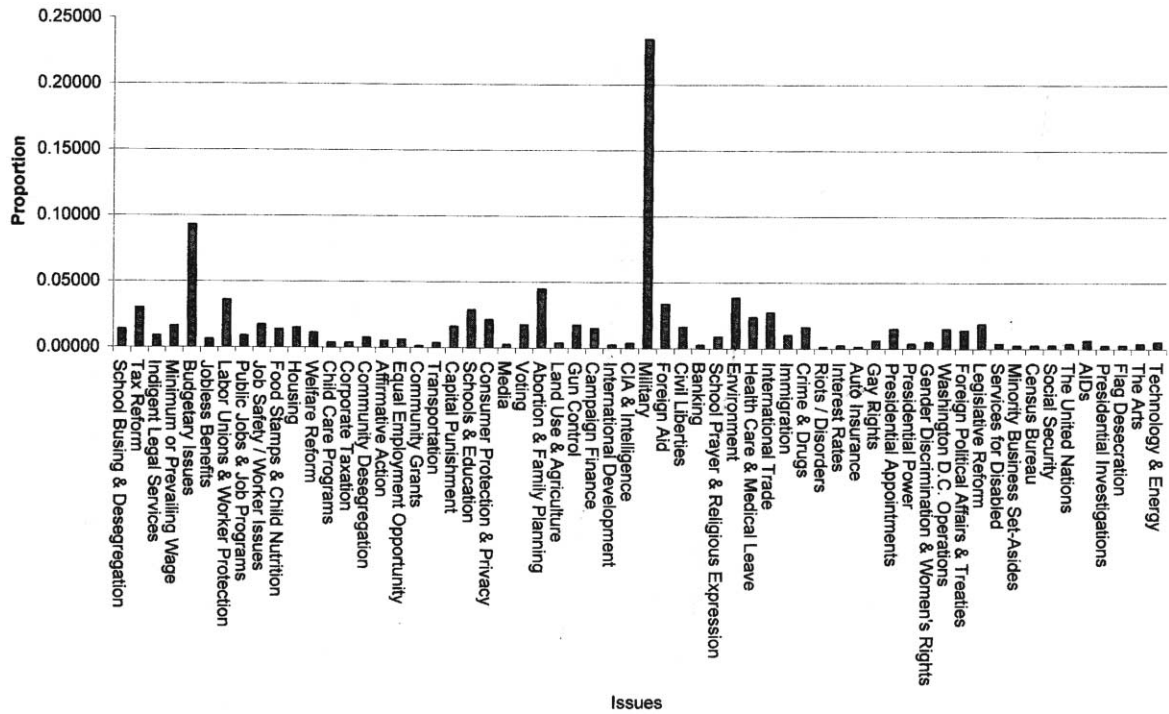


FIG. A1.—Roll call votes on issues selected by the ADA

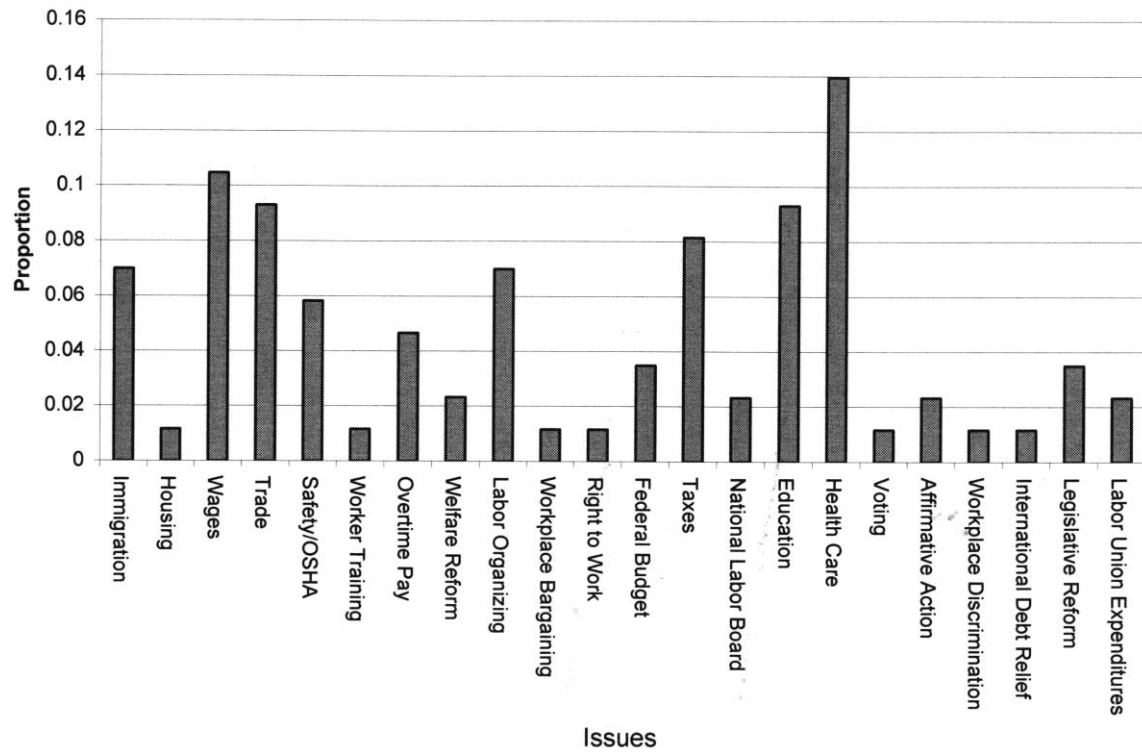


FIG. A2.—Roll call votes on issues selected by COPE

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