

The Peripheral South: Demographic and Political Dynamism and Increasing Electoral Consequence

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After Democratic presidential candidates Al Gore and John Kerry were defeated in 2000 and 2004 in every Southern state, some electoral scholars assert that prospects for future Democratic candidates in the South are virtually nil (Schaller 4). They also extend such bleak prospects for Democrats to Senate seats and House seats in non-majority African-American districts in the South (Schaller 14-5). But should the electoral behavior of all Southern states be considered collectively? Do some Southern states offer reasonable prospects for Democrats and the opportunity to have a highly competitive two-party system?

Overall, with its rapidly diversifying and growing population, the South should be viewed as a broader region encompassing two sub-regions. Distinguishing between the Deep South and the Peripheral South, and examining these sub-regions' electoral behavior, suggests different electoral trends, and yields a more accurate electoral picture.

What is the Peripheral South?

The task of classifying a Southern region is elusive and prone to subjectivity. Some consider only the eleven states of the Confederacy to be Southern, while others include such states as Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Missouri. Earl and Merle Black defined the Deep South as South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana; they defined the Peripheral South as Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Florida, and Texas (Black and Black 17). This classification includes only states that were part of the Confederacy.

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I add the non-Confederate states of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri to their classification of the Peripheral South. These three states may be considered Southern because each has a significant contingent of people with traits that many consider to be a part of Southern identity, including vernacular and religious behavior (Lew; Kilpinen). Missouri and Kentucky were slave states, and although West Virginia broke away from Virginia, in part, over the issue of slavery, it did so relatively late (1863), considering its relatively eastward location in the United States.

On the other hand, I exclude Maryland, Delaware, and Oklahoma from my analysis of the Peripheral South. While some consider Maryland and Delaware to be part of the South, the Northeastern megalopolis that stretches from northern Virginia to Boston includes Maryland, anchored by the urban Montgomery and Prince George's counties outside of Washington and Baltimore, and Delaware, anchored by Newcastle County encompassing Wilmington and the Philadelphia exurbs. The population densities of Maryland and Delaware (542 and 401 people per square mile, respectively) far exceed the most population-dense state that we have included in our classification (Florida, with 301 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a)). A main reason Oklahoma is discounted in this analysis is that it has split from other Great Plains states in presidential elections only once, and often voted differently than Peripheral South states, as in 1976 (Leip).

Population Growth in the Peripheral South

In recent years, the Peripheral South has realized a large population increase, though that increase has largely been confined to North Carolina, Florida, Texas, and Virginia. Of the total population increase in the United States from 2000 to 2005, the Peripheral South accounted for almost 38% of the increase, though the region contained only 26% of the country's total population in 2005. Much of this increase stems from interstate migration from the Midwest and Northeast, and immigration from Mexico, Central America, and Puerto Rico. The other states in this sub-region have also seen population increases, though to a lesser extent (U.S. Census Bureau 2005b).

Overall, the Deep South is growing at a modest pace compared with the explosive growth of the Peripheral South. Georgia and South Carolina are growing above the national average, but the other states in this

sub-region are growing more slowly than the national average. From 2000 to 2005, more people moved from Louisiana and Mississippi to other states than vice versa. Alabama's population also grew less rapidly than the national average, but they have managed a net gain with respect to interstate migration (U.S. Census Bureau 2005b).

Table 1: State Populations and Their Components of Change from 2000 to 2005

State	Pop. Change	% Pop. Change	Net Immigration	Net Interstate Migration
Arkansas	105,756	4.0	21,947	35,664
Florida	1,807,040	11.3	528,085	1,057,619
Kentucky	131,120	3.2	27,435	32,169
Missouri	203,627	3.6	42,690	26,979
North Carolina	636,751	7.9	158,224	232,448
Tennessee	273,697	4.8	49,973	109,707
Texas	2,008,176	9.6	663,161	218,722
Virginia	498,435	6.9	139,977	103,521
West Virginia	8,506	0.5	3,691	10,518
Alabama	77,418	2.5	25,936	10,521
Georgia	885,760	10.8	192,844	232,666
Louisiana	54,670	1.2	20,174	-89,547
Mississippi	76,432	2.7	10,653	-10,578
South Carolina	243,276	6.1	36,401	115,084

Not only is the Peripheral South realizing rapid population growth, it is also becoming more diverse. Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas are among the states that realized the most migration of African-Americans from other regions. Many African-Americans that moved to other regions a few decades ago to escape lack of upward mobility and discrimination are returning to these states, and their children

are also moving to there. In fact, every other U.S. Census region — Northeast, Midwest, and West — realized a net loss in black migration, with more blacks moving out than moving in (Frazier 1, 4).

Coupled with Hispanic immigration and internal migration of Hispanics from other regions, Texas has become a majority-minority state (where there is a plurality of non-Hispanic whites, not a majority). Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia boast large contingents of racial minorities with just 57.3%, 65.1%, and 65.7% of the population being non-Hispanic whites, respectively, as of 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a). Though Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Missouri are not diversifying as rapidly as Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia, some are becoming more diverse. As of 2005, only West Virginia was overwhelmingly composed of non-Hispanic whites (94.4%), while this figure was lower in other states—Kentucky (88.2%), Missouri (81.9%), Arkansas (76.8%), and Tennessee (76.6%) (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a).

By contrast, in the Deep South, only Georgia is becoming more diverse. Georgia realized a large increase of the share of blacks from 2000 to 2005, from 28.5% to 29.5%. The Hispanic population grew 43.6% from 2000 to 2005, and the share of non-Hispanic whites decreased (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005a). From 1995 to 2000, Georgia realized the largest interstate migration of blacks of all states, and this number was more than double North Carolina's which came in second place (Frazier 1). But other Deep South states saw no significant increase in the share of blacks and no significant reduction in the share of non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a).

Some of the fastest-growing counties in the nation are within the Peripheral South. Many of these counties are already heavily populated, so such a rapidly growing population is even more remarkable.

Such an example is Loudon County in northern Virginia, in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. From 2000 to 2005, this county's population ballooned from 169,755 to 255,518, an increase of 50.7%. Prince William County, also part of the northern Virginia suburb of D.C. grew 24.1%, from 280,813 to 348,588. In fact, the growth of the northern Virginia D.C. suburbs, particularly Fairfax, Loudon, Prince William, and Arlington counties (all of which rank in the top ten counties with the highest votes cast in 2004), account for over 28.4% of the growth in Virginia from 2000 to 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006c). Furthermore,

these counties are becoming more diverse, and the share of non-Hispanic whites is decreasing. In Loudon County, the Hispanic population grew 134% from 2000 to 2005, and this demographic now accounts for 9.3% of that county's population (compared to 5.9% in 2000). The non-Hispanic white share of the population has decreased from 82.8% to 73.8%. In Prince William County, the share of the Hispanic population increased 187% (from 9.7% to 18.1%). The share of the non-Hispanic white vote decreased from 68.9% in 2000 to 62.5% in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a).

North Carolina, like Virginia, has seen rapidly increasing and diversifying populations in its larger counties, including Mecklenburg and Wake counties. Mecklenburg County, home to Charlotte, grew 12.2%, and the share of non-Hispanic whites decreased from 64.0% to 62.4% from 2000 to 2005. Wake County, which features Raleigh and Cary, grew 16.2%, with the share of non-Hispanic whites dropping from 72.4% to 70.3%. Both counties saw an increased share of Hispanics, and Mecklenburg saw an increase in the black share of the population. Even rapidly growing suburban counties, usually among the least diverse of places, have diversified considerably. Cabarrus County, which lies outside of Charlotte, grew 12.9% (131,063 to 147,039) from 2000 to 2005, but during this time, the share of non-Hispanic whites declined from 83.3% to 80.6% (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a). In North Carolina, over 51% of the growth from 2000 to 2005 has been in the ten most populous counties. The growth in Mecklenburg, Wake, and Guilford counties accounts for over 38% of the state's population increase from 2000 to 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006d).

In Texas, like North Carolina and Virginia, the growth has been concentrated in several counties with almost 65% of the growth confined to the ten most populous counties (U.S. Census Bureau 2006e). Harris County (which contains Houston) and many of the surrounding counties, such as Galveston and Fort Bend, are not only growing rapidly; they are also diversifying rapidly.

Florida's growth has shifted from the southern Atlantic region, encompassing Miami and Palm Beach, to the I-4 corridor that runs from Daytona Beach to Tampa, and to the southern Gulf Coast encompassing Sarasota and Fort Myers. However, because many of these counties are relatively small compared to enormously populous counties like Miami-

Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward, the ten most populous counties account for almost 57% of the population growth in Florida from 2000 to 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006f).

At the same time, there have been only a few pockets of rapid growth in the Deep South, particularly in the already large suburban counties of Atlanta. About half of the counties in other states within this sub-region are losing population (U.S. Census Bureau 2006e).

The Old Solid South: A Brief History of Southern Politics Before the Civil Rights Era

A region that many electoral scholars dismiss as solidly Republican was once a Democratic bastion where not only did Democrats win virtually every election, but a Republican opponent was rarely fielded, especially in the former Confederate states. There were, however, pockets of Republicanism in the South, and all of them were in the Peripheral South. These areas of Republican support were mainly in Appalachia: western North Carolina, western Virginia, and eastern Tennessee (Black and Black 40). The Democrats hailing from the South were largely pro-segregation and espoused racist beliefs. Before the Great Depression, Republicans won elections without the help of the South. The general consensus among Republicans was that the South was a lost cause, and so they elicited their support from non-Southern states (Black and Black 13-4).

When the Great Depression wreaked havoc on the agrarian Southern economy, Southerners' loyalty to the Democratic Party was only reinforced. Of course, Democrats gained a large following with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, and Democrats were able to maintain majorities of non-Southerners during some of this time. The Democrats from other regions were less inclined towards the segregation and racism of the Southern Democrats. Then, it must be asked, how were the Southern Democrats able to prevent legislation that criminalized lynchings or outlawed racial segregation?

The modus operandi of Southern Democratic congressmen was to be elected at an early age and continue to be re-elected term after term. Eventually, they would gain seniority and chair committees in Congress that determined what legislation was addressed. Seniority was the determining factor in committee chair assignments until the 1960's.

Following the Roosevelt era, his successor Harry S. Truman, a former

U.S. Senator from Missouri, sought to pass civil rights legislation in Congress (Black and Black 46). His initiatives inspired the campaign of the Democratic governor and future U.S. senator of South Carolina, J. Strom Thurmond, who ran as a “Dixiecrat” (Black and Black 33). A electoral cleavage between the Deep South and Peripheral South begins with this election: Truman carried every state in the Peripheral South while losing every Deep South state except for Georgia (Leip).

In 1952, Democrats lost their twenty-year grip on the White House with the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower was able to carry five of the nine states in the Peripheral South, but no Deep Southern states. In fact, the Democrat achieved at least 60% of the vote in three of the five states in that sub-region. Eisenhower’s re-election demonstrated a continued divergence between the two sub-regions: he carried six of nine Peripheral South states, while only winning one in the Deep South. When John F. Kennedy was elected President, he carried only five of the nine Peripheral South states, a continuation of two-party presidential politics in this sub-region, and he won the vote in four of the five Deep South states, a continuation of near-solidarity (Leip).

The 1964 landslide victory of Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater — one of the few non-South Republicans to vote against the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — is arguably the most useful example in distinguishing between the politics of the two sub-regions (Black and Black 4). The Peripheral South states unanimously voted for Johnson, as did all of the non-Southern states except Arizona, Goldwater’s home state. The Deep South unanimously voted for Goldwater and against the remainder of the country, including the Peripheral South (Leip).

The peripheral Southern states that were not part of the Confederacy certainly had a Democratic leaning in presidential and congressional elections, but these states — Kentucky, West Virginia, and Missouri — had Republican congressmen prior to 1960 (Black and Black 16). And while some Southern States had Republican representatives, almost all of these were confined to Appalachia with its strong Republican, pro-Union heritage. No Southern state had elected a Republican to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction (Black and Black 40). That remained true until 1961, with the election of John Tower of Texas to fill Lyndon B. Johnson’s Senate seat, when Johnson became Kennedy’s vice president (Black and Black 90).

During the 1950's and early 1960's, many states in the Peripheral South experienced rapid urbanization, as people from rural areas of these states and migrants from non-Southern states began to concentrate in large urban centers, including Dallas, Houston, Charlotte, Memphis, Tampa, and Miami. These largely white, middle-class, urban Southerners began voting for Republicans, mainly because they viewed Republicans as being more compatible with their economic interests (Black and Black 24). Thus, Peripheral South states had two sources of Republicanism: rapidly growing urban areas and historicalloyal Appalachia. These voting blocs would allow the emergence of a viable Republican Party in statewide elections — a hard road to travel, but one that would prove to be much less difficult than Republican penetration of the Deep South (Black and Black 173).

The New South or the New Souths?

Though what Earle and Merle Black have referred to as “Republican enclaves” emerged in the urban centers of the Peripheral South, the Democratic juggernaut of the South had not been overturned. More Republicans were challenging Democratic incumbents in congressional races, and many were running in open races where Democratic incumbents were retiring (Black and Black 64-5). Success was slow and marked by setbacks (Black and Black 70-1). The Voting Rights Act of 1965, however, changed the electoral landscape for the South. By the end of the Ronald Reagan's presidency, more Southerners referred to themselves as Republicans than Democrats, though they still do not enjoy a majority in party identification and were not at all comparable to large majorities in party affiliation that Democrats had once enjoyed. The progression from a Democratic one-party to a two-party system was steady in the Peripheral South, while it was subsequent but dramatic in the Deep South.

Although Democratic congressmen would continue to enjoy dominance in the Deep South until the 1980's and early 1990's, Republicans enjoyed great success on the presidential level from Goldwater onward. Voters in the Deep South continued to elect Democrats to Congress, but very often voted for Republicans and third-party candidates. The Peripheral South continued to send Democratic-majority delegations to Congress but exhibited a strong two-party presidential system with only Arkansas (and by a narrow margin) ever voting for a third-party candidate.

Merle and Earle Black portray this progression from presidential Republicanism to Republican Party identification among the electorate as a top-bottom progression (Black and Black 32-6).

These changes in voting behavior can be attributed to the civil rights movement and to non-Southern Democrats becoming more aggressive in pursuing civil rights legislation (Black and Black 171). The political landscape of the Deep South from the mid-1960's to the early 1990's is summarized as follows by Earl and Merle Black:

None of the Deep South states...had impressive traditions of grassroots Republicanism. Nor did these states contain white middle classes large enough to make Republicans competitive in statewide elections. Most Deep South states were still more pre-occupied with racial conflicts than with economic development. As they had done for generations, racially conservative white Democrats continued to set the tone of Deep South politics....Although Republicans from the Peripheral South gradually became a sizable minority presence in the Senate, they had much greater difficulty doing so in the Deep South. (Black and Black 114)

The Deep South continued to elect conservative Democrats who were often racially hostile and had low party unity scores (Black and Black 114). Most of these conservative Democrats either retired, were defeated, or switched to the Republican Party — some as late as the mid-1990's. Examples who took the lattermost path include Sen. J. Strom Thurmond (SC), who became a Republican in the 1960's, and Sen. Richard Shelby (AL), who switched in the 1990's (Black and Black 269-70). Many moderate Democrats formed bi-racial coalitions in which almost unanimous black support combined with 35-40% of white voters to give the Democratic candidate a majority. Examples of these moderate Democrats who enjoyed bi-racial support included Sen. John Breaux (LA), Al Gore (TN), and Sen. Sam Nunn (GA) (Black and Black 134).

Today, there is only one Democratic Senator from the Deep South: Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. Many believe that she faces a tough reelection in 2008 because she will have to contend with a demographic landscape changed by the displacement of blacks, one of her key-supporting blocs, from New Orleans due to the devastating damage of Hur-

ricane Katrina in August 2005 (Miller). In her two previous elections to the Senate, she has failed to achieve more than 52% of the vote (Leip). By 2008, Democrats may very well be shut out of any Senate seats in the Deep South.

In 1994 Republicans gained control of Congress, and for the first time, the South sent a majority Republican delegation to the House. Over the next decade, Republicans lost their majority delegations outside the South, but continued to maintain their majority for the next twelve years in the House and for eleven of those twelve years in the Senate; thus the South was the critical component of their majority in Congress (Black and Black 401-4). Republicans in the House were led by Southerners from overwhelmingly white, affluent, suburban districts: Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, of suburban Atlanta, his successor Bob Livingston, of suburban New Orleans, and the House majority leader Tom Delay, of suburban Houston. These congressmen represented highly gerrymandered districts that essentially guaranteed them victory, freeing them to pursue a comprehensively conservative agenda that could be described as: "Low tax, low union, strong work ethic, strong commitment to family and community" (Black and Black 5-7).

One of the critical factors in the Republican surge in the South was the creation of majority-black districts that aimed to recruit more blacks in Congress. These efforts were supported by the Congressional Black Caucus and by the Republicans in Congress. These districts did, in fact, allow more blacks to become elected in these newly created districts. The drawback for Democrats, however, is that these districts consolidated Democrats into noncompetitive districts and away from other districts which Republicans were able to pick up (Black and Black 389). Although the number of votes for Democratic and Republican House candidates in Florida in 2006 were roughly equal, Republicans won fifteen house seats while Democrats won only nine (CNN.com 2006). This disparity is largely due to the concentration of Democrats within highly-gerrymandered districts where a Republican challenge is not often mounted. In fact, of the nine seats Democrats won, six were uncontested. Taking into account the House seats won by Democrats in the South in 2006, the average share of blacks in Democratically-held seats in the Deep South is slightly over 50%, whereas the share in the Peripheral South is slightly below 20% (*New York Times* Online 2006).

Democrats in the Peripheral South became less dominant, with most states eventually sending majority Republican delegations to Congress, but these majorities stabilized in most states, and some have once again regained Democratic majorities. Many senate races in the Peripheral South tend to be competitive. For example, North Carolina has not supported any candidate by greater than a 10% margin since 1972 and no more than a 9% margin since 1984. Six of the nine elections for the U.S. Senate in North Carolina have been determined by less than 5%. Four of the five previous senate races in Virginia (1994, 1996, 2000, 2002, and 2006) have been determined a margin no greater than 5%. In Tennessee, the last two Senate elections (2002 and 2006) were determined by less than 10%. Besides the landslide re-election of Sen. Connie Mack in 1994 and the landslide victories by Democratic Senators Bob Graham in 1998 and Bill Nelson in 2006, two previous Florida Senate races were determined by narrow margins (4.85% in 2000 and 1.11% in 2004). In Missouri, four of the five previous U.S. Senate elections have been determined by less than 10% margins, and three of these by less than 3% (Leip).

Tables 2 and 3 examine the progression of congressional delegations in the South since the Reagan administration.

The Future of the South and the Peripheral South: One-Party Politics?

In *Whistling Past Dixie: How Democrats Can Win Without the South*, Thomas Schaller argues that the Democratic Party should essentially cut its losses in the South (excepting Florida) and focus on winning states in the West and Midwest. In fact, Schaller argues that Democratic candidates should run their campaigns to demonize or marginalize the South in a way that he believes Republicans have by attempting to stereotype Democrats and using states such as Massachusetts and California as pejoratives (Schaller 18). He allows that there will always be certain House districts, but concludes that Democratic presidential and senatorial campaigns would be ill-advised to try to court white Southerners (Schaller 3).

Schaller contends that, discounting Florida and Texas, the South — which he defines as the Confederacy — is not gaining much electoral significance. By 2030, the Confederate states, less Florida and Texas, will have only gained a net two electoral votes. If we break this analysis down by sub-region, however, we see that the Peripheral South will realize

**Table 2: Peripheral South House Delegations,
1982-2006 (% Held by Democrats)**

State	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
Arkansas	75	75	75	50	50	75	75
Florida	63	63	47	35	35	28	36
Kentucky	57	57	57	33	17	33	33
Missouri	67	56	67	67	56	44	44
North Carolina	82	64	64	33	42	46	54
Tennessee	67	67	67	44	44	56	56
Texas	78	63	70	60	50	50	41
Virginia	40	50	60	55	55	27	27
West Virginia	100	100	100	100	100	67	67

**Table 3: Southern Senate Delegations,
1980-2006 (% Held by Democrats)**

Region	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
Peripheral South	56	56	56	61	61	61	50
Deep South	60	60	60	80	70	70	60
Region	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
Peripheral South	39	33	33	39	33	28	39
Deep South	50	40	40	50	40	10	10

a net gain of one electoral vote (North Carolina will gain two electoral votes and Virginia will gain one, while West Virginia and Missouri will lose one apiece), whereas the Deep South will realize a net loss of one electoral vote (Alabama and Louisiana will lose one apiece while Georgia will gain one) (U.S. Census Bureau 2006g).

Schaller argues that Democrats should compete in Florida and what he calls the Southwest-U (Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, which surround Utah), and the Midwest while abandoning the South. Using our definition of the Peripheral South, this region will gain eighteen electoral votes and representatives, and discounting Texas (if uncompetitive for Democrats at said time), ten electoral votes and representatives (U.S. Census Bureau 2006g). Table 4 (next page) accounts for the changes with each state.

The states that the Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry won in 2004 are expected to lose 17 electoral votes by the 2030 Census. New York will lose six electoral votes, Pennsylvania and Illinois will lose four apiece, Massachusetts and Michigan will lose two apiece; Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey will lose one apiece; California will gain three; and Washington and Oregon will gain one apiece. As soon as 2012, Democrats will not be able to win the presidency with the states Kerry won and with Ohio (the crucial state that, had Kerry won it, would have given him the presidency). Obviously, a strategy which focuses on picking off Ohio from the Republicans is a dead-end approach. This is one of the reasons why Schaller looks to the Southwest, where the population is burgeoning. But in fact a strategy that focuses only on winning Ohio and/or the Southwest-U and abandons the South is flawed in several ways.

First of all, discounting Arizona — where Bush defeated Kerry by eleven percent (just shy of the twelve percent margin in North Carolina and higher than the margin in Virginia, Arkansas, Florida, and Missouri) — the Democrat would have to sweep the three most competitive Southwest-U states (Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada) and Kerry states (with a total of nineteen electoral votes) to barely reach the requisite 270 electoral votes needed (the candidate would then have a total of 271 electoral votes). This obviously puts the candidate in a precarious situation. Kerry won Pennsylvania's twenty-one electoral votes by less than 3%, Michigan's seventeen electoral votes by less than 3.5%, Wisconsin's

Table 4: 2030 Census Projections for Peripheral South States and their Projected Electoral Votes

State	Electoral Votes 2000	Projected Pop. 2030	Projected Electoral Votes	Electoral Vote Change
Arkansas	6	3240208	6	0
Florida	27	28685769	36	11
Kentucky	8	4554998	7	-1
Missouri	11	6430173	10	-1
North Carolina	15	12227739	17	2
Tennessee	11	7380634	11	0
Texas	34	33317744	42	8
Virginia	13	9825019	14	1
West Virginia	5	1719959	4	-1

ten electoral votes by less than 0.5%, and New Hampshire's four electoral votes by less than 1.5% (Leip). A small shift to Republicans in states with more than twenty electoral votes, would result in losing the electoral college even if Democrats picked up Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, and Ohio.

Although the Southwest-U states are growing very rapidly, their raw population is small, which correlates into fewer electoral votes to be gained. By 2030, the Southwest-U will only gain seven electoral votes (U.S. Census Bureau 2006g). This meager gain, especially considering the losses of electoral votes that will be sustained in Kerry states and the narrow margins of victory in many of those states, will only position Democrats where they are now: being dependent upon winning one more state.

Another flaw in Schaller's contention is that voting patterns (at least in presidential elections) in many non-Southern states and Florida (which Schaller wishes for Democrats to contend) are highly correlated with voting patterns in the South, and particularly the Peripheral South. It is use-

Table 5: Track Record of States Voting For the Winner in Presidential Elections Since 1948

State	Times Voting for the Winner		State	Times Voting for the Winner
MO	14		VA	11
TN	14		LA	11
FL	13		NC	9
KY	13		GA	9
AR	12		AL	8
TX	12		MS	8
WV	12		SC	7

Peripheral South States' Average at Voting for the Winner: 81%

Deep South States' Average at Voting for the Winner: 57%

ful to look at presidential election results since 1948, which seems to be the first significant cleavage between the two Southern sub-regions.

These results should be compared with non-Southern states that have historically been competitive to demonstrate their correlation with the patterns of the Peripheral South. Ohio and Nevada have voted for the winner in fourteen of the previous fifteen elections, New Mexico in thirteen of the previous fifteen, and Iowa in eleven of the previous fifteen.

These results indicate that candidates who win Peripheral South states also win these traditional non-Southern swing states. One may conclude that if candidates fail to win at least some Peripheral South states, they will likely fail to win these other crucial non-South states. As a result, such candidates will likely lose these elections. In fact, Ed Kilgore makes this assertion in a recent post-2006 Election editorial. He argues that

[N]o one can deny the Southern cultural flavor of many areas outside Schaller's definition of the South, most obviously border states such as Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, and

Delaware, but also portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. And anyone who thinks most of the nation despises Southern culture hasn't paid much attention to the rapid spread and enthusiasm of NASCAR and country music, not to mention evangelical Protestantism and mega-churches. Let's also remember the pervasively Southern character of African-American culture throughout the country. It's no accident that Southern Democratic politicians who ran nationally seem to do especially well in presidential primaries among African-American voters. (Kilgore)

Kilgore also contends that "there's a whole lot of ground between this alleged Southern strategy [to 'obsess about the South at the expense of other opportunities'] and Schaller's run-against-the-South prescription, and that's where I take my stand" (Kilgore).

Schaller fails to mention that early 20th-century Republicans could more easily afford to write off the South than present-day Democrats can in the current electoral landscape. In the 1924 and 1928 elections, Republicans had to win 266 of 405 or 66% of non-Southern electoral votes to win an election. Many of the Peripheral South states and non-South states in the Mountain West and Great Plains regularly voted for the Republican presidential candidate, so achieving victory was not all that entirely difficult. After the 2000 Census reapportionment of electoral votes, Democrats must win an identical 66% of states that were not part of the Confederacy, but this does not account for states that regularly vote for the Republican presidential candidate. With these states, Florida, and the other Peripheral South states accounted for, Democrats must win 85% of the remaining electoral votes to attain victory (Leip). According to the 2030 Census projections, the situation becomes even more precarious: without the broadly-defined South (excepting Florida), and the Great Plains and interior West states that voted for Bush in 2004 by more than 15%, the Democrat would have to win 80% of the remaining electoral votes. With Florida conceded to Republicans, this figure would jump to over 89% (U.S. Census Bureau 2006g).

Racial Perspectives in the New Souths

Schaller presents an interesting comparison of the racial perspectives among whites: from the Deep South, the Peripheral South, and the non-

South. He cites a study done by Nicholas Valentino and David Sears concerning four variations of “neo-racism” and their prevalence in the three aforementioned regions: The four varieties are symbolic racism (“agreement/ disagreement as to whether progress among African-Americans was impeded by slavery and political discrimination”), negative black stereotyping (“belief that African-Americans are lazy, less intelligent, less hard-working”), white-black feeling thermometers (“scaled responses that measure racial affect towards blacks and whites”), and Jim Crow racism (“support for keeping African-Americans out of white neighborhoods, or opposition to racial intermarriage and miscegenation”) (Schaller 82). The following table illustrates their findings.

Table 6: Negative Racial Attitudes Held By Whites By Region

Region	Symbolic Racism	Black Stereotyping	Feeling Thermometer	Jim Crow Racism
Deep South	55%	49%	47%	43%
Peripheral South	39%	39%	38%	34%
Non-South	32%	37%	34%	23%

Table 6 illustrates that racial attitudes in the Peripheral South are much closer to those in the non-South than the Deep South for three of the four categories, and the other category shows the Peripheral South to be almost exactly between the Deep South and the non-South. Clearly, race is less of an issue in the Peripheral South than it is in the Deep South.

So long as Democrats continue to embrace civil rights, the policies that allowed the Republican Party to be competitive in the Deep South (from Barry Goldwater’s opposition to the Voting Rights Act to Ronald Reagan’s “states’ rights” speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi), they are going to encounter difficulties winning in a region where almost half of the white population believes that blacks as a whole have inferior intelligence and work ethic. Because this attitude is less common among both Peripheral Southern and non-Southern whites than among their Deep South counterparts, Democratic and African-American candidates will have a challenging, but possible, task ahead of them. The Peripheral South has

several examples of successful African-American candidates being elected by largely white populations: former Governor of Virginia Douglas Wilder, former Mayor of Charlotte Harvey Gantt, and Mayor Terry M. Bellamy of Asheville.

Jim Crow racism (essentially, the support of racial segregation) is more of an issue in the Peripheral South than in the rest of the nation, though less of an issue than it is in the Deep South. This kind of racism might make it difficult for African-American candidates, as the whites who espouse this type of racism may view political office as an institution reserved for their race alone. Schaller seems to believe that this “neo-racist” attitude precludes African-Americans from winning statewide office, though he seems to conveniently blame the South as a whole. He conveniently dismisses Douglas Wilder’s 1989 gubernatorial victory, though he was the only elected African-American governor in the nation until Deval Patrick won the 2006 Massachusetts gubernatorial election. He passively concedes that “the track record for electing black candidates to statewide office is not much better in the non-Southern states,” and instead he turns to the fact that the relatively large black population in the South should automatically translate into success among African-American candidates (Schaller 81). Harold Ford, a candidate for the U.S. Senate from Tennessee and an African-American, won enough white voters in Tennessee to beat his Republican opponent, but African-American voter turn-out was less than the share of the African-American population (CNN.com 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2005a). Perhaps his failure to win had more to do with lack of appeal among the black electorate than hostility among the white electorate. Ford, by many accounts, is a moderate-to-conservative Democrat: He supported repeal of the estate tax and called for more troops to be sent to the Iraq conflict. Perhaps these conservative stances did not appeal to African-Americans and failed to motivate this voting bloc to vote in numbers proportional to their presence in the population (Tumulty and Bacon).

Race will continue to be highly intertwined in Southern politics, but we must also examine the interrelatedness of race and politics in the non-South and the absence of African-American politicians in those states. Perhaps, if and when, appreciable numbers of black candidates are elected to political office in the non-South, there will be a similar, but mitigated, effect in the Peripheral South.

The 2006 Midterm Elections: A Gap Between the Deep and Peripheral South?

Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress for the first time in twelve years in the 2006 midterm elections. Democrats increased their seats in the House from 202 to 232 and increased their Senate seats from 45 to 51 (including two independents who caucus with the Democrats). The Peripheral South contributed two of the six Senate gains, with the elections of Jim Webb in Virginia and Claire McCaskill in Missouri (CNN.com 2006). Indeed, Democrats regained control of the Senate because of these two victories against Republican incumbents. The Peripheral South provided six of the thirty gains for Democrats in the House: Heath Shuler (NC-11), John Yarmouth (KY-03), Ron Klein (FL-22), Tim Mahoney (FL-16), Ciro Rodriguez (TX-23), and Nick Lampson (TX-22) won Republican-held seats. Democrats gained a Republican-held gubernatorial seat in Arkansas, to regain a majority of governors' mansions in this sub-region (CNN.com 2006).

There were several seats in the Peripheral South where Democrats almost won. Republican Robin Hayes (NC-08) was 329 votes from being unseated by a former textile worker and middle-school teacher Larry Kissell, even though Hayes vastly out-spent his opponent in the campaign. Phil Kellam almost unseated Republican Thelma Drake (VA-02). In Florida, Christine Jennings is within 373 votes (of almost 238,000 ballots) of unseating Republican Vern Buchanan (FL-13). The outcome of this race is still in question (CNN.com 2006). In the Tennessee Senate race mentioned earlier, Democrat Harold Ford lost with 47.98% to 50.72% for Bob Corker, a thin margin of 2.74% (Leip 2006). Exit polls revealed that Ford won enough white voters (he won 41% of them) to have won the election if Tennessee blacks had voted at a rate proportional to their share (16.4%) of the population in the state (CNN.com 2006).

Overall, Democrats realized appreciable success in this sub-region. However, the outcomes in the Deep South were unimpressive for Democrats and would help to bolster Schaller's arguments for this particular sub-region. In the House races, Democrats incumbents almost lost two U.S. House seats in Georgia. Democrat Jim Marshall (GA-08) held off Republican Mac Collins by fewer than 1,800 votes out of over 159,000 cast. Democrat John Barrow held off Republican Max Burns by fewer than 900 votes of over 142,000 cast. Republicans continued to hold four

Table 7: 2006 Two-Party Popular Vote for U.S. House Races

State	% Republican	% Democrat
Arkansas	40	60
Florida	51	49
Kentucky	51	49
Missouri	51	49
North Carolina	43	57
Tennessee	48	52
Texas	54	46
Virginia	56	44
West Virginia	42	58
State	% Republican	% Democrat
Alabama	63	37
Georgia	56	44
Louisiana	66	34
Mississippi	54	46
South Carolina	56	44

of the five governors' mansions (CNN.com 2006). The Democratic successes in the Peripheral South stand in contrast with the lack of Democratic success in the Deep South. These differences are highlighted in Table 7 by the two-party popular vote percentages in the Peripheral South and Deep South.

Conclusion

Obviously, there are marked differences between the political behaviors of these two sub-regions. While it took a longer time to overcome the Democratic juggernaut in the Deep South, this sub-region now appears

far less promising for Democrats. By contrast, the Peripheral South seems to be emerging and/or stabilizing for the two parties, with neither party enjoying a large advantage in party identification (as indicated by exit polls), excepting Texas and West Virginia (CNN.com 2006). Rather than making broad characterizations of the South, electoral scholars should examine demography and electoral behavior with a more specific approach, looking at each state and each sub-region.

Although the 1990's proved to be a highly successful decade for Republicans in congressional elections, the elections of Democrats John Edwards (NC) and Blanche Lincoln (AR) are noteworthy, though for different reasons. John Edwards was the only Democrat to beat an incumbent Republican in one of the former Confederate states in the 1990's (Black and Black 111). He was also the vice presidential nominee in 2004. While the Democratic ticket failed to win his home state of North Carolina, exit polls from the state showed that Edwards still enjoyed favorable opinion among a small majority of voters. Blanche Lincoln, running for an open U.S. Senate seat, in the next election after Arkansas elected its first Republican Senator since Reconstruction, handily defeated her Republican opponent. She won re-election in 2004 by a similar margin, outperforming the Republican presidential candidate and winning a majority of white women (CNN.com 2004).

With the Peripheral South's increasing diversification and growth, the success Republicans have enjoyed in the last few decades could become less consistent or, perhaps, become a consistent opportunity for the Democratic Party. As an article in *The Charlotte Observer* reports, "The influx[of minorities into Charlotte, and other places in the South] could have political ramifications as well....Although Sen. John Kerry lost the 2004 presidential election, he won Mecklenburg County with 52% of the vote—the highest percentage for a Democratic candidate since Franklin Roosevelt in 1994" (Frazier 4). What seems to have been the foundation for modern Republican competitiveness in the Peripheral South — Appalachia and rapidly-growing urban centers — now seems to be an opportunity for a Democratic re-emergence, though there is little prospect of the Democratic dominance that was enjoyed in these states before the 1950's. Tables 2-5 indicate that these large and diversifying urban centers have recently trended towards the Democratic presidential candidate.

In *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, Black and Black conclude that the

emergence of the Republican Party in the South can be characterized as a competitive Republican plurality, not a Republican majority. They argue that such competitiveness does not preclude Democratic victories; rather, both major political parties have reasonable prospects for electoral success in both the South and the nation as a whole (Black and Black 3-4). From our examination, we may clarify the conclusion by Black and Black: while the Deep South seems to offer fewer and fewer prospects for Democratic victory, there are increasing opportunities and a competitive two-party framework in the Peripheral South that leads to a competitive two-party framework nationally. How Democrats can maximize their electoral prospects without reverting to the racism espoused by Democrats of the region decades ago is a question that can be examined in light of the observations set forth in this study.

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