The Cities on the Hill: Urban Politics in National Institutions

Thomas Ogorzalek
Department of Political Science
Columbia University

Abstract

Much is made of the contemporary “Red States-Blue States” partisan divide and of the importance of race and income for defining partisan conflict. Less scholarly attention has been paid to place-character as a defining and dividing principle of American politics. This essay links literatures on urban politics and American political development to argue that a distinctly urban perspective is at the core of the current “Blue” alignment, and proposes a “city delegation” theory to explain how a cohesive urban bloc grew out of the local politics of the New Deal’s urban wing and has solidified steadily since. Empirical tests of the theory’s implications, employing cohesion and likeness scores and multivariate regression, provide support for the importance of local parties in national legislative behavior. Initially concentrated in Northeastern and Midwestern industrial centers, this progressive urban bloc has nationalized and emerged as a “dually liberal” partisan pole in national political conflict, representing the full articulation of the New Deal realignment even as the original industrial core upon which it was built continues to wane.

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“New York City... where more than seven million people live in peace, and enjoy the benefits of democracy.”

-WNYC Radio 1930s-era station identification

“Let me say... that I know very little about New York, and if I never know any more I will be just as happy.”

-Rep. Graham Barden (D-NC), Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor

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1 Red and Blue in Black and White

Generations of Americans have traveled the thousand miles from Mississippi to Chicago since the beginning of the 20th century: from semi-feudal agricultural society to industrial urban inequality, from flat fields to vertical towers. This path is also an axis upon which America’s racial politics have turned. Indeed, five of the six African Americans ever to serve in the U.S. Senate have come from either Mississippi or Chicago, although a century of political exclusion interrupted their seatings. In 1963, as racial tumult beset the South and just a year before LBJ’s signing of the Civil Rights Act, these very different places had much in common politically. Mississippi sent five representatives to the House, all white Democrats (no one other than white Democrats had been elected, or voted, really, in Mississippi in the 20th century). Chicago’s North Side, dominated for a generation by a local machine organization, also sent five delegates, also all white Democrats. Both places had been consistent, archetypal elements of the New Deal coalition, and both places profited from this relationship with the national government, bringing home pork and having outsize influence on many policies from positions of seniority.

In both places, moreover, a clear racial hierarchy was in place. In Mississippi, this hierarchy was sustained by law and private violence. The story of the strongest bastion of Jim Crow South is well-known. In Chicago, America’s most racially segregated large city, hierarchy was more subtle, and less obviously violent, but still real. The hegemonic local Democratic organization practiced a politics “with a sharp racial edge,” marginalizing black political forces or co-opting their leaders as lieutenants of the dominant city-wide order. Everyday white Chicagoans were not focused on racial

\[1\text{Congressional Record, April 24, 1952, p. 4382. Quoted in Mayhew (1966)}\]
utopia, either: entrenched patterns of racial segregation were strengthened first by neighborhood vigilantes, then by law and regulation (such as redlining), and later by discrimination and strong cultural norms. However, this may have been the last moment that these places were both, for all intents and purposes, stable white polities within the Democratic fold. Over the next five decades, Mississippi would become one of the reddest states in America, with 56 percent of all Mississippians (and 88 percent of all white Mississippians) voting for John McCain in 2008. Chicago would also see decades of local racial tumult, but it came out blue at the national level (and remained a Democratic stronghold throughout): Barack Obama won Chicago’s Cook County by more than a million votes, winning 3 votes for each one cast for McCain. The powerful New Deal coalition built upon the tenuous alliance between representatives of urban and Southern constituencies has vanished completely, famously riven in a process that was driven by racial conflict, accelerating in the 1960s with the struggles and successes of the civil rights movement.

Twentieth century legislative conflicts turned on two substantive axes—statism and race/region—and in the contemporary polity these dimensions of conflict overlap: conservatism on one tends to coincide with conservatism on the other to an extent unprecedented in the modern era. While urban and Southern representatives were once reasonably united on the first dimension and divided on the second, they now tend to be divided on both. Today, Mississippi’s representatives in national politics—the distillation of Mississippi as a political community within the nation—are doubly conservative, while Chicago’s are doubly liberal. Double liberalism on political economy and intergroup politics has come to sweep other issues into a broader liberal portfolio, such that elite positions have also become sorted on a host of seemingly unrelated issues such as those about traditional values and abortion, with partisans sorting close behind.

This doubly liberal set of positions taken up by the Democratic Party and “blue” America, however, is a distinctively urban set of positions, an idea alluded to in the popular discourse on

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3 Each of these 2008 figures is from CNN exit poll data. The margin was almost certainly higher in Chicago proper, as suburban portions of Cook County tilt relatively Republican.
4 There are several perspectives on the root causes of this intraparty schism, the role of race in the breakup, and the timing and sequencing, and the mechanism by which different actors took sides in the debate (Carmines and Stimson (1989), Katznelson and Farhang (2004), Schickler and Feinstein (2008).
5 Poole and Rosenthal (1998); McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2007)
6 Mississippi’s representatives are doubly conservative except for Rep. Bennie Thompson, from a majority-African American district that includes Jackson
7 Shapiro and Bafumi 2009
the Red-Blue divide but usually attributed to state or regional culture. Particular regional cultures, economies, historical trajectories and contingencies, and climates that make up state and region are important in constituting and accounting for difference in citizens’ political consciousness; however, material conditions and lived experience on a human scale—immediate as opposed to imagined community—are also likely explanatory concepts, and this is more readily described in terms of place character: urban, suburban, and rural. Statism and group pluralism, the hallmarks of double liberalism, are more important for sustaining order in urban political communities than they are in other contexts. Thus the main commitments of the long New Deal—intervention in the economy through regulation; the recognition, tolerance, and accommodation of group difference; and institutional adjustment to new social conditions generally—are urban commitments, made by the Democratic Party’s new urban bloc-of-blocs in the 1930s, even as their local polities were episodically riven by deep racial and class conflicts. This is the spirit conveyed by the WNYC station announcement above, which is still used to describe a certain kind of community to which the urban bloc aspired. These commitments made a marriage of convenience with the South, who often preferred not to “know any more” about such communities, less and less convenient as time wore on. Local development patterns, and local political institutions and arrangements, not simply demography, constituent ideology, or Southern pathology, played a key role in these divergent outcomes of Chicago and Mississippi. The contemporary full flowering of the Blue-Red, urban-rural ideological and partisan cleavage has deep roots in the New Deal.

This essay describes the urban-rural cleavage, and how it may contribute to our current state of polarization. It goes on to identify the roots of this moment in the birth of the New Deal alignment, in an urban wing that “moved first” in developing distinctive policy goals and norms that would overwhelm the national alignment. In doing so, the project contributes to our understanding of an historical puzzle at the heart of the New Deal's dissolution, positing that local political institutions played a causal role in bringing issues of racial equity to the national legislative agenda—a change that Democratic leadership (correctly) foresaw as pushing the South out of the coalition, and providing the basis for the overlapping dimensions of conflict we have today.
2 City Mouse, Country Mouse: Seeing the Urban-Rural Cleavage

In this brief descriptive section, several data sources will be used to illustrate the status and development of the urban-rural divide at the aggregate and individual levels. Urbanity is clearly associated with support for Democratic candidates among electorates and individuals, even when we account for other factors known to be important, such as race, income, political ideology, and religiosity. There is also support for the notion that this development is strengthening over time: urbanites and urban areas are increasingly identified with the Democratic Party in elections for President and Congress, and urbanites are increasingly distinctive from residents of other kinds of places in their voting behavior, to an extent that has not been seen in the modern era. Finally, this cleavage is most powerful and exaggerated at the level of party elites. Partisan representation and leadership in Congress are more closely associated with place type than ever before.\footnote{Previous studies have noted the relationship between suburbanism and Republican support (Gainsborough 2001) and the recent spike in rural support for Republicans (McKee 2008), and to possible drivers of these spatial-voting connections (Nall 2011); the findings here are generally in keeping with their findings, though attention to the full spectrum of urbanity (i.e., city, suburban, rural) yields further insights.}

The urban-rural cleavage operates at several levels. At the aggregate level, we can see it impressionistically from the famous series of Red-Blue maps that have been on display after the past three elections, in which the industrial Northeast and Midwest are joined by the West Coast. Stopping at the state level, pundits often settle on regional cultural tropes and stereotypes (think Starbucks vs. Wal-Mart, snowmobiles vs. sailboats) in explaining the lines of political conflict. Region certainly plays an important role in defining the lines of political conflict, a fact that is not at all unusual in American history, but a closer look reveals a complimentary pattern within states and across regions at the county level.\footnote{Excellent graphical presentations of this county-level map are at Newman et al 2008} Urban counties tend to be more Democratic, rural places more Republican, and suburban places tend to be somewhere in between: “purple.” This is of course perfectly compatible with the state-level map. After all, when we think of big cities, certainly the “Blue” states contain most of the paradigmatic examples in America: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit. But the trend is apparent within states as well. In Texas, Austin, Dallas, and Houston are bluer than most of that state, while in blue states like California and New York the large urban counties are bluer than the rest of those states (Notable exceptions include rural areas with large African American, Latino, or Native American populations in the South, Southwest, and...}
Figure 1: **Support for Obama by population density in sixteen states.** 2008 County-level support for Obama by population density in large states. In all cases, support for Obama is relatively high in densely populated counties. *Source: Calculated from USA Today (Election Results), U.S. Census (County demographics). States with few people or few counties excluded.*

West; and Vermont, Iowa, and Phoenix’s Maricopa County).

Two quantitative analyses can illustrate the cross-regional relationship between cities and support for Democrats. First, Figure 1 plots county-level vote share for Obama against the natural log of county population density for sixteen states, with local fit lines to visualize trends.\(^{10}\) While the overall level of support for Obama varies widely by state, in almost every case, densely populated counties voted for Obama more than sparsely populated ones, often by 20 to 30 percent.\(^{11}\)

Multivariate linear regression of support for Obama on (the log of) population density reveals that densely populated counties (those a standard deviation above the mean density), on

\(^{10}\)Throughout this analysis, a few convenient definitions of urbanity will be employed. For county-level data, population density is reflective of the underlying concept, especially when counties within states are compared and when counties are relatively evenly populated. In the individual-level survey data, I use the 3-category urbanity variables provided in the surveys. Later, in analysis of Congress, a more precise definition centered on the size of a local political community will be employed. A more rigorous definition of the components of urbanity will be clarified in a later section; for now, urbanity is understood as consisting of density (for counties), membership in a central city as opposed to suburb or rural area/small town (for survey respondents), or encompassing at least a significant part of a large local political community/municipality (for congressional districts).

\(^{11}\)Though note that the trend is not monotonic in several Southern states. Gastner and Newman (2004) finds similar spatial trends in other recent presidential elections.
average, voted for Obama by about 14-15 points more than sparsely populated counties (those a standard deviation below the mean density), even when region is included as an alternative explanation.\textsuperscript{12}

The expected difference in support between a big-city county (where the average population density is over 3,000 persons/square mile) and an otherwise comparable rural county is over 60 percent, about as extreme a contrast in political support one could find.\textsuperscript{13}

Table 1: At Left: Linear regression of county support for Obama on the natural log of population density and regional indicators (West as base category). $R^2 = .25$, 3112 observations. At Right: Measures of county-level percent African American, Latino, and Asian, and median household income added. The relationship between support for Obama and density is only modestly diminished, and still precisely estimated. $R^2 = .46$ N=2830. Source: Calculated from NAES.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
Variable & Model 1 & Model 2 \\
\hline
logpopdens & 0.075 (0.003) & 0.060 (0.003) \\
Northeast & -0.006 (0.021) & 0.062 (0.019) \\
Midwest & -0.060 (0.014) & 0.020 (0.014) \\
South & -0.198 (0.014) & -0.291 (0.014) \\
Black & 0.935 (0.031) & \\
Hisp & 0.434 (0.034) & \\
Asian & 1.619 (0.215) & \\
Medinc (10k) & 0.030 (0.005) & \\
Intercept & -0.325 (0.014) & -0.270 (0.021) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

This association between dense populations and “blue” politics is not merely an artifact of the fact that many dense places tend to have more residents from racial and ethnic minority groups. In fact, at the county level, the association between percent nonwhite and population density is fairly weak.\textsuperscript{14} Beyond that, regression of county-level support for Obama on both population density and percent non-white reveals a persistent independent relationship between Democratic voting and density, as shown in the second model of Table 1. Popular euphemism notwithstanding, “urban” is more than just a synonym for “not white” when it comes to residence and voting behavior. Blue-ness, whatever it may be precisely, is strongly associated with density.

These aggregate data tell us about places, but not about individuals. Trends and rela-

\textsuperscript{12}Table 1 employs a simplified 4-category version of the 9-category ICPSR/Census regional definition. Using all 9 categories decreases the coefficient on logpopdens to .071.

\textsuperscript{13}Though note there are some suburban counties that are more dense than younger city counties like Harris County (Houston), TX, or San Diego County, CA.

\textsuperscript{14}Percent nonwhite and population density are correlated at about $r = .15$ (2008 Census).
Figure 2: **Red country, Blue city (All respondents)**. Local probability of voting for Bush (Red) or Kerry (Blue) in 2004. Almost all blue patches are cities. Exact measures are constant terms on linear geographically-weighted regression with no predictors. *Source: Calculated from 2004 NAES*

... relationships at the aggregate level may mask individual-level processes.\(^{15}\) In this case, however, the ecological fallacy does not seem to be operating.

Digging beneath the limits of aggregation, the urban-rural cleavage operates at the individual level as well. Using geocoded data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), which has a huge number of respondents and is thus more geographically representative that the typical national sample, and which also includes information about respondents’ ZIP codes, Figure 2 maps the locally-weighted average of voting in particular places. The Red Country-Blue City divide is most clearly shown here: blue clusters are almost exclusively around cities, and almost all large cities are blue (characterized by high levels of support for Kerry against Bush). A similar map using only white voters, not presented here, reveals a similar pattern across space, albeit generally at a lower level—again, urbanity is not just race. Returning to national estimates, individual-level...

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\(^{15}\)For instance, one of the paradoxes of the Red-Blue divide has to do with the at-odds relationship between income and partisanship at different levels of analysis (see, eg, Bartels 2006 and Gelman et al 2008, or the county-level regression results above contrasted with the individual level results below). In a locational variable, however, it is less likely that relationships would be at odds at different levels of aggregation.
regressions show that even when we control for the well-known covariates of partisanship and vote-choice, including race, political ideology, income, education, age, sex, and religiosity, there is still a statistically significant and substantively meaningful relationship between vote choice and urbanity in 2008. Table 2 shows the results of a multivariate logit regression estimating the determinants of vote choice in 2008, again using data from the 2008 NAES.

From Table 2, it is clear that urbanity is not just a proxy for race, or anything else so obvious. The correlation coefficient on urbanity is significant and positive, indicating that if a respondent is from a central city, he or she is ceteris paribus more likely to vote for Obama than someone who lives in a rural area—about 8-9 percent more likely, even when controlling for other important individual-level factors including race, ideology, income, education, and religiosity. It is not surprising that ideology, race, and ethnicity are powerful explanatory factors (being African American gives a respondent a 50 percent greater likelihood of supporting Obama, and a Latino an 20 percent bump, and moving one step in the conservative direction on a five-point ideology scale would make one about 30 percent less likely to vote for Obama); but the magnitude of the effect of urbanity is on par with any of the other “prepolitical” variables: for instance, a person in the bottom third of
the income distribution is about 9 percent more likely to vote for Obama than a wealthy person—just a slightly greater difference than that between an urbanite and a country dweller.\footnote{16}

In elections as closely contested as the last few cycles have been, an effect of a few points can have a large effect in aggregation, which will be made clearer in the exploration of the development the urbanity cleavage in Congress below. Finally, we can see from the regression above that urbanity is important, but region has a slightly larger effect on predicted vote in 2008. Going from the South to the Midwest (the biggest regional shift) would make one about 14 percent more likely to support Obama; moving from the country to the city, about 8.5. Thus the average rural Northerner was still about 5 percent more likely to support Obama than the hypothetical, otherwise identical, urban Southerner.

\subsection*{2.1 A developing cleavage}

The relationship between place-type and partisanship has not been constant over time, at the individual or aggregate level. For instance, county-level density and support for the Democratic presidential candidate have not always been positively associated, even during the New Deal era. We can see this at a glance from Figure \ref{fig:1932}, which replicates Figure \ref{fig:2008} for the 1932 election, with the log of population density on the horizontal axis and the marginal support for the Roosevelt v. Hoover on the vertical. Contrary to the contemporary figure, there is no cross-state pattern of positive association (nor is there a relationship between density and Democratic support when all counties are put together in the same pool). Some states, like FDR’s own New York, show a fairly strong relationship, but in most the relationship is either flat or non-monotonic. In many states, especially in the South, there is almost no variation in county population density: almost all counties are fairly sparsely populated.\footnote{17} Both mathematically and theoretically, it is difficult for a relationship to exist when there is so little variation in one variable. Also, in many cases there is a larger spread along the vertical axis than we saw in 2008, indicating intrastate conflict, albeit not associated with density.

\footnote{Similar analyses using data from 2000 and 2004 yield similar results in terms of direction and statistical significance, but the magnitude of the independent relationships between urbanity and vote choice seem to be slightly weaker in those years (though comparing coefficients from different regressions is not straightforward).}

\footnote{Except in Virginia, where many of the cities and larger towns are classified as their own county. But there is no relationship between density and voting there.}
Figure 3: **County-level support for FDR (1932) in 25 states by population density.** In 1932, there is no cross-state pattern in the relationship between density and aggregate local partisanship, and only New York exhibits a strong relationship. By 1960, the pattern had developed in several states with large cities (OH, MI, MO, PA), but it was especially weak outside the northeast, where there was less variation in density in any case. Source: Calculated from NHGIS Historical Census data (Population), Clubb et al 2006 (County-level election results)

At the individual level, we can track the development of the urbanity cleavage by using Group Voting Fractionalization (GVF). GVF, an adaptation of Gallagher disproportionality, is one method of comparing the voting behavior of different groups and measuring the extent to which group identity is associated with vote choice, and is a quick, intuitive way of studying gross cleavages in an electorate.\(^{18}\) GVF does not disaggregate the individual factors that are typically added together to predict an outcome; rather, it measures the association between a particular identity

\[^{18}\text{GVF is developed in Huber (forthcoming) as an approach to studying ethnic voting. The formula for GVF is}

\[
GVF = \frac{1}{\sqrt{G}} \sum_{g=1}^{G} (GVF_g \times s_g)
\]

where

\[
GVF_g = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=1}^{P} (V_{jg} - V_j)^2}
\]

where \(V \) is the share of votes from each of \(G \) groups \(g \) for each of \(P \) parties/candidates \(p \), weighted by \(s \), the proportion of each group \(g \) in the electorate. In essence, it is the divergence of each group from the overall electorate, weighted by group's proportion in the electorate. Here the groups are based on place-character (Urban, suburban, rural), not ethnicity, and identified as living in urban, suburban, and rural settings, respectively, in the ANES data (a question which runs through 2000, and complemented for 2004 and 2008 in the Presidential series using the National Annenberg Election Survey). For intuition of the measure, and for an example of its use for measuring ethnic voting in a comparative context, see Huber (forthcoming). Essentially, as groups become more different in their voting choice, the measure rises. The minimum possible value is 0 and the maximum possible is 1. The original Gallagher Index, which does not weight the groups' contributions to the ultimate measure, or include the initial weighting term \(\frac{1}{\sqrt{G}}\), (which allows for comparability across electorates with different numbers of groups and forces the measure to fit between 0 and 1, is from Gallagher (1991).
Figure 4: **Place-type group voting over time.** Group Voting Fractionalization among urban, suburban, and rural voters, 1950-2000. Top row all voters, bottom row white voters only. Presidential voting at left, House voting at right. Over time, place-character has become more associated with vote choice. *Source: Calculated from ANES cumulative datafile, and NAES 2004, 2008.*

and a choice, to evaluate how much that kind of identity structures voting. Taking persons as whole entities (as opposed to collections of attributes) can help us more realistically understand how cleavages have developed (though care must be taken to account for alternative underlying factors which may be correlated with the cleavage and powering it indirectly). Figure 4 shows that the gap between voters from different kinds of places has grown over the past half-century. It is not straightforward to precisely interpret GVF in isolation, but the positive slopes in the lines in all four figures suggest that the urban-rural cleavage has been strengthening, and that it is not simply an artefact of the increasing (and disproportionally urban) ethnroracial diversity of the United States.

Breaking down the summation measure GVF into some of its constituent parts (not pictured here), urban voters and rural voters have each become more distinctive in their partisan support. Suburban voters, on the other hand, have become more like the overall electorate, in part because they have grown to make up a larger share of the electorate, but also because they have become less Republican over the past five decades.
All of the above observations reinforce the idea that there is a significant association between place-type and vote choice within the electorate, and that this relationship has gotten stronger over the past half century. They also point to the reality that the urbanity cleavage runs all the way from urban to rural, with the suburbs in between. Most recent social science has attended to the urban-suburban divide specifically, and recent political science has devoted increasing attention to suburban politics and urban-suburban conflict, but the urban-rural continuum extends beyond the borders of metropolitan development in a way that it did not 50 years ago.\textsuperscript{19} Urban and rural voters have become less like the other groups, while suburban voters have become more like the others. Part of this has to do with simple demographic math: as the U.S. has become a suburban nation, suburbanites have become more diverse and less different than the rest of the country. But it also has to do with shifts on the ends of the urbanity continuum: a hard right turn to the Republicans by rural voters, and a softer one to the Democrats by urbanites (though urbanites have generally been more distinctive than either other group during the years of the ANES study). This monotonic relationship between urbanity and partisanship is new; the New Deal was more like a sandwich: urban and rural Democrats, with suburban Republicans in between. Now, however, party support runs one way along the continuum, and parties can frame appeals with one half of the continuum in mind.

A few caveats are in order. Though the electorate is now more organized around urbanity than it has been before, it is important to note that the “usual suspects” of political explanation—race, class, ideology—of course continue to matter and to explain much of what people do. Race especially explains more than urbanity. Urbanity, however, is a distinct variable both theoretically and empirically, and its relationship to our politics merits deeper investigation and attention. It is also important that we cannot draw any causal conclusions from the associations above, because the relationship between context and political affiliation (and other views) is not straightforward; because of relatively easy residential mobility, there is a debate about whether context affects views or people with particular views seek out contexts in which to live. Perhaps Democrats like cities (or Republicans like wide open spaces), and move there. Or maybe cities (or wide open spaces) cause

\textsuperscript{19}For instance, Gainsborough (2001) finds that urban and suburban residents have distinct tastes for government spending programs, with suburbanites more conservative, even when accounting for partisanship. Nall (2011) details and estimates the role of highway construction in promoting urban-suburban polarization. McKee (2008) does attend to the structural position of rural voters, calling attention to their increasing affiliation with the G.O.P., especially in the South, though he draws no distinction between urban and suburban voters.
people to support the Democratic (or Republican) Party. Understanding the roots of why cities are blue and the countryside red is the focus of the rest of this study, with a focus not on individuals’ preferences and geographic sorting, but on the deep roots of partisan conflict and political change.

It is important to note that even as the many partisan cleavages are identified, there is much evidence that Americans generally are not as polarized—that is, deeply divided and at the extremes on issues—as is sometimes asserted in popular culture. The relationship between urbanity and partisanship is far from determining; there are lots of Republicans in cities and lots of Democrats outside them. At minimum, however, urbanity (and race and region) do seem to be gaining strength as predictors of political affiliation, and and close association between these dearly held, seldom-changed identities seems likely to contribute to polarization among elites and in the public.

3 The Urban Bloc(s) in Congress

From the individual- and aggregate-level analyses above, it is clear that the urban-rural partisan cleavage has grown over the past several decades, and that it is not solely a function of the increasing ethnic and racial diversity of urban areas over that time period. Ultimately, however, the system of representation distills the preferences of individuals-in-communities into seats in the legislature. Representation is almost always based on residence: legislators represent geographic constituencies, not sectors of the economy or age cohorts or other possible cross-sections of society. Thus a representative will represent a particular built environment and the persons that dwell within it—and to the extent that urbanites, suburbanites, and ruralists are affiliated and represented differently, this may contribute to political conflict.

A 5-10 percent gap is quickly (and probably repeatedly) exaggerated to 1-0 in a winner-take-all constituency, so even seemingly small place-
character effects can be magnified in the process of representation.\textsuperscript{23} The increasing identification of one place-type with a particular political alliance or ideology, moreover, may feed back into the system, prompting further geographic sorting, heightening polarization and deepening division.\textsuperscript{24}

The bulk of this study focuses on the relationships between local place-character, local political institutions, and the way these factors interact with national representative institutions. Looking for the effects of local institutions in national politics is an unusual path to take for a scholar interested in local politics, but it should not necessarily be so. Many texts in the past four decades have sought to argue for the relevance of local politics even in the face of the famous “city limits” that circumscribe local political agents.\textsuperscript{25} The logic of federalism and the disciplining power of financial institutions do not determine the character of every local outcome, but it is little use denying the predicament cities face if they seek to promote progressive politics locally—particularly in terms of statism and public goods provision. Rather, urban political forces can organize at higher levels to shape their communities and the broader contexts in which they govern themselves. Indeed, this surely was one purpose of the northern New Deal and its descendant urban national political order. Redistribution, labor law, regulatory policy, public works projects, and a host of other market interventions are perhaps better planned and paid for at a national scale, where interjurisdictional competition is less of an undermining force. Each of those areas of intervention has a distinctively urban position, prompted by the characteristics of cities, and that position is the one given voice in national politics by the Democratic Party. How these urban positions are pursued in the national legislature—how cities represent themselves to and interact with the rest of the polity—is the subject of the subsequent inquiry.

A useful first step is to show how the growing urban-rural political cleavage has manifested itself in Congress over the long-durée. The parties have not always been organized along this continuum. Sectional conflict has been more typical, or long periods of fairly one-sided national

\textsuperscript{23}Indeed, such a “small” place-character advantage may not only shift a district from one party to another, but also make a district practically uncompetitive, though this effect would be smaller in the many “mixed” districts that combine more than one character of place and in suburban districts, where voters are less distinctive in their partisan choices. Such safe districts may give representatives electoral slack and allow them to deviated from the preferences of the district median voter, even without any insidious or overly partisan gerrymandering.

\textsuperscript{24}It is very difficult to convincingly identify the causal relationship between residential location and geographic political polarization. Gainsborough (2001) speculates that the processes are mutually reinforcing, at least in the suburbs—that suburbs attract conservatives, who then become more conservative among like-minded neighbors. It is unclear whether analogous processes are at play in other kinds of places.

\textsuperscript{25}Peterson (1980), Hackworth (2007)
contests. Even if political conflict is urban-rural, it need not be national; in some places we could have the dominant contemporary configuration, in others Republican cities could be surrounded by a Democratic hinterland. Since the New Deal, however, the nationalization of the urbanity-partisanship identity has spread, so now cities in all parts of the country and of all ages are usually more Democratic than their outlying areas, in the electorate and in Congress. Given our present demographics, however (with an ever-increasing proportion of Americans living in metropolitan areas, and the suburbs becoming the dominant form of residential place-type) an elite partisan politics with opponents arranged according to constituency place-character is likely to be contentious and close-fought, as we have seen in the past few electoral cycles.

Analyses of urban representation in Congress, the the place of cities generally in the development of national politics, have been too rare in political science.\(^{26}\) Previous studies focusing explicitly on urban representation in Congress have examined the influence of cities on legislators or the power of urban legislators in the chamber to pursue a distinctive urban agenda. Mayhew (1966), in what may be the first scholarly indication of the Congressional sorting/polarization that was to come, found that urban Republicans were one set of congressmembers who were cross-pressured by constituency and party. Studying a set of roll call votes on housing from the 1950s, he finds that urban Republicans were pressured to vote against their party in favor of their constituents. Conversely, urban Democrats found the same vote on those bills compatible with both their urban constituencies and their party. Though the urban-rural divide had not yet matured in Congress at this point, its seeds were clearly there. Wolman and Marckini (1998) systematically explore the developing character and strategic position of the urban bloc over the three decades in which suburban pre-eminence took hold. This section updates and expands each of these endeavors.

To study urban representation in Congress, we need some standard of what constitutes an “urban” district. Unlike states and persons, however, cities are accorded no formal representation in the national legislature. Congressional district boundaries often blithely cross municipal boundaries, so identifying an “urban” or “city” district may not be straightforward. Worthy approaches typically rely on the availability of Census data listing the districts’ proportion of rural, suburban, and urban residents. Mayhew (1966) used this approach, combined with an accounting of per-

\(^{26}\)Lieberman (2009)
centage in the district who rented their homes. Wolman and Marckini (1998) identify a district's character with its largest population group: central city, suburban in-metro, out of metro, or a mixture. These studies represent the best examples of attempts to identify and track urban representatives in the House using Census data. This technique is simple, but it has two shortcomings. First, comparing across time is not easy, as readily available census data for congressional districts only go back a few censuses, so getting a long-term picture of urban power or the urban-rural divide may be impossible using this approach. To study the New Deal, another tack must be taken. Second, the “central city” of a Census Bureau Metropolitan Area may not conform to our idea of what a city is. Sioux City, Iowa, is the center of a small metropolitan area, but it does not really conform to our intuitive understanding of a city because it is still very small—we would not think of it when listing urban places. Mayhew (1966) attempts a fix to this issue, by applying threshold of percentage in the district who rent their homes, but this approach is too exclusive: it jettisons some districts within large cities if they have too few renters, even if those residents are part of the large political communities we call “big cities.”

The alternative approach employed here is to identify a priori the locations of big cities at a given time and then identify the districts that overlap these places. Lieberman (2009) defines a standard of “city” that allows for consistent, intuitively satisfactory comparisons over time. A place is considered a big city if its population constituted .1 percent of the total national population in the most recent Census. This is a nice round number, and the actual list of cities it produces fits fairly well with what one would intuitively expect from such a list, but it is also theoretically compelling: each congressional district (if they were actually equal in size) makes up 1/435 of the nation, or .22 percent. Thus the .1 percent threshold is just shy of a majority of a district. For a city to have its “own” district in Congress, it should at least be close to a majority of a Congressional district.27 In this approach size is the key definitional element in defining cities over time: without a large population, a city cannot make a strong claim for representation in the legislature in the context of partisan conflict along an urbanity cleavage. For each Census, Lieberman (2009) identified the cities that constituted at least .1 percent of the national population. Using this list and congressional district atlases, each congressional district is coded by hand as to its composition

27 A “big-city” standard of .11 percent would of course be more rigorous than .1 percent. Using that standard yields an identical list of cities for the 20th century, though the two lists do differ slightly during the 19th century.
and shape. The result is a dataset spanning American history that can allow us to see the character of place-type representation in the national legislature, and to see the partisan distribution of these different kinds of districts. Some preliminary analyses of this dataset, referred to here as the Urban-Suburban-Rural (USR) data, follow.

3.1 Urban representation over time

Using the historical USR data, we can see how representation in Congress has shifted over time. The story is not counterintuitive, but for illustrative purposes it is worth re-telling here. First, from the graph at left in Figure 5, we can see how the number of urban districts rose in the early 20th century and levelled off just as the New Deal solidified. Urban representation in Congress does not seem to have declined much in terms of overall numbers (though a closer look would reveal that these city representatives are more diverse in their origins than they used to be). Since the 1930s, the real change has been in the growth in the number of suburban districts, from about ten percent of seats to about 1/3. The graph at right in Figure 5 displays the partisan distribution of the different kinds of districts: dark blue Democrats on the bottom of each category, red GOP seats above within each category. From this figure, we can see the historical development of the urbanity cleavage in Congress: from 1865 to 1929, urban and rural districts were each split fairly evenly between the parties (there were very few suburban districts during this time, but they were all Republican), and both urban and rural districts are fairly responsive to national shifts: when one rises and falls a lot, so does the other, as in the rapid sequence of partisan rotation in the 1890s.

After 1931, however, there is a large jump in the Democratic share of urban districts, as the New Deal assembled its urban coalition of labor, newly mobilized “ethnic” whites, and eventually African Americans. Republicans regained some of these urban seats intermittently in the 40s and 50s, but as Mayhew (1966) notes, these urban Republicans were cross-pressured by party and constituency. On the substance of urban policy Democrats were better positioned to reconcile party

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28For current Congresses, very useful maps are available online through the Census Bureau’s TIGER GIS collection. For recent pre-Internet congresses, the Congressional District Atlas of the United States (Bureau of the Census, series begins 1960) is useful; for older congresses, Martis (1982) is an invaluable resource. Each congressional district was given several qualitative scores by the author for this study, as detailed in the USR scoring Appendix.

29In any case, the selection mechanism may not matter overmuch in identifying city legislators: using demographics, Mayhew (1966) identified 140 city districts. Using maps and the .1 percent population threshold, USR data identified 143. It is likely that there is a high degree of overlap in our lists, though note that the different selection rules mean that Mayhew would have more renter-heavy districts from small cities, while the USR would have more districts with homeowners in large cities.
programs and constituency pressure. Thus since the early 1960s, Democrats have held a large majority of urban districts. At the same time, the share of rural districts held by Democrats has fallen, fairly gradually, until a big drop in the 1990s with the 1994 takeover of the chamber by Republicans, in which many rural Southern districts were converted to the GOP column. By this time there were fewer total rural districts in any case, as the suburbs grew. Democrats have made gains in suburban districts, the middle zone of the graph: until the 1960s this was exclusively Republican territory. The main observation from these graphs is that the development of the urbanity cleavage has taken place in the national legislature: before the New Deal (and intermittently in the 1940s and 1950s) the two parties each featured sizeable urban and rural factions, but this is far less true today. The bottom half of the graph has gotten bluer, and the top half has gotten redder: this is a core development in American politics in the past 80 years (not just recent cycles), and the institutional corollary of the growth of the urban-rural divide in the electorate.

Even within the set of urban districts, we can see the partisan differential along the urbanity dimension. Urban districts come in many shapes, and there are four basic recurrent patterns of drawing urban districts (described more fully in the Appendix). “Core” districts are part of a
Figure 6: **Urban districts by type and partisanship.** Core urban districts are almost exclusively Democratic, while mixed districts are split between the parties. *Source: USR data*

City and not mixed, “Metropolitan” districts encompass the entire metropolitan area of a smaller city, and “Sliced” and “Spillover” districts are constituted by a mix of urban, suburban, and rural contexts within a metropolitan area with more than one district. Especially as America’s population has shifted to the suburbs, and as redrawing district boundaries has become a more complicated affair, it is less common for a district to be purely urban, suburban, or rural, and core districts are vanishing in favor of slices and spillovers. Breaking urban districts into these four broad categories, an even starker partisan picture emerges. Among the most urban “core” districts, only one is Republican today, and Democrats have long predominated among representatives from these districts. The other kinds of urban districts are more evenly distributed between the two parties, though in each category Democrats hold a majority. The growing identity of the Democratic Party with its urban constituency can also be seen by simply depicting Democrats as a share of urban representatives—and, vice versa, urban representatives as a share of Democrats in Congress. These two subfigures in Figure 7 tell the story again: most urban representatives are Democrats, and an increasing share of Democrats are urban, nearly a majority of the party since the final departure
of the South in the 1990s and after the 2010 losses actually constituting a narrow majority of the Democratic caucus. At no time in our history has there been a more urban party—a party more identified with cities, their citizens, and all that entails—than the contemporary Democratic Party.

Figure 7: **Partisanship and place-type over time.** Democrats are a stable majority of urban seats, and urban representatives are nearly a majority of Democrats. *Source: USR data*

We can also measure the cleavage using weighted disproportionality, as in the measures of GVF using individuals’ vote choices in the preceding section. In the case of Congress, however, the vote choice is made by the aggregated electorate, choosing a representative from one party or the other. Again using urban, suburban, and rural district characters as groups, Figure 8 illustrates that the urban-rural cleavage has grown in Congress, spiking first in the New Deal, again in the 1960s, and again the 1990s until it is as high as ever in our contemporary congress. At right, the constituent parts of GVF for each place-type are plotted over time.\(^{30}\) Urban districts spiked first, in the 1930s; the growth in number of suburban districts increased their contribution to the

\(^{30}\)This measure, VD, is the difference between each group and the overall chamber, weighted by the proportion of the group in the chamber.
overall cleavage in the 40s and 50s, but the suburbs have not become more distinctive in their partisan representation. Rural districts, however, have become increasingly distinctive—in favor of the G.O.P.—since in the 1960s.

**Figure 8:** **Group-fractionalization by district place-character.** Congressional partisanship has become more organized around the urbanity dimension over time, indicated by the general rise in GVF (using place-character-types as groups) in the plot at left. At right, the general increase in place-character disproportionality is driven by the sharp and then gradual increase in distinctiveness in urban representatives beginning in the 1930s and the recent drift of rural representatives to the GOP. Suburban representatives have become less distinctive. Source: USR data

Within Congress, the increasing identification of the parties with different kinds of places has led to the potential for institutional exaggeration of the urbanity cleavage. Some players have more power than others in the lawmaking process; in particular, committee chairs and party leaders have outsize influence on substantive agendas and the precise content of legislation. The distillation of the urban-rural partisan cleavage is even starker when we get to the level of committee chairs and ranking minority members—the individuals advantageously situated for crafting and promoting (or shelving and ignoring) legislation. Figure 9 illustrates the place-character divide among House party elites, and shows that in this area the major changes are fairly recent. Each subfigure shows where committee chairs or ranking members come from, an indication of place-type influence within each party’s caucus. Vertical dashed lines indicate moments of majority change—the
moments when the House has changed hands, while the small circles indicate the values for the 112th congress, which are difficult to see otherwise.

While the most important long-run historical trend here is probably the diminution of rural power on committees, especially during the reforms of the early 1970s, the other important observation to be gleaned from Figure 9 is the close relationship between partisan control and the position of urban representatives in the past two decades or so. Before the GOP takeover of the 1990s, just under a half of House committee chairs were from urban districts, and the proportion of committee chairs from different kinds of places had held fairly steady for two decades (though there was a gradual increase in the share that went to suburban representatives). Since the mid-90s takeover, however, when Republicans have had a majority of House seats, less than five committees have been headed by urbanites; when Democrats have held a majority, more than half of House committees chairs have come from urban districts. This may be due to aging-out or defeat of partisans who did not fit the place-character dimension; representatives more naturally compatible with their districts (ie, those whose party affiliation and district character match the partisan character of the urbanity cleavage) can more easily accrue seniority as the place-type sorting of Congress continues. As in the electorate and in the legislature as a whole, however, the place-character cleavage
has matured within legislative party leadership. Even at the very top of the parties' leadership the divide is clearly present. The contrast in style and self-presentation between Barack Obama and, say, Sarah Palin or George W. Bush is obvious. But within Congress the urbanity divide is manifest as well: the past four Speakers of the House: Newt Gingrich, Dennis Hastert, Nancy Pelosi, and John Boehner all came from constituencies perfectly in synch with their party's position on the urbanity spectrum.

In summary, we have seen the secular development of an urban-rural cleavage over the past seventy years: at the individual and aggregate level, the electorate increasingly makes choices along the continuum of this cleavage. These choices are filtered into the system of representation, and thus the composition of the national legislature and its leadership reflects this dimension of division to an even greater extent. The manner and cause of the shift, however, are less clear. Authors focusing on spatial polarization have often focused on the city-suburb divide (Gainsborough 2001, Nall 2011): this is an important source of conflict, another legacy of the long New Deal-era, but among voters and in the halls of Congress, cities and suburbs are becoming more alike, not less, while partisan sorting matures along the full urbanity continuum.

What ultimately drove this political change, however, is less clear. In Congress, the parties sorted themselves along regional and urbanity lines beginning with the New Deal's urban gains and accelerating with a delayed rural response about thirty years later. Republicans made gains in the South first in presidential politics and later converted that largely rural “solid” region into their stronghold. In the North, the disappearance of urban Republicans led to homogeneous Democratic urban blocs in many industrial cities (though suburban Republicans remain in all regions). Most scholarly focus has been on the conversion of the South, understanding its drift away from the New Deal coalition, and the resilient causal force and effects of racial conservatism in regional and national politics. Carmines and Stimson (1989) depicts the effects of choices by Republican national elites in the 1960s, who seized upon an opportunity to use race as a wedge issue to appeal to Southerners and other white voters and eventually escape their seemingly permanent minority status, and how that issue evolved into a cross-partisan, rather than intrapartisan, conflict. Katznelson and several co-authors have identified the divide coming earlier. These studies identify “defections” by Southern members on core New Deal issues, especially on labor, in the 1940s and 1950s as pre-
cursors of the eventual break over race.31

4 Local dispositions and institutions in national politics

The organization of politics around place-character is not inevitable. In other contexts, in the American past, sectional conflict has been as common, and regional interests might easily trump urbanity. Cities politically allied with their hinterlands may pursue rivalries with other regions, within or across states. Locality could be orthogonal to or disconnected from national political concerns. Scholarship about place character has addressed different facets of this political divide, as urban places differ greatly from suburban or rural communities. In this section, I briefly describe a few facets of urban social and political life that may have contributed to the development of the urban-rural ideological cleavage over economics and race. I then propose a source of this cleavage, outlining the the city delegation theory, which identifies a distinctively urban mechanism by which dual liberalism may have developed among representatives of U.S. cities. Finally, I briefly outline the next steps for testing the city delegation theory, and conclude with possible implications of these findings.

Partisan political conflict in the United States is, now more than ever in our modern history, organized according to place-character and urbanity, the outcome of the glacial partisan shift of conservative (mostly non-urban) Southerners from the Democratic to Republican party and of liberal (mostly urban) Republicans to the Democrats, while Democrats have made gains in suburban areas (where Republicans still tend to win). This shift has left us with the close split we have in today’s polity. This urbanity cleavage has matured at the same time that we have again seen the “disappearance” of the episodic second dimension of roll-call disagreement in the national legislature, which Poole and Rosenthal (1998) identify as conflict related to race and region. It does not seem as though racial conflict has disappeared, of course (neither has the old first dimension, about government intervention in the economy); more accurately, the two substantive areas of conflict have been folded into each other to become mutually reinforcing and contributing to the present era of more consistent partisan disagreement and polarization. The increasing overlap of these

31See, eg. Katznelson and Farhang (2005), Katznelson and Mulroy (forthcoming).
dimensions of conflict is related to an historical puzzle, and identifying important characteristics of cities can help explain at least a piece of this puzzle. Urbanity played an important role in the development of dual liberalism and the full flowering of the New Deal coalition.

In the middle of the 20th century, over the course of three decades, relations within the powerful coalition between the urban and Southern wings of the New Deal coalition grew increasingly tense, and suffered a mortal blow with the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a decision Lyndon Johnson famously averred would lose the South for Democrats for a generation. The full transition of the South to the GOP eventually took a generation, but it has now been completed.

From the perspective of racial egalitarianism, the civil rights advances of the mid-1960s mark a revolution, but as a set of political and historical events, this period is puzzling in two respects. First, it is not clear that dramatically disrupting the status quo on any policy position makes sense for a party if it means risking majority status in the legislature, even if the departing faction has different priorities than party leadership. Democrats had handled race gingerly for decades to avoid such a calamity, striking an especially ambiguous stance toward racial egalitarianism as late as the 1950s. Second, scholarship on race relations in northern cities—the homes of the representatives who supported and voted for a long series of racially liberal positions during the schism—generally paints a picture of tension or enmity. Northern cities may not have been the Jim Crow South, and opinion outside the South may looked less favorably upon the most egregious forms of American racism (Schickler 2009), but they were not anti-racist utopias, either. The arrival of African Americans and other groups to workplaces, neighborhoods, politics, and schools was often met with violence, or at least outrage or displeasure. For local citizens, African Americans often represented competition for jobs, disruption of established communities, or direct threats to hard-earned wealth. For elites, they represented another new group that had to be incorporated (and satisfied with services, city jobs, and the other costs of acquiescence to a local political order). Dedication to a specific racial code may have been less rigid and explicit in the North, but the general attitude of the white urban core of the New Deal coalition toward African Americans seems to have ranged from indifference to antipathy.

Much of the extant political science literature on the dissolution of the New Deal coalition

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33 Erie 1988
focuses on the pathologies of the conservative side: the adoption of racial conservatism by Republican national elites to lure the South into their camp, or the increasingly frequent “defection” of Southern Democrats from the major Democratic coalition as their regional racial order became more vulnerable in the face of advances by organized labor.\textsuperscript{34} To some extent, this approach takes for granted or treats as “natural” the ascendant liberal tradition in American politics. An alternative approach focuses less on the partisan consolidation of conservatism than on the development of liberalism, particularly in the area of civil rights, identifying this change as the one most demanding of explanation and most powerful as a causal factor in the breakup of the Democratic coalition.\textsuperscript{35}

The puzzle here is, why did representatives from these city communities sustain a liberal trajectory over the course of the 20th century, when much of our theory indicates that the entrance onto the local scene of a “threatening” outgroup might very well make electorates and representatives (who are at that moment overwhelmingly from the dominant in-group) less tolerant or inclusive and less prone to provide public goods or engage in redistribution-through-statism? Indeed, this is what happened in the South when African Americans finally forced their way into the electorate: all trace of liberalism on even the statism dimension vanished.

One potential answer lies in the character and institutions of the city itself. In the remainder of this paper, I argue that cities themselves played a major causal role in the development and sustenance of dual liberalism through the critical period of the 1940s-1960s, influencing the preferences, priorities, and behavior of urban governing coalitions and cities’ representatives in Congress. By “dual liberalism,” I intend to signify what we now call liberal positions on both of the major axes of 20th century national legislative political conflict identified by Poole and Rosenthal: statism and race. The core commitments of the urban bloc of the New Deal coalition became dually liberal. The Southern wing was at first fairly liberal on statism, but the opening of the second dimension led them toward dual conservatism and eventually the Republican Party.

\textsuperscript{34} eg, Carmines and Stimson (1989), Katznelson and Farhang (2005)
\textsuperscript{35} Feinstein and Schickler (2008)
4.1 What does a City do?

Cities may theoretically impact the preferences of voters and elites on these dimensions in a number of ways. First, the basic characteristics of a city—size, density, and heterogeneity—make statism a priority for governance and a basic fact of urban life. The specific kinds of market interventions that small-government conservatives are critical of (such as regulation of commerce and mitigation of externalities, redistributive social insurance, and infrastructure development) seem generally to have more usefulness in an urban environment than in a more sparsely populated area. Many facets of urban life would be unmanageable without such interventions, and the Progressive Era of the early 20th century was largely a project to find coordinated government solutions to some of these problems of rapidly expanding urban communities. Density and size increase anonymous interactions (which are more reliable if effectively regulated), increase the returns on public goods investment, and magnify the negative effects of all sorts of social breakdowns. Thus urban populations and elites are likely predisposed, for the sake of order if not out of pure self-interest, to favor the kind of economic liberalism that defines one pole of the “first” dimension of conflict in American political economy, and may not be likely to sacrifice it for subordinate preferences such as racial hierarchy. In less densely populated places, with less frequent and anonymous interactions, different preferences about statism and regulation are likely and reasonable—and preferences on the statism dimension may be subordinate to preferences on other dimensions because it is not as necessary for day-to-day social functioning.

Second, the historical experiences of American cities as sites of refreshed diversity color politics with an inclusive brush. This operates on a personal level, as urbanites must always interact with the often very different people they may encounter in all kinds of settings, even if they have no particular affection for them. More importantly for politics, however, is how political elites and their organizations deal with this refreshed diversity. Many classic texts of urban politics, from Dahl (1962) to Erie (1988) emphasize the recurrence and importance of incorporating new groups

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36 And the leaders of the New Deal order saw themselves as the inheritors and national carriers of the liberal Progressive themes (Plotke 1996).

37 Though the relationship is not necessary, statism is often associated with redistributive politics in the classic Left-Right conception of the modern capitalist state. Given the logic of federalism identified by Peterson (1981), such policies are perhaps best pursued at the national level, where capital flight and interjurisdictional competition is less of a risk. Thus explicitly studying statist “urban” politics in national politics seems a natural, if underdeveloped, step for students of this substance.
into local politics. Political entrepreneurs, long locked out of office by an effective incumbent organization (or institutional manipulation), mobilize newcomers (Italians in New Haven, or Poles in Chicago) or try to attract blocs to defect to their coalition (Jews in Boston, African Americans in Chicago).\(^{38}\) Or, alternatively, incumbent elites pre-empt challenge from a new group by buying off their leaders and incorporating them as junior partners in an alliance.\(^{39}\) In these accounts of urban mobilization and competition, race and ethnicity are almost always central to bloc formation and political identity. These diverse blocs often accumulate through elite negotiation and accommodation to form city-wide political organizations, which are overlaid on group identity as a dominant coalition asserts itself as central to the entire local polity, either through an insidious local “monopoly” on local power or as a more benign “regime” formed to maintain order or address particular problems.\(^{40}\)

Though the meaning of race in American history certainly stands apart from other kinds of heritable difference, and racial politics in nearly all cities have been contentious or violent at times, since World War I the power of black voting blocs in most large cities have grown to become an important or even central feature of local politics. In the leading cities of the New Deal, New York and Chicago, African American members of Congress such as William Dawson and Adam Clayton Powell joined with leaders of other groups to take a seat at the table early in the process of local power consolidation, coming to lead important political organizations within the black community. It is true that this seat at the city-wide table may often have been one of subordination to or contention with a white-dominated local regime, but even as junior members of a ruling coalition they opened the door to negotiations and compromise that may not have otherwise been possible. This seat at the table, and a working relationship with other local elites, affords access to the informal agenda of the local party, but it also contributes to a political culture of accommodation, compromise, and logrolling: the informal, repeated interactions between leaders of different factions within the same local party or local polity build trust, create a culture of intergroup respect (if not affection), and help contribute to the maintenance of a regime that can see a city through inevitable episodes of crisis.

\(^{38}\)See, for examples, Key (1955), Dahl (1962), and Cohen (1990). Andersen (1979) identifies mobilization of previously unengaged or “nonunimmunized” urbanites as these as the key political shift of the New Deal.

\(^{39}\)Gosnell (1935), Pinderhughes (1987), Keiser (1997)

\(^{40}\)Trounstine (2008), Stone (1989)
A local leader who ignores this consociational aspect of city politics and fails to incorporate large groups risks electoral peril (as entrepreneurs may build a coalition around the unmobilized group) and the general public order (because the size and density of urban populations makes extra-systemic expressions of discontent by marginalized groups—such as riots—more dangerous and costly than in less-built environments). This sort of cross-group elite bargaining seems less likely in rural areas, where institutional life is less dense, the threat of disorder less costly, and the plurality of interests is generally less diverse. If a central normative goal and challenge of democracy is the avoidance or elimination of domination, then cities, because of their heterogeneity and density and in spite of extant and perhaps unavoidable differentials of power, offer themselves up as a likely site for commensurability of opposing interests in the context of “deep pluralism.”41 While persons who live in cities have the possibility of exit open to them, and are free to leave for the suburbs or Arizona, city elites are not quite as lucky; they are more closely bound to their territory, and must find a way to deal regularly with the others who share that space. It is this predisposition, more powerful among elites than among the electorate, that underpins a “city delegation” in Congress.

If urban elites have a predisposition toward intergroup compromise, regardless of ideology, this would be manifest in Congressional behavior if cities’ representatives behaved as particularly cohesive blocs. And if the characteristics of urban life informed the content of politics in support of particular ideologies, in this case dual liberalism, we would expect to see these blocs assemble as a bloc of blocs within the legislature, leveraging cohesion and common interest in support of policy goals. This is indeed what we see in the national legislature since the beginning of the New Deal.

4.2 Diversity and Unity

Because we casually refer to Congresspersons as from “Chicago” or “New York,” we might not be surprised if a representative from the North Side of Chicago agreed very often with a representative from the South Side. Formally, co-membership in a local polity should be largely irrelevant to congressional representation, because Congressional representation is generally not by municipality, but by some subdivision or combination of local jurisdictions. Perhaps we should be a little

41Shapiro (2003), Katzenelson (2009)
surprised by city cohesion, because local political history has been marked by deep, enduring racial rivalry, and because the areas of the city are so different demographically. Far from the cohesive allies they appear to be on the national stage, Chicago’s North and South sides are not natural friends.

More broadly, we might expect representatives from within a city to be particularly unlike in their voting behavior and positions, especially on issues pertaining to race. Because of spatial-racial segregation in most of the nation’s cities, if a city is large enough to have several congressional districts, it is likely that these different jurisdictions will be very different from each other. Chicago, famous for its north-south division, is the archetypal example of this phenomenon, but the 20th century was a period of segregation in most large cities.42 Race and class differences are often stark and spatially organized, and this leads to representatives with very different constituencies. To illustrate, we can examine the city’s delegation on two politically salient dimensions of difference. By the 1930s, Chicago’s deeply segregated racial residential pattern was established. Figure [10] illustrates the racial demography of congressional representation. The area that made up most of the First congressional district, just south of downtown, along the lake, was over 80 percent black, while only a handful of other census tracts in the city had any African Americans at all. By 1964, the picture had changed, but not very much. Chicago’s city districts ranged from just twelve percent white in the historically black First District, to over 90 percent white in the four northside districts. The remaining four were between 70 and 80 percent white (at least one of these was probably largely Hispanic, but available census data do not include this information for 1964. Median family incomes ranged from 5200 to 7900, or from roughly the fortieth to 95 percentile nationally. If we were to draw nine districts at random, they would likely not have such a large range on these dimensions. By way of contrast, Chicago’s six suburban districts were almost stereotypically homogeneous: all were more than 90 percent white, and all were above the 80th percentile in median family income.

But, as shown below, cities’ delegations are remarkably cohesive, more cohesive than their suburbs’ delegations, even in the face of this cross-district diversity. The affinity may be spatial—a congressional application of Tobler’s First Law of Geography43, but it is not quite that simple, be-

42Massey and Denton (1994)

43“Everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related to each other.”
Figure 10: Chicago congressional districts and racial demography, 1930s. At left, Chicago’s congressional districts after the 1933 redistricting. At right, patterns of African American residence in the city (dark areas represent higher concentrations). Nearly all African Americans lived in the 1st district, which was over 80 percent black. All other districts were over 90 percent white. (Source: Martis 1982, US Historical GIS)

cause the North Side is also ‘near’ the north suburbs—and they share little, politically. To explain this tendency to cohere more tightly with members of their local polity than with others with whom they share another important identity, even on issues that cut across party and threaten valuable political resources, requires additional theoretical leverage. This is where city delegation theory is situated, predicting that representatives of cities—the typical mechanism of representative accountability notwithstanding—head to Congress not only as representatives of their district constituents or as members of a national party but as members of a local governing coalition or “regime.”  

This is the core of city delegation theory: that city representatives’ behavior cannot be fully explained by their partisan affiliation or their district constituents’ preferences; in addition to those well-known factors, they are cross-pressured by other members of their city delegation and by other local elites (such as a mayor or local boss, or other citywide institution or power structure) to support policies and positions that they otherwise might not, and that their constituents may indeed not support themselves; they are pressured to vote as representatives of their city, not just their district.

44Stone (1989)
Figure 11: **City Delegations, abstracted.** At left, “prepolitical” demography, segregated and un-organized. Moving in sequence to the right, intermediate institutions provide a framework for deliberation, compromise, or cohesion, or not. At right, interests are aggregated and represented. In spaces with intermediate institutions, interests will be smoother across incorporated districts.

The intuition of city delegations are depicted graphically in Figure 11. The top row represents an area, like a city, with strong extracameral intermediate institutions, to mediate difference and disagreement before representation. The bottom row represents an area that does not have such intermediate institutions. At left, an abstraction of demography of a given space is depicted. Persons are separated according to some identity or interest, which may be continuous and relatively fluid (like class) or lumpy and relatively immutable (like race). Moving from left to right in the figure, intermediate institutions foster compromise, deliberation, and recognition of common interest (or, more insidiously, domination by one group), providing a framework for cohesive representation, depicted at right. Intermediate institutions may be a local party organization that can incorporate different groups, or even something as simple as a municipal boundary, which may foster cohesion in pursuit of some good or goal awarded to the entire space from a higher level of government, benefiting all within the space. These institutions will, theoretically, smooth out representation across the space, creating homogeneous representation out of a heterogenous set of constituencies. Spaces without such intermediate institutions will have less smoothing in their representation; they will be less organized because there is no institution to organize them.

As a result, according to this theory, city delegations are likely to be remarkably cohesive in
Congress, often voting as a bloc despite their high levels of cross-district diversity. Having decided on their cohesive decision, city delegations can then leverage their unity to more effectively pursue their legislative goals. There is evidence that city representatives engage in such strategies in state legislatures, so employing a similar strategy to the national may not be unlikely; this is the basic function of the political party. These urban delegates are cohesive because they are often voting with a city—in addition to, or rather than, a district—interest or preference in mind.

5 City delegations: Some hypotheses and tests

This section includes preliminary tests of observable implications of the city delegation theory before delving more deeply into thicker description of how cities represent themselves. I first examine trends in cohesion scores on roll call votes, and then use multivariate regression on a particularly compelling set of votes to evaluate the independent relationship between intermediate institutions and congressional behavior. Because only large cities can be easily and reliably evaluated using cohesion scores, I focus on Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles in this section. First, city delegation theory predicts that city delegations will be more cohesive than national parties or other like delegations-of-interest, such as metropolitan delegations or suburban delegations:

\[ H_1 : C_{City} > C_{Party, Metro, Suburbs} \]  

Being more cohesive than a national party (given American-style weak-discipline parties) is something we would expect from many kinds of geographic subdivisions, because representatives from proximate districts have interests they may not share with others far away. Any particularized, localized benefits that may be allocated to one place or another may be a cause for spatial influence, even among co-partisans. Still, because city constituencies are often more ethnoracially and socioeconomically diverse across districts than the nation as a whole, this prediction is worth testing. Metropolitan areas are sites of potential economic common interest, as regional planners continually remind us, and as urbanists have urged for strategic success in state legislatures. However, few metropolitan areas have any sort of inclusive intermediate organization, so we would expect

\[^{45}\text{Burns et al (2009)}\]
\[^{46}\text{Orfield 1997, Weir et al 2005}\]
them to be less cohesive than cities, especially given the prevalence of the urban-rural partisan continuum. Finally, the city delegation theory predicts that cities will be more cohesive than the suburbs that surround them, even though they typically have more internal cross-district heterogeneity. Suburban districts, despite tending to be quite similar to each other on most observables, do not share any common intermediate institutional framework for cohesion (aside from national party, sometimes). If they tend to be less cohesive than city delegations, this would support the importance of intermediate institutions. While local politics are often characterized by high levels of animus or conflict, according to city delegation theory, at the level of the national legislature, the representatives of a given city are more likely to behave as a cohesive unit than virtually any other subset of representatives.

We can see that cities are generally cohesive units in Congress. Figure 12 details four large cities' cohesiveness over time. Though the bloc-ness of each city fluctuates somewhat, city averages are almost always higher than those of the Democratic Party as a whole, which is itself an organization designed to discipline legislators's behavior.

Figure 13 illustrates broad trends in city cohesiveness relative to the other blocs of legislators. The solid black line represents the cohesiveness of the city's legislators over time, which in all cases precedes the growth of the urban-rural cleavage during the New Deal. The dashed black line represents all Democrats—fairly but not very cohesive, and relatively steady over time. For the three northeastern cities, the party is generally less cohesive than the city. The Morse-code and dotted grey lines are for metropolitan areas and suburbs only, respectively. Cities are more cohesive than either, and suburbs seem to show the most change over time, becoming less cohesive generally as time has worn on, an observation to be expected in light of partisan shifts.

A second implication of city delegation theory is that delegation cohesion will be greater in partisan cities than in non-partisan cities. This could be true for two reasons: first, because the party is a primary site of negotiation and articulation of a city delegation accord, as well as a mechanism for disciplining representatives by controlling their access to party nomination from outside their district, representatives from that party are more likely to agree with their local political allies than a representative without local organizational structure would be. Second, partisan cities often develop locally-dominant organizations that may create more homogeneous party representation in Congress to begin with, by mobilizing voters to keep these representatives in office. This was
one of the original goals of machine-style organizations.\footnote{Bridges (1984). Though, importantly, non-partisan cities have also developed dominant city-wide organizations at times (Trounstine 2008). If partisan cities are more likely to be represented by members of a single party in Congress, this is evidence of the vertically integrative power of city-wide partisan institutions.} Thus we would expect an order of cohesion: very strong parties (machines) more cohesive than weaker parties, more cohesive in turn than non-partisan. Leaving the precise mechanism aside for later investigation, the city delegation theory predicts that local partisan institutions, will be tend to be associated with more cohesive congressional delegations:

$$H_2 : C_{HiPartisanCity} > C_{LoPartisanCity} > C_{NonpartisanCity}$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

Ie, that the average Rice cohesion score $C$ for the delegation from partisan city $i$ will be greater than the score for non-partisan city $j$. The left-hand panel in Figure 14 provides support for this hypothesis in the broadest strokes. The four lines in the figure represent the smoothed annual

Figure 12: **Mean city delegation cohesion scores, all roll calls, 45th-100th Congresses.** Solid lines indicate average city delegation cohesion scores for a given congress, dashed lines are the average cohesion score for the Democratic Party for that year. City delegations are typically, though not always, more cohesive than congressional parties. They are almost never deeply divided. *Source: USR data, Voteview*
Cohesion Among Blocs of Common Interest

Figure 13: **City delegation cohesion scores, 45th-100th Congresses.** Lines indicate smoothed average delegation cohesion scores for a given delegation in a given congress. Solid black for the city, grey Morse-dashed for metropolitan area, grey dots for suburban delegation only, black Morse-dashed for Democratic party. City delegations are typically more cohesive than national parties or other blocs of common spatial interest, especially when they are from cities with local partisan institutions. *Source: Calculated from USR data, Voteview*
average cohesion scores for representatives from Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, and Los Angeles, respectively. Chicago and Philadelphia are strong partisan cities, New York is more weakly partisan, and Los Angeles has non-partisan local institutions. The figure roughly corresponds to $H_2$ above; Philadelphia and Chicago tend to be the most cohesive, Los Angeles the least. Note that Chicago, which had internal partisan competition before the establishment of the citywide machine in the 1930s, became more cohesive during the New Deal, and that Los Angeles has become much more “like” a partisan city late in the century, as the urban-rural divide matured.

Finally, given the premise that the New Deal alliance was rent by conflict over African American Civil Rights, the core of city delegation theory (and its power in explaining an important facet of the midcentury decision by northern Democrats to end their long association with the South), holds that intracity alliances and bargaining were essential to building a transformative racial force in national politics. At the beginning of the New Deal, there was one black member of

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Footnote: The extremely high cohesiveness of Los Angeles at the beginning of the series may be an exaggeration due to its small number of representatives at that time. Cohesion scores are biased toward the extremes when the number of voters is very small. A similar effect may be pulling Philadelphia up slightly as well, especially late in the time series.
the House, Oscar DePriest of Chicago. In the 90th Congress, on the eve of the Civil Rights Act, his eventual successor William Dawson had been joined by three more African American members in the chamber (Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., was infamously barred from the House that term). Clearly these four could not achieve much on their own. Fortunately for them, they had staunch allies in their city delegations—especially from Chicago, where the white machine was not otherwise known for its racial liberalism. If the city delegation theory is correct, city delegates from places with black members of congress will be more likely to side with their local copartisans than with national allies when forced to choose, and they will be more likely than otherwise-similar representatives to side with African Americans on civil rights. I test this last hypothesis first by comparing the likeness scores between white Chicago representatives (regardless of party; though almost all are Democrats) and black representatives (first there is only one, later more) with likeness between white Chicago representatives and the entire Democratic Party on roll call votes about African American Civil Rights, as coded in the American Institutions Project substantive coding dataset. From the right-hand panel in Figure 14, we can see that Chicago’s white representatives, who are the products of a machine culture characterized by exclusion and subordination, and whose all-white constituencies were hardly post-racial in their outlook, voted with their local allies nearly unanimously throughout the New Deal. They voted much less like the rest of their national party, which was of course deeply divided over race, and they were more like their black South Side allies than like their fellow white Illinois co-racials (though more like the Illinoisans than Southerners).

Congressional behavior is a complex phenomenon, subject to many competing and complementing influences, so the final piece of this section seeks to disentangle the effects of party, section, and constituency to see whether local institutions have an independent effect on representatives’ choices. Using a logistic regression model, I test the influence of local party institutions and urbanity on roll call votes, including measures of alternative possible explanans including party, region, legislator race, constituency composition.

In each of the models below, the dependent variable is agreement with the black caucus on a civil rights roll call in the congresses leading up to the ultimate schism of the mid-1960s

49For more information on the AIP dataset and its substantive codings of congressional roll call voting, see Katznelson and Lapinski (2006). I calculate Rice likeness scores by subtracting the differences in the proportion of yea votes cast by two voting blocs from 1 (Rice 1925, 1928). Likeness scores are imperfect measures for identifying causality, but are useful for identifying patterns in voting behavior which can be more closely evaluated using other qualitative and quantitative techniques.
(ie, all congresses before the 91st). In an effort to disentangle the effects of urbanity, region, and party, which are weakly but significantly correlated themselves, a series of indicator variables are included. First, an eight-category measure of urbanity based on the USR scores above, ranging from 0 (rural) to 7 (core urban). If there is a general relationship between racial liberalism and urbanity, the coefficient on this variable should be positive. Second, I include a measure of local party strength, Mayhew’s (1986) traditional party organization scores (TPO). Mayhew’s scores range from 1-5 and are measured at the state level, but the preponderance of the evidence justifying them is gathered from cities. Local parties are a possible intermediate institution which may introduce cohesion within a city delegation and encourage racial liberalism in the face of Southern opposition and the threat of national coalition dissolution. Thus the coefficient on TPO is expected to be positive as well if local institutions influence congressional behavior. Third, I include an indicator for whether the representative was a white representative from a city with a black representative. Third, I include an indicator for whether a white representative had a black member of congress within his or her city delegation (BlackCity). For instance, all white Chicago legislators have had a black city delegation ally since DePriest’s appointment to the 71st congress. If city delegations create leverage from within, there should be a relationship between being from a city—but not from a district—that elected an African American, and the coefficient on this indicator should be positive. Finally, I include a set of measures of alternative explanations for behavior: legislative party (Democrat), section (Non-south), the race of the legislator (BlackRep), and the racial composition of the district (%Black). I test the model on a variety of samples of civil rights roll calls: all votes, votes on which the two party medians were in opposition, votes in which the median black representative was opposed to the median Democrat, and the intersection of these last two. Because measures of district-level racial composition (from Lublin 1997) are currently available only back to the 87th Congress, I also test the data without the measure of local percent black on the wider range, which allows going back to prior congresses; completing this measure is an area for refining this research.\textsuperscript{50} In all models, there is a positive association between being a city legislator and supporting the black position on civil rights, and in most cases there is a substantively and

\textsuperscript{50}The models shown here on subsets of civil rights votes are mostly those without the measures of local racial composition, as for the subsets of votes there are too few available observations. Before then, in any case, residential segregation tended to restrict large black populations from moving into “white” districts in large numbers, though this was indeed changing by the mid-1960s.
statistically significant relationship between being an legislator from a city district that is part of a
delegation with a black representative.

Table 3 presents the parameter estimates from these several models. Each column repre-
sents a model run on a subset of civil rights roll calls before the 91st congress. Under each subset, a
particular logic of bloc-pressure obtains. Column 1 includes all civil rights votes. Column 2 in-
cludes only those on which the median black legislator disagreed with the median Democrat–on
these votes, there was deep intraparty racial conflict, so a choice between city and party had to
be made by urban Democrats. Column 3 includes partisan votes, where most Democrats disagree
with most Republicans. On these votes, pressure to side with party was strong. Column 4 is the
intersection of Columns 2 and 3: partisan votes with intrapartisan racial disagreement. On these
votes, the pressures from party and local allies would be strong and pulling in different directions.
Finally, column 5 is all roll calls for which there is a district-level measure of percent African Amer-
ican. For now, these are those from the 87th congress on. We can make four observations based on
this table: first, the observable implications of the city delegation theory are not disconfirmed by
these results. There is a robust association between racial liberalism and urbanity, even beyond the
interaction category UrbanDem. Second, there also seems to be a significant relationship between
racial liberalism and having a black MC in one’s city delegation, though the magnitude of this re-
lationship is sensitive to which other variables are in the model, so further testing of the strength
of this relationship is desirable. Third, the strength of a representative’s local party organization
seems to consistently boost the probability of voting for the racially liberal position by about 3-4
percent. This is not a giant effect, but it is fairly consistent across the subsets of votes, and is an
indication that extracameral party organizations matter inside the chamber.

It is important not to overstate the relationships in the table above. It is clear that the
biggest factors in predicting positions on these votes are still the well-known party and section.
While being from a city might make one about ten percent more likely to support the racially
liberal position, if that city was in the South we would still expect the sectional effect to wash
that urbanity boost away and then some.51 Thus the biggest caveat in interpreting the effects
above—statistically significant though they may be—is that for most actual legislators, sectional

51Though Southern districts often underrepresented urban constituencies before the principle of equal representation
was established in Baker v. Carr and subsequent rulings and redistrictings, and thus the meaning of Southern urban
representation is not quite the same as for Northern.
Table 3: Estimation results: logit regression of agreement with black caucus on explanatory variables on civil rights-related votes, pre-1965 congresses. Cell entries are model marginal effects estimates (with stars indicating significance at \( p < .05 \) using robust standard errors). Blank cells indicate that the variable perfectly predicted the outcome, and observations with 1 in that category were dropped from that analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Bl≠Dem</th>
<th>Dem≠GOP</th>
<th>Bl≠Dem &amp; Dem≠GOP</th>
<th>All</th>
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<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.10*</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlackRep</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlackCity</td>
<td>0.10*</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td>0.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>-0.14*</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>-0.26*</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-south</td>
<td>0.60*</td>
<td>0.57*</td>
<td>0.54*</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>21307</td>
<td>2851</td>
<td>6363</td>
<td>2141</td>
<td>9516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-(R^2)</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Discussion

This essay has described the macro-development of the urban-rural cleavage in the electorate and the national legislature over the past half century, and sketched a link between the development of that cleavage and the mid-century collapse of the Democratic Party coalition. To elaborate a puzzle about why this happened, two premises drawn from political history are salient—that race
broke the coalition apart, and that most white rank-and-file Democrats, even in the party’s urban
industrial strongholds outside the South, were not particularly liberal on racial issues. Given these
premises, the most important puzzle has to do not with Southern defection or with conservative
opportunism in driving a wedge through the Democratic alliance, but rather with the choice by
strategic actors in the urban wing of the Democratic alliance to side with their local partners (no-
tably African Americans) over their national partners (Southerners), and knowingly risk their large
congressional majorities over an issue that promised them little in terms of personal re-election.

Recent studies have engaged this question directly, arguing that non-southern state Demo-
cratic parties were predisposed to racial liberalism well before the loud crack in the national party
in the 1960s (Schickler and Feinstein 2008). This paper goes a step further, arguing that the
location of the push for racial liberalism was in cities, and these local cross-race alliances were
transferred vertically to the national legislature from local political arrangements, as local city del-
egations behaved as distinctly cohesive blocs in the national legislature, and representatives from
city delegations with black members of Congress were more likely to take racially liberal positions
than those from otherwise similar constituencies. These urban blocs, somewhat less cohesive and
distributed more evenly across the two parties before the New Deal, have coalesced over a half
century to anchor the contemporary Democratic Party: a political entity that more reliably supports
“dually liberal” positions on the major (and minor) cultural and economic conflicts of the day.

The empirical findings here are more suggestive than conclusive. The use of a regression
framework and gross aggregations can isolate relationships and identify trends, but they cannot
easily track causal processes. Fortunately, there is a large historical record to be examined in the
next section. Still, all of the data here support the central themes of the city delegation theory
and its intersection with national politics: cohesive local delegations despite diverse constituencies,
and support for local partisans rather than local co-racials when forced to choose. Further close
examinations of particular city delegations, to examine the relationship between national repre-
sentatives and the local polity and thus a possible mechanism for the creation, maintenance, and
disciplining of city delegations. Elevating local-style machine politics to the national legislature is
not straightforward. The other issue areas of dual liberalism—statism, redistribution, and cultural
issues beyond African American civil rights—remain to be explored as well.

The city delegation theory cannot explain the entirety of the strategic calculation urban
Democratic leaders made when shifting to racial liberalism, though it can add specificity to claims in that direction made by others (Schickler and Feinstein 2008). What it can partially explain is why some urban representatives would take a risk (a vastly weakened coalition) to support a policy from which they themselves had seemingly little to gain. In short, they were good local partisans, the products of local political cultures which in the end prioritized the concerns of local partners (African Americans) over their grudging national coalition partners (Southerners). Ultimately, the link between this study’s two main claims—the elaboration of the urban-rural cleavage and the city delegation theory—is the articulation of an urban liberalism during the New Deal that was resilient enough (thanks in part to city delegations) to survive the governance problems associated with increasing diversity, forge alliances with other groups, create jurisdictions and constituencies supportive of public goods and racial equality, and provide an ideological and political vision that prompted the collapse of the second dimension of political conflict into the first.

This liberal ideology, viewed as a distinctively urban vision, may indeed help explain why Democratic leaders would consciously risk their huge majority by alienating their Southern wing, but not simply because they believed in the power or rightness of racial equality. Another possibility is that they saw themselves as acting strategically to reinforce and grow the urban coalition that had been the bright core of the New Deal alignment all along.\textsuperscript{52} Though local policymakers have been increasingly constrained in their menu of policy choices, and the power of urban political monopolies has waned, this liberal, progressive vision has survived and consolidated as a bloc in the national legislature.\textsuperscript{53}

A deeper understanding of the role these intermediate institutions have played, and how they interacted with the defining elements of their cities to produce sustained liberal representation—even when many of their constituents may have been conservative or indifferent on racial issues—may help us gain a deeper understanding of our contemporary politics and its possible future paths.

\textsuperscript{52}The decision to finally fully support civil rights and voting rights, destroying formal white supremacy in the South, roughly coincided with three developments that might encourage an urban leader: the highest urban population the nation had seen (though many of these cities would soon see precipitous declines); the reform of immigration laws, which would see a massive increase in arrivals, potentially bringing new voters into an urban party committed to respect for civil rights and inclusion; and the Supreme Court’s decisions, such as \textit{Baker v. Carr}, 1962 mandating parity of representation, a decision that would boost urban representation in Congress. Each of these developments worked out imperfectly. National and global political economy did not cooperate, either.

\textsuperscript{53}It is these constraints, such as the logic of federalism and interjurisdictional competition identified by Peterson (1981) that make the dual liberalism of the urban order so powerful and what pushes the liberal preferences for redistribution and public action to the national level, rather than seek to create “model cities” according to this vision at home.
in a number of ways. First, there has been resurgent scholarly appreciation for the nuanced role of context in the formation of political views. Place-character is obviously an elementary piece of context: the concrete setting for our daily lives, and the lens through which we view and process more abstract political information. If partisans not only live apart (as in sectional cleavages) but also live in completely different kinds of places, and have completely different kinds of experiences with diversity and the activities of government, incommensurable preferences or visions of the good life may not be far behind. The residential context also intersects with a discursive context, in which local elites may transmit signals or norms of respect and common interest (or of enmity and rivalry) across group lines, which may be picked up by local publics. This transmission of norms is in itself a significant element of political culture, and may help us understand where the pundit’s signifiers of “Red” and “Blue” America originate, and why certain signals and symbols resonate well in some areas but not in others.

Second, the development of the dually liberal urban bloc intersects with another recurring finding about the relationship between governance and diversity. Political economists have argued and shown that diverse places in the United States (and diverse nations in a comparative context) tend to provide fewer public goods than homogeneous places. This observation is attributed to a theory of cross-group distrust or divergent preferences: people may not want to provide goods that are likely to be consumed, even in part, by members of other groups—or, less selfishly, groups simply cannot agree on which public goods the state should provide, so they agree not to provide any. At the local level, this may be true, but in the national legislature the representatives of cities—who often have among the most diverse constituencies—are now and for a long time have been the most ardent exponents of spending for major public goods and for government activism of all sorts. This is an apparently paradoxical observation: diversity affects the preferences of local median voters in one way, but congressional medians in the opposite. Given the constraints present on spending faced by local governments (interjurisdictional competition, legal prohibition or caps on spending and revenue, balanced budget requirements, and the disciplining power of bond-rating agencies) this finding that diversity does not apparently affect all preferences uniformly is a hope-


\[55\] Indeed, to the extent that activist government is the product of the Progressive movement as it informed the New Deal, this urban political order is the inheritor of this kind of pragmatic liberalism in modern American politics. (Plotke 1996)
ful one, given the inevitability of continuing demographic change. The present craze for austerity and welfare retrenchment aside, it may not be impossible to generate public goods and equality-supporting policies even with a diverse electorate.

Third, an investigation of the effects of local politics in national institutions may help us understand how local ideas and visions are transmitted to broader contexts. Scholars of progressive urban politics have sought to see past or around the alleged limits of the possible imposed by interjurisdictional competition or hegemonic neoliberal disciplining institutions. Escalating the search for the effects of urban politics to the national legislature, where flexibility and the possibility for statism and redistributive politics are ostensibly greater, is a natural place to look, but an underexplored area of scholarship. In identifying the roots of what we now call liberalism in the urban politics of New Deal city delegations—in the home districts where WNYC’s millions of listeners aspired to “live in peace and enjoy the benefits of democracy”—this study hopes to contribute to our understanding of issue development, ideological transformation, and the role of liminal bridging institutions such as parties across levels of government in prompting those processes. It also promises to muddy the water of our Manichean conceptions of racial orders, which often pit those who wish to transform society’s racial norms against those bent on sustaining white supremacy.

Urban Democrats were somewhere in between, or a hybrid of both: they were the core of support for the expansion of civil and political equality, and made sacrifices to do it, but they also relied upon constituencies and organizations that were not liberal on race at home. If Northerners and Southerners were strange bedfellows, so too were Northsiders and Southsiders.

Finally, contemporary politics are shared by four major demographic trends: increasing inequality; immigration and increasing (and increasingly complex) diversity; the continued population shift to the Sunbelt, out of snowier climes; and the continued growth of the suburbs. These trends each correspond to major factors in political consciousness—income, race, region, and urbanity. The last of these has received too little attention. The interplay of all four will no doubt shape the contours of partisan alignments in the generations to come.

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56 Peterson (1980), Hackworth (2007)
7 Methodological Appendix: USR scoring and urban district types

As described briefly above, several USR scores are assigned to each congressional district a description based on the place-types they contain. These USR scores are akin to the urbanity scores used by Mayhew (1966) and Wolman and Marckini (1998), but are comparable across a wider stretch of time because they do not start with district-level Census data. Mayhew (1966), in his pioneering study of cross-cutting pressures on legislators from different kinds of places, used this approach, combined with an accounting of percentage in the district who rented their homes. Wolman and Marckini (1998) adopt a similar approach, identifying a district's character with its largest population group: urban, suburban in-metro, out of metro, or a mixture. For the present study, USR scores begin with Lieberman's (2009) list of cities with more than .1 percent of the national population, and each district is assigned a series of scores based on its position in time and space relative to that list. Replicating Wolman and Marckini's method for the 110th Congress yields a correlation between the two measures of roughly .82, with the vast majority of discrepancies due to the inclusion in the census data of small cities.

Of course, this approach has its potential pitfalls as well. It is more subjective at the margins and might be potentially distorted by a coder's differential knowledge about different places or their subjective interpretations of the maps. Second, this definition of “city” is essentially void of content beyond a population threshold. It thus allows the kinds of communities that count as cities to evolve over time, but also excludes some places that may be considered more “urban” by conventional understandings of the term than those in the set. For instance, neither South Bend nor Gary, IN are included in the set at any point; neither was big enough to merit inclusion, though both seem to have self-conceptions as cities, and were important industrial centers for much of the 20th century. Santa Ana, CA, and Mesa, AZ, are included, however, even though they are basically just large suburbs of sprawling late-20th century cities. This is an acknowledged conceptual hazard of the method of classification, and analyses bear it in mind.

Most simply, a district is scored with a USR numerical indicator if a substantial part of the

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58 For instance, if a coder knew more about developmental patterns in particular cities than in others, he or she might be able to more precisely gauge the balance between urban and suburban character in those places. These errors can be minimized with attention to history and cartography, and subjective interpretations are mitigated to a great extent by the use of textual legal descriptions of districts in addition to maps.

59 Indeed, some would probably argue that Gary is more of an “urban” community than Phoenix, even though the latter includes almost 20 times as many members.
district lies within the borders of a city from the list, or if a substantial part of the city lies within
the boundaries of the district. If the city is on the list for that Congress, it is given a 1, marking it
as a current big-city district. If it is no longer on the list, but used to be (this is mostly the case for
smaller industrial cities in the northeast,) it is given a different indicator marking it as a former
big-city district. All other districts receive a zero in this score.

A more complex qualitative indicator (USRalpha) is scored by the researcher based on the
traditional tripartite distinction between central cities (Urban), their satellite communities (Subur-
ban), and spaces not within metropolitan areas (Rural). If a district is wholly within or coterminus
with a big city, it is given a score of “U.” If it is wholly within the suburbs of a city from the list, it
is given an “S,” and if it is wholly outside of the local sphere of a city from the list, it is given an
“R.” Many (perhaps most) districts contain a mix of urban forms, and these are given combination
scores. For instance, a district that contained a city from the list, its suburbs, and a big part of
the surrounding countryside would receive a “U/S/R.” 60 If a district is predominantly suburban,
but has a small sliver of the city in it, it is marked “S/U,” and so forth. If a state has only one
district, this is marked as “at-large,” and if the state contains a city from the list (usually it does
not, if it only has one representative in Congress, though Delaware is an exception at moments), it
is marked “AL-U.” Otherwise, it is “AL-R.” These scores are then combined into broader categories
groups to make some of the figures above, or used independently.

The driving factor behind these two USR indicators is the idea that there is reason to believe
that the character of politics in that district are related to the politics of the big city on the list. In
almost all cases, it is fairly easy to judge whether the district should get a 1 or a 0; the subtler
distinctions between “U/S” and “S/U” are sometimes harder to make without being arbitrary. In
these cases, analyses are run with different values of measures or with the districts dropped from
the analysis in order to be sure marginal decisions are not driving analytic observations and judg-
ments.

Finally, each district that receives a numeric USRnum indicator is given a what “type” of
urban district it is. Even within the set of urban districts, there is variation in the proportion of of
the district within the central city, and the urbanity cleavage can be seen here as well. Every ten

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60 This is true for many of the smaller cities on the list, such as Wichita, and for many Southern and Western cities,
such as Memphis, where reapportionment was long-delayed even as the city grew in the 20th century.
years, we are reminded that re-drawing the boundaries of Congressional districts is an important strategic game played by politicians at the local and state level; much of the action in this game seems to lie near the edge of the city. In developing USR scores for each district, a few types of city districts recur, and the actual geographic form of a district may have dramatic implications for its partisan status.

Four basic ideal types of urban districts are often drawn. Though particular districts may not fall clearly or perfectly into one of these categories, for the most part the judgments of type are fairly straightforward. Adding this qualitative layer beyond the simple urban-suburban-rural trichotomy adds nuance to our understanding of why representatives behave the way they do. Once a district has been identified as “urban” or “mixed urban,” I assign it a type indicator, from 1 to 4. These types are illustrated in Figure X, and described in brief here.

- **Type 1: Core.** Core districts are those districts that are nested within a city, or coterminus with the city’s boundaries. Most core districts are one among several within a large city—New York’s districts, which almost all run along city boundaries and are nested within the city, are the paradigmatic examples.

- **Type 2: Metropolitan.** These districts are mixed Urban and Suburban (and sometimes rural as well), encompassing all of the central city and at least a substantial portion of the suburban and/or rural hinterland. Many small cities, and many malapportioned districts before *Baker v. Carr* fall into this category.

- **Type 3: Sliced.** These districts combine urban residents with suburban and/or rural residents, typically in a way that makes the city look like a pie that has been sliced up. If a city is large enough to merit more than one district, this is often a main alternative to creating districts that are more internally homogeneous with respect to urbanity. Many districts that resulted from the forced redistricting following *Baker* look like this, as do many of the districts that result from court enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

- **Type 4: Spillover.** These “remainder” districts combine urbanites with residents outside the central city, most often because there is some area of the city left over, or geographically anomalous, and cannot be fit into a more urban district. There are not many spillover districts,
and for a district to qualify as type 4, it must be from a city that has at least one Core district, to illustrate that the spillover is not just one of many pie slices.
Figure 15: Illustrations of ideal urban district-types.