The Cities on the Hill: 
Urban Institutions in National Politics

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“The only genuine difference between a southern white and a Chicago white was in their accent.”

-Mike Royko, *Boss* [1]

“Local experience has taught them that in unity there is power.”

Leo Snowiss,
“Congressional Recruitment and Representation” [2]

1 Overview: Party, Race, and City Delegations

In 1963, as racial tumult beset cities across the nation, the all-white electorates of Mississippi and Chicago’s North Side each sent five white representatives from the Democratic Party to Capitol Hill. Each of these places exemplified an archetypal element of the main wings of the always-tenuous New Deal Democratic coalition—urban machines and the Solid South—and both places had profited from a close 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. The story of the strongest bastion of Jim Crow is well-known; Medgar Evers had been assassinated earlier that year in Mississippi. In Chicago, hierarchy was more subtle, and less obviously violent, but still real, a social fact reflected pithily by Mike Royko in the quote above[3]. This moment, at the cusp of the landmark Civil Rights legislation to come, was the last time when Mississippi and the North Side were stable white constituencies within the Democratic fold. Each experienced extreme local upheaval as part of a broader national revolution in race relations, but set off on different paths to our contemporary political alignment. Judicial decisions, Voting Rights legislation, and demography transformed each place’s white hegemony into a mere majority. The divergent ways that racial politics played out in these

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[1] (Royko 1971), p. 139  
two kinds of places, and were transmitted to national partisan politics, set the stage for today’s political confrontation between Mississippi’s “Red” America and Chicago’s “Blue.”

Why did these places take such different paths? And why weren’t the conflictual racial divisions of large cities like Chicago reflected in the national politics of civil rights? This study answers these crucial questions by linking the distinctive conditions of city life, the institutions developed locally to govern in such conditions, and the effects of these local institutions on representation in national politics. The resulting analysis puts local institutions at the center of an account of national political change, and draws upon the insight summarized by Leo Snowiss above in his study of Chicago’s congressional delegation. Integrating key theoretical insights from the study of urban politics, the politics of race and ethnicity, American political history, and the study of national politics, this book leverages a range of original data sources and analytical approaches (including archival analyses, innovative use of Geographic Information Systems, and statistical analyses of a new dataset measuring the place character of all congressional districts in American history) to propose the city delegation theory, an account of the unexpectedly cohesive manner in which cities represent themselves at higher levels, which has led to the development of liberalism and the ever-growing urban-rural divide in American national politics.

Cities like Chicago, where where the hegemonic local Democratic organization practiced a politics “with a sharp racial edge,” were the sites of serious, multidimensional conflicts. But these cities were simultaneously remarkably unified in national politics, forming cohesive city delegations bound together by institutions of horizontal integration (IHIs) that bind some constituencies together, and whose members therefore attend to more than their districts’ parochial concerns and represent a city interest that reflects the governance demands of urbanicity (the social, economic, and political challenges and opportunities of large, densely populated, heterogeneous polities). Paradoxically, the same politically integrative institutions that have been criticized as racially divisive in city politics—machines

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(Sugrue 1996)
such as the powerful Cook County Democratic Party are a subset of the broader category of IHIs—were associated with greater cohesion and more consistent racial liberalism in national representation. These city delegations, in turn, have coalesced to form an ever-growing urban political order to articulate and defend the policy positions that have become the heart of contemporary liberalism. Thus, this account locates the roots of today’s politics not in the upheavals of (and reaction to) the 1960s, as the tale is often told, but much earlier, when cities brought their city agenda to the national level became active allies in national affairs. The seeds of Red and Blue America were sown earlier, right in the soil of the 1930s New Deal.

1.1 Local institutions and national realignment

The gradual erosion of the national Democratic Party coalition between conservative Southerners and liberal urbanites, the strangest of bedfellows, is the most important development in American politics in the second half of the 20th century. Typical accounts of this schism focus on the irreconcilable tension between the pathologies of Southern white supremacy and the virtues of the Civil Rights Movement (and its big-city northern liberal allies), and most focus on the critical moments of the 1960s. Such accounts, however, sit uneasily with the contemporaneous local histories of these cities themselves, marked as they were by divisive racial politics among citizens and leadership. The sources of strongest support for civil rights in national politics were simultaneously the site of volatile racial conflict, and the most powerful political forces in the North were not egalitarian saints. Why were conflicts over race divisive enough to break apart the national Democratic coalition, and to create the “urban crisis” of the 1960s, but not to manifest in how

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5There is an understandably large and lively ongoing literature on this crucial topic. Major canonical and current works include (Carmines & Stimson 1989), (Edsall & D. 1991), and (Frymer 1999). A major revisionist strain, to which this study contributes, identifies the intraparty strife as manifest well before the 1960s. See (Katznelson 2013), (Schicker N.d.).
cities represented themselves in national politics?

We can better understand this tension by examining the implications of local institutions of horizontal integration, which are distinctive to large cities because only large cities combine multiple congressional districts within a common local polity. Key among these local IHIs are inclusive local political borders and traditional party organizations. These IHIs were powerful integrative forces during the urban interlude, a period from the 1930s through the 1960s, in which cities were particularly salient in American politics and culture, and ascendant within the Democratic Party. By bringing constituents and representatives from deeply different perspectives together into one local polity faced with urgent governance requirements, and one local political organization faced with citywide electoral imperatives, these institutions fostered unity in city representation in national politics despite deep divisions at home. These common fora for political exchange led to compromises and positions compatible with cities' interests in racial peace and the mutual (if imperfect) recognition of minority groups as legitimate stakeholders in American society. Significantly for historic shifts in partisan politics, these integrative institutions were particularly important for generating support for civil rights policies in Congress, linking the representatives of constituencies that were not natural allies on such issues. While issues of race were divisive among the urban masses, and fatal to the cross-sectional Democratic coalition, city delegations remained cohesively liberal.

This continued liberal representation of the city, despite the divisive potential of race, was partly attributable to the fact that cities have always been different from other kinds of places (and generated distinctive political ideas), but also to the fact that representatives from city delegations were from the same city: the local institutions of a common political community and strong local party organization meant that a city's representatives form a common city delegation, not just a collection of unconnected representatives. The original analyses in this book demonstrate that members of city delegations are more likely to agree with each other on all issues, especially those most relevant to the city, despite the
fact that city districts are very different from each other. For Chicago’s (and other similar cities’) delegation in national politics, race was explosive in the streets, and the main signal coming from their constituents on these issues was often deeply antagonistic to notions of racial advance. Among the cities’ representatives on Capitol Hill, however, the institutions designed to keep diverse coalitions together weathered the storm, and they never wavered from a position of civil rights liberalism on national issues. Members of city delegations with a significant African American component were uniformly and consistently supportive of civil rights liberalism, despite recurrent, often violent, resistance to policies such as workplace or housing integration in their cities and districts and despite the fact that few had significant numbers of nonwhite constituents in their districts during this time.

These city delegations, in turn, coalesced to form an ever-growing urban “bloc of blocs” to articulate and defend the policy positions demanded by the conditions of urbanicity in a federal system. This analysis puts cities and their distinctive political dynamics, rather than conservative reaction, at the heart of the political changes of the 20th century—and by extension at the heart of the contemporary ideological and partisan landscape of The historically felicitous intersection of local party, local polity, and local demography provided a substrate in which support for civil rights could develop over the course of the urban interlude, simultaneously dislodging white supremacy as an assumed component of national ideology and providing a basis for the multidimensional ideology, progressive liberalism, that defines one pole of the contemporary partisan landscape of “Red” and “Blue” America, in which multiple dimensions of potential political conflict continue to overlap into a single powerful cleavage that can be largely understood through the political implications of cities as social, economic, and political communities.

More than ever before, national politics is fought along a national divide between cities and outlying areas, and the heart of this book’s analysis focuses on the distinctive conditions of the urban political life and the role cities play in national politics. This urbanicity divide has not always been present in national partisan politics, but rather began with
the development of an urban political order that changed the Democratic party during the New Deal era. These cities, despite being the site of explosive conflicts at home, and in competition with each other for economic development, became remarkably cohesive in the way they represent themselves in national politics. These positions taken in defense of “city” interest have come to coincide with and define liberalism.

Faced with demands to change and compromise, the reaction by white Mississippianes and their representatives was partisan exit. What had been a one-party Democratic state became a Republican stronghold, and over the next five decades, Mississippi would become one of safest “Red” states in America. Like Mississippi, Chicago also saw decades of local racial strife, with recurrent, often violent, conflict between groups of citizens and deep contention among elites. But unlike Mississippi, the city continued to represent itself as staunchly Democratic, and liberal, in national politics. Chicago’s North Side representatives in Congress—despite representing all-white constituencies populated by Rokyo’s Chicagoans, who rioted against neighborhood integration and later threw rocks at Martin Luther King, Jr.—found power in unity, and were consistent supporters of civil rights policies throughout the 20th century, even as divisive racial conflict powerfully reshaped their city, the Democratic Party, and the structure of national politics in the U.S.

2 Significance and Scholarly Contribution

Situated at the crossroads of American political development, urban politics, and the politics of race and ethnicity, this book makes several significant original contributions to our understanding of American politics—in substantive area of investigation, approach to the study of urban politics, original data collection and analysis, and theory-building in the study of representative institutions. To make these contributions, it takes the important innovative step of explicitly bridging the subfields of urban politics and American Politi-
More, as part of a new generational strain of research in American political development that fully integrates multiple streams of evidence and diverse analytic techniques, this book combines both traditional archival-interpretive approaches as well as sophisticated statistical-inferential techniques to illustrate both concrete instances and the broad generalizability of its main theoretical claims. The result is a text, rich in original findings, that is both a rigorous investigation into the place of cities in national politics and an important contribution to a range of central, ongoing scholarly concerns that span intellectual disciplines—about the roots of the midcentury partisan realignment, about the development of ideological polarization in American politics, about race in American politics, and about the challenges of democratic governance in diverse societies.

A primary contribution of the book is its connection of theories and histories of urban politics to the broad arc of American political development. Re-centering a conversation on how cities serve as a political force in driving American politics forward and structuring the major political cleavages of our age helps us see and explain new patterns. My approach takes two innovative steps to make this contribution: theorizing how the distinctive conditions of city politics (“urbanicity” and federalism) generate support for certain policies and strategies among local elites that are best pursued at higher levels of government, and then employing new data and quantitative techniques to leverage variation among cities to identify and estimate the role of local institutions—not just mass preferences or national party coalitions, as typically described—in articulating and cohesively supporting these distinctive city positions in national politics.

First, analysts of urban politics have (unsurprisingly) focused on the internal dynamics of local polities, generating a field rich with insight. However, the powerful logic of federalism predicts that many policies that usefully ameliorate the shortcomings of capitalism—including regulation of business, the provision of public goods, and redis-

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[6] See (Dilworth 2009) for essays that urge this connection.
tributive policies—may be unsustainable and ineffective if carried out unilaterally at the local level, even though they are likely to be relatively popular and/or efficient in cities.\footnote{Peterson 1981} According to this logic, these distinctively urban policies are best enacted at higher levels of government, such as the state or nation, especially as the movement of people, production, and capital across great expanses of space, and across borders, becomes easier. Thus it is theoretically useful to turn our attention to how cities represent themselves at higher levels, where we may be able to spot distinctive patterns in their representation as they strategically pursue policies useful for local governance. This simple shift of gaze, from the local to the supralocal, has been intermittently employed by urbanists, but this is the most comprehensive and self-conscious such study to date.\footnote{For past studies of city involvement, see (Mayhew 1966), (Gelfand 1975), (Mayhew 1986) (Wolman & Marnicki 2005). For theoretically relevant studies of city delegation strategic behavior in state legislatures, see (Weir & Wolman 2005) and (Burns, Evans, Gamm & McConnaughy 2009).}

Focusing on dynamics in Congress, where cities represent themselves and contend with countervailing forces in national politics, this study employs innovative approaches and sources of evidence to analyze the development and strength of this urban political order, leading to important insights. In examining city politics on Capitol Hill over the long durée of American history, several patterns emerge: the variable relative strength of central cities in the legislature; the formation of a newly distinctive city bloc at the beginning of the New Deal; the appearance on the national policy agenda of legislation and programs meant to alleviate the problems of city life; and the increasing partisan divide—first at the level of congressional representation, and much later in the public at large—along an urbanicity continuum, which occurred in phases since the 1930s.

The most important theoretical innovation introduced and tested in the book is the city delegation theory, which contributes to contemporary theories of legislative politics. Accounts of congressional voting have typically focused on the formal rules of the institution and characteristics of a member’s district constituency as primary predictors of legislative behavior, because the formal rules of congressional elections and intracameral
activity predict that these factors will be important. The city delegation theory complicates this story by identifying a special class of legislators: those that represent large cities. Their districts are subsumed within larger local political communities, so they are less atomistic in their behavior; they are affected by the rules, practices, and organizations of their home city, which are external to both their particular district and to the halls of Congress. The local institutions developed to foster orderly local governance also foster cohesion among the representatives of the varied constituencies of the city. I find that city delegation cohesion is fostered by local institutions of horizontal integration—such as traditional parties and large municipalities themselves—that are developed locally to provide political order.

To study the role of cities in American politics over time, it is necessary to have good data. To date, much of this data was problematically incomplete, especially for the crucial urban interlude period. In particular, we lacked reliable measures of congressional districts’ place character (ie, City, rural, suburban), as well as good information about city districts’ demography (which is often seen as a key driver of political pressure and preferences). Thus the project introduces original datasets to remedy these previous shortcomings, developed with painstaking care and original techniques for small-area demographic estimation using GIS software. These new measures allow for entirely new analyses, and their introduction through this book will both highlight their usefulness and draw other scholars into a field that was very difficult to work in previously.

Situated within a broader research agenda that investigates the political and coalitional dynamics of the diverse, cacophonous liberal pole of American politics by focusing on the distinctive nature of city politics, the theories and findings presented in the book have important implications for several major scholarly debates. First, numerous findings across the social sciences argue that diversity presents challenges that undermine the possibilities for “liberal” policies. According to proponents of this perspective, diversity tends...
to undermine intergroup comity, and by extension the potential for political action by diverse coalitions and policies that might support a mutual understanding between such groups, who may see themselves as rivals for goods rather than potential allies. The implications of these findings may make one pessimistic about the possibilities for governing in a world where group diversity is becoming evermore salient. This book is part of a very recent revisionist strain that pushes back on these paired findings that identify “challenges of diversity” for liberal policies. By focusing on the very diverse, heterogeneous places where the suite of policies we now identify as liberal first found their articulation, our attention is drawn to the local institutions that have provided a substrate for the continuous support of both interventionist economic policies and measures to support intergroup comity. From there, we can more clearly see and analyze the processes by which these “challenges of diversity” are in fact often overcome, usually through elite action in particular institutional milieux. As in the past, these places are still home to highly heterogeneous constituencies, a fact that continues to pose challenges to governance generally and progressives in particular. Nonetheless, these places do remain the sites of strongest support for policies that encourage group equality and ameliorate the harsh realities of capitalism. In short, the enduring urban political order complicates the pessimistic case that diversity is an insurmountable problem for those who would govern, so understanding its dynamics is crucial to forging successful coalitions and policies.

Second, within the study of race relations in the U.S. a model of competition between recalcitrant white supremacists and progressive transformative egalitarians is preeminent. This Manichean depiction of noble allies against illiberal racists is appealing, because of its cleanly identifiable “sides” in the battle for equal rights. In the present study, however, the discussion of racial politics is murkier: the organizations that provided mistrust, and coordination problems across group boundaries as hurdles that lead to diminished capacity to govern, a particularly problematic possibility in the context of increasingly diverse urban polities in need of continual reinvestment and maintenance for their proper functioning. Second, a wide range of findings, particularly within political science, have found significant evidence for the “group threat” hypothesis and its variants. See (Oliver 2010) for a review and addition to this literature.
unanimous support for civil rights liberalism in Congress are the same ones that excluded, subordinated, segregated, and otherwise marginalized African Americans and other minorities back in their hometowns. Different “positions” on race were held simultaneously by the same actors and organizations. By attending to this complication of history, we can achieve a subtler understanding of the dynamics of mid-20th century racial politics. We can also identify circumstances—here, in chapter 6, institutional circumstances—in which ideological commitment to racial equality may not be necessary to make important forward steps; political alliances may be enough. This presents an alternative path to progress, one less reliant on sainthood and self-sacrifice by allies of the excluded.

Finally, the book is part of an ongoing national conversation about the causes and character of polarization in American politics. Much of our current political conversation rightly highlights the manner in which ideological and partisan polarization has come to affect issue after issue, leading to stalemate and acrimony in national debates. To a large extent, though, the particular combinations of issue positions held by party activists and elites are not held together by a coherent political philosophy: “liberalism” and “conservatism”—at least in the U.S. political sphere—are more catchall post-hoc descriptors than principled systems for choosing and defending positions on issues. But if we attend to urbanicity, to place character as a central organizing concept, and to the spatial and social conditions that inhere in different kinds of places, the picture gets clearer. Cities make certain kinds of policies, like regulation and public goods, more important and more valuable. They also make a certain kind of politics more necessary, one in which tolerance, mutual respect between groups, and negotiation are necessary for conflict resolution and effective governance. When exit is less of an option, defiant certitude in the face of opponents with different but reasonably held views is not a viable strategy. The contemporary recurrent stalemate and obstructionism on vital, timely issues by some members of the national legislature thus reflects not only partisan rancor, but also a thoroughly non-urban approach to governance, explicable in part by fact that the contemporary GOP leadership
has almost no experience with urban politics marked by group pluralism. Similar obser-
vations apply to the GOP's core constituents, who are far less likely to be members of heterogeneous local polities, and who see compromise and negotiation with political op-
ponents as anathema.

Fully understanding the distinctively urban combination of diversity and liberalism—
supported by institutions that foster alliances and accommodation among constituencies that might easily be rivals—is vital, and has long-lasting implications for an America in-
creasingly facing the twin challenges of deep social difference and political fragmentation.
Chapter Outline

Chapter 1. Introduction: An Even Playing Field?

In the Introduction, I introduce the concept of urbanicity and frame the subsequent analyses with a vignette of testimony by Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley—city politician par excellence—before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. Daley articulates the priorities of cities, and their pursuit of allies, against rural representatives who cited the allegedly formidable unity of urban legislators as a reason for continuing their historic under-representation. But the very premise of this position—that cities are sites of political unity—clearly merits scrutiny. After all, cities are the sites of all kinds of continual and recurrent contention, both violent and subtle. This was particularly true in the 1960s, as racial conflicts bubbled over in the most dramatic and destructive riots of the 20th century. Whence the formal political unity of representation, from deeply divided “pre-political” building blocks? This is the key question of the book, which is explored in subsequent chapters.

The introduction continues to illustrate the urban-rural nature of the contemporary “Red-Blue” partisan divide in individual voting. Using several unique analyses, including over-time and over-space comparisons, I illustrate that today’s partisan divide exists within “Red” and “Blue” states, though it has not always been the case. This attention to place character can help us focus on a whole range of political phenomenon, and this account forefronts the importance of place character in any analysis of American politics.

Chapter 2. Urbanicity and City Delegations

In Chapter 2, I theorize the relationship between urbanicity and governance, with a focus on how the distinctive attributes of cities—principally density, size, and heterogeneity—prompt a set of policy priorities among those responsible for a community’s well-being and foster the development of local institutions to sustain them. Among these priorities are economic intervention in the economy and group pluralism. These governing commit-
ments each present a strategic challenge for city governance, however. Group pluralism is difficult because cities are places where “deep difference” often obtains in close proximity, making social peace less assured and governance more complicated. Economic interventions are often difficult to sustain if enacted only at the local level, so cities must also seek to affect supralocal policies. To manage these challenges effectively, a collection of representatives from across a city (and across many cities), who are often rivals in other contexts, must put aside their differences and behave cohesively in support of a citywide interest at the higher level. This cohesion is fostered by institutions characteristic of city delegations but not of other collections of representatives. These institutions of horizontal integration bind heterogeneous constituencies together and play a key role in the city delegation theory elaborated in this chapter, which highlights the role of local institutions in allowing the cities to represent themselves as cohesive units rather than as collections of heterogeneous and separate constituencies.


In Chapter 3, the analysis zooms out to describe the urban bloc in Congress and introduce the new “CSR” dataset developed for this project, which includes measures of congressional district place character (“City, Suburban, or Rural”) over the expanse of American political history. Improving upon previous analyses, I evaluate the strength of the city bloc over time, using measures of institutional strength within Congress. The twentieth century has seen the birth of a distinct, national urban political order, and then a shift from a “bimodal” Democratic coalition of urban and rural representatives to one in which the relationship between urbanicity and partisanship is much more monotonic: the more urban a constituency, the more likely it is to be represented by a Democrat. This shift has important implications for national policymaking: for instance, when the Democrats are in the majority, big-city representatives are more likely than ever before to occupy leadership positions in key policymaking positions, and city forces for the first time ever can consti-
tute a majority of the majority party. When Republicans hold the majority, however, city representatives are virtually excluded from all important institutional positions within the chamber. While the *urban interlude* of 1930-1950 was a heyday for the city’s place in the national imagination, in some ways the urban political order is potentially more powerful, though also more fragile, today.

**Chapter 4. The Bloc of Blocs: Building the Urban Political Order**

Chapter 4 includes an historical analysis of the rise of urban policy issues onto the national agenda during the 1930s. A bipartisan coalition of local officials tried—unsuccessfully with the GOP of the 1920s, and successfully with the Democratic leadership of the 1930s—to outline the particular governance challenges of their local polities, brought on by rapid urbanization, chronic fiscal challenges, and the increasingly relevant challenge of heightened mobility within metropolitan areas. Chief among these were the provision of affordable housing, the provision of certain public goods and infrastructure, and the maintenance of social peace in labor and race relations. In a series of hearings and policy debates, new national organizations such as the U.S Conference of Mayors of cities argued for the first time that national policies should be used to remedy what had been seen as primarily local challenges. In the process, they also forged a new alliance in national politics: cities had previously seen each other as rivals for economic, social, and political preeminence, but now they were allies in the articulation and pursuit of distinctively urban positions on the major issues of the day. The result was a deeply and multiply diverse “bloc of blocs,” built city by city to include most of urban America by the end of the 1930s. This urban order was finally institutionalized in 1965’s landmark legislation creating the cabinet-level Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Chapter 5. Ties That Bind: City Delegations and Cohesive Representation in Congress**

In Chapter 5, I rigorously test some of the observable implications of city delega-
tion theory. At the national level, were the rural defenders of malapportionment correct in their concerns that cities are more organized or cohesive in representation than we might expect? Is there a difference between cities with different kinds of local institutions? The answer to each question, this chapter shows, is “yes.” Institutions of horizontal integration—IHIs, political institutions spanning multiple constituencies that are present in cities but not in other areas, and which are stronger in some cities than in others—foster cohesive representation among members of a city’s congressional delegation even though its members often represent very different kinds of constituents. Even when we account for other relevant factors, representatives from the same city are particularly cohesive, and this is especially true in places with local traditions of strong parties. The unit of the city delegation is vital in the maintenance of a progressive, united urban political order, because it is a building “bloc” for such a political force. By overcoming the challenges to political order presented by interest heterogeneity at home, cities can present a cohesive face to the nation in pursuit of national urban policies.

Chapter 6. Anti-racism without Anti-racists: City Representation and Racial Realignment

Chapter 6 explores a crucial policy area in which the cohesion fostered by institutions of horizontal integration were particularly important: civil rights. The re-emergence of a second key dimension of political conflict (over race) drove the midcentury transformation of the “solid” South from its place at heart of the Democratic Party for nearly a century to its position as stronghold of conservative Republicanism today. More than simple sectional conflict drove the intraparty schism and rent the fabric of the Democratic national alliance, however. Urbanicity and the characteristics of local party organization were important factors in this partisan change. Members of city delegations with African American partners articulated a distinctly urban position on civil rights, one that de-emphasized binary racial polarization and focused on the importance of civil rights protections to en-
sure that many groups could coexist peaceably within the close quarters of the modern metropolis. They then cohesively supported the liberal position on the racial issues. This support was particularly strong among those representatives coming from cities with local party delegations, and those with African American representatives within their city delegation, even when we account for other factors that might predict support for racial liberalism—party, region, urbanicity, and constituency demography. The insights of city delegation theory help explain how local party organizations linking the heterogeneous constituencies of the largest American cities had an important role to play in fostering national racial liberalism, one that is often overlooked in studies of both urban racial dynamics and national partisan change.

Chapter 7. Conclusion: Notes for an Urban Political Order

Finally, the conclusion takes stock of the urban political order. What does it mean for American politics that the place-character divide in the contemporary “Blue” alignment has matured? What are the implications of this narrative for unity and durability of a national alignment still characterized by such strange bedfellows? And what are the prospects for institutional changes that would reinforce or replicate the integrative dynamics of the mid-20th century, and perhaps portend a resurgence of durable, multi-dimensional liberalism? I address these questions with the insights gained from city delegation theory and from a perspective that refocuses a picture of cities as key drivers of American politics. I also outline future avenues for research in the areas of political geography and American political development.
4 Table of Contents

I. Chapter 1. Introduction: An Even Playing Field? (95% Complete)

II. Chapter 2. Urbanicity and City Delegations

Outline of theoretical perspectives and approaches of the study, relationship to scholarly literature (85% complete)


Descriptive empirical chapter giving a comprehensive account of the relative power of city political power in national legislative politics over the long durée of American history (Complete)

IV. Chapter 4. The Bloc of Blocs: Building the Urban Political Order

Empirical chapter elaborating the ideas and perspectives of nationally salient city politics figures and the suite of policies they advocated for the nation, beginning with the formation of a significant cross-city alliance in the late 1920s through to the formation of the formal Congressional Urban Caucus in the 1990s. (70% complete)

V. Chapter 5. Ties That Bind: City Delegations and Cohesive Representation in Congress

Empirical analysis chapter theorizing, chronicling, and testing the role of local institutions of horizontal integration in national representation. (85% complete)

VI. Chapter 6. Anti-racism without Anti-racists: City Representation and Racial Realignement

Empirical analysis chapter theorizing and testing the role of local institutions in the special case of civil rights liberalism during the Long New Deal, the effects of which would have profound importance for structuring the contemporary Red-Blue political alignment. (Complete)

VII. Chapter 7. Conclusion: Notes for an Urban Political Order (Complete)

VIII. Appendix 1: Development of CSR (City-Suburban-Rural Congressional District Measures) Dataset (Complete)

IX. Appendix 2: Construction of new demographic measures for congressional districts (Complete)

X. Appendix 3: Urbanicity in the Senate (Complete)
5 Audience and Technical Details

This text is principally written for an academic audience, and includes several significant new analyses aimed toward such readers. However, its accessible and widely popular subject matter mean that a wider range of readers interested in the fundamental structure and historical development of American politics should also find it a useful source in understanding where our contemporary policy and political divides come from, and how they are likely to play out in the future. There are many scholarly texts that have found a broader audience by analyzing important the dynamics of “Red” and “Blue” America, and this book combines the strengths of engaging in that compelling contemporary conversation with an approach that will appeal to those interested in American political history and cities in and of themselves. Taking an historical approach and combining forms of and approaches to evidence and analysis, I intend for the book to contribute not only to very current scholarly conversations but also public sphere debate more generally.

On the university side, the book will be very appropriate for assignment in undergraduate or graduate courses in American politics, federalism, race and ethnicity, urban politics, legislative politics, and American Political Development–principally in political science courses, but also in sociology, history, urban studies, African American Studies, and American studies.

The manuscript is currently approximately 100,000 words in length. There are currently 39 Graphical Figures and Maps and 15 Tables.
Select Bibliography


