

THE IMPACT OF RACE UPON LEGISLATORS' POLICY PREFERENCES AND  
BILL SPONSORSHIP PATTERNS: THE CASE OF OHIO

DISSERTATION

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By

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## ABSTRACT

The principal purpose of this research is to explain and to analyze the policy preferences of Black and White state legislators in the Ohio General Assembly. In particular, the study seeks to understand whether or not Black state legislators advocate a distinctive policy agenda through an analysis of their policy preferences and bill sponsorship patterns. Essentially, one of the central objectives of the study is to determine the extent to which legislators' perceptions of their policy preferences actually correspond with their legislative behavior (i.e., bill sponsorship patterns). In addition to understanding the impact of race upon legislative preferences, I also analyze additional factors (e.g., institutional features, district characteristics, etc.) which potentially influence legislators' policy preferences and legislative behavior.

The data for this inquiry derive from personal interviews with members of the Ohio legislature conducted in the early to late 1990's and legislative bills introduced in the 1998-1999 session. The analyses of these data suggest that Black state legislators exhibit distinctive agenda setting behavior measured in terms of their policy priorities and bill sponsorship patterns in comparison to White state legislators. Black legislators are significantly more likely to prioritize race-based policy issues relative to White state legislators. In addition, the findings indicate that Black legislators support policy

priorities which are generally consistent with traditional legislative decisionmaking. Hence, Black legislators balance “dual representational roles” as both race representatives and responsible legislators.

The results also suggest that the policy priorities of legislators parallel their bill sponsorship activity. Black legislators are proportionately more likely to sponsor Black interest (i.e., racial justice) legislation than White state legislators. The evidence also indicates that the majority of bill proposals (i.e., both Black interest and nonracial) sponsored by Black legislators has an overwhelmingly symbolic rather than substantive impact upon their constituents.

Dedicated to my mother, Eva Trautman Gates and in honor  
of my maternal grandmother,  
the late Effie Lee King

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**"Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal." *Andrew Hacker.***

Racial polarization has persisted as a defining characteristic of American society. Over the years, it has taken the form of Jim Crowism, segregation, and the civil rights movement. The challenge of racism continues to have a debilitating and profound impact upon our society. It lies at the core and root of the American culture and continues to tear at the fabric of this country. As suggested by Andrew Hacker (1995), the American culture exaggerates differences and exacerbates tensions by vividly emphasizing race. Race remains the most pervasive and divisive cleavage plaguing and paralyzing our society.

Race has long been a critical ingredient of American politics. The history of civil and voting rights litigation documents this viewpoint quite well. One goal of the civil rights movement of the 1960's was to grant political access to racial groups who had previously been systematically excluded and marginalized from politics. The struggles of this movement continued with the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, which eliminated legal barriers to political participation for Blacks. Even after several decades, efforts are still being made to fully enforce the Voting Rights Act of

1965. Subsequently, the Voting Rights Act of 1982 was passed which has had a profound impact upon the racial composition of state legislative bodies. The purpose of VRA of 1982 was to increase the political representation of racial groups which had been historically denied political participation by the creation of single member majority Black districts. These statutory measures and the development of majority minority districts have facilitated greater Black representation in lawmaking bodies, such as state legislatures. The gains in Black representation have prompted scholars to rethink and reevaluate the role of these lawmakers, especially in comparison to their White counterparts. In short, the legacy of the relationship between race and politics and the struggle for Black political empowerment is still relevant and the realization of it remains incomplete even today.

The principal purpose of this research is to explain and to analyze the policy priorities of Black state legislators in the 120<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assemblies. In particular, this study seeks to understand whether or not Black state legislators advocate a distinctive policy agenda. The research questions to be answered are: What is the impact of race on legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities? How do the policy priorities of Black state legislators differ from White state legislators? What factors other than race (i.e., political socialization, district characteristics, and institutional features) potentially influence legislators' policy priorities and legislative behavior? How do these variables constrain or shape the legislative experiences and behavior of Black legislators? And, do legislators' perceptions of their policy preferences correspond with their legislative behavior (i.e., bill sponsorship patterns)? The answers to these questions are important because African Americans are increasingly competing for and winning a greater share of state

legislative seats. In 1970, Blacks constituted only 2% of all state legislators (Walton Jr. 1972). By 2003, 8.1 percent of state legislators were Black (National Conference of State Legislatures website ([http: www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org))). The answers are also important because state legislators have acquired a more expansive role in public policymaking in recent times due to the devolution of power from the federal government to the states. State legislators have jurisdiction over important domestic public policy issues, such as education funding, job development, affirmative action, Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare reform, all of which have enormous socioeconomic effects upon individuals' quality of life, especially African Americans. Since these issues are at the heart of legislative decision-making, state legislators are in a unique position to exert considerable influence over the nature and direction of Black interest representation. Thus, the study illuminates the representational and policymaking behavior of Black Americans in the contemporary legislature of an American state.

A variety of data sources will be used to address the core research questions. The major sources of data are personal interviews with members of the Ohio General Assembly conducted in 1993, 1998 and 1999 and legislative bills introduced in the 1998-1999 session. Data were also collected from several printed sources obtained from the Ohio Historical Society, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Ohio House and Senate Clerk Offices, and the Political Atlas of Ohio. A variety of methodological techniques including descriptive statistics, lambda, multiple response and multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data. It is hoped that through the utilization of these techniques, I will be able to shed penetrating light on the central concerns of my dissertation: whether or not distinct policy preferences and bill sponsorship patterns exist between Black and White state legislators; and the role

political environments, both external and internal, play in influencing legislative decision-making.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

In many fields of American politics (i.e., urban leadership and voting behavior), race is seen as a critical factor to explaining political behavior and phenomena. Yet, studies in state legislative politics have largely neglected to accord a complete treatment of race. With the exception of a few studies, (Barrett 1995; Bratton 1997; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Button and Hedge 1996; Hedge 1998; Haynie 1994, 2001; King-Meadows and Schaller 2001, 2006; Miller 1990), scholarly inquiry into the policy priorities and attitudes of Black state legislators has been lacking. Previous research has focused almost exclusively on studying the behavior of a specific racial group, primarily African-American legislators (Holmes 2000; Miller 1990; Colston 1972; Hedge et al. 1996; Simms Maddox 1991; McGriggs 1977; Walton, Jr. 1985; Wright 2000). This research attempts to go beyond simply understanding Black legislators by comparing and contrasting them with White legislators as the available data permit.

As a complementary issue, the present analysis is also a preliminary effort to assess the degree of Black political linkage in state politics, rather than at the local level. Scholars of urban politics have explored minority political linkage in local politics (Browning et al. 1984; Nelson 2000), but few studies have devoted sufficient attention to the notion of minority political linkage at the state level.<sup>1</sup> This study will

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<sup>1</sup>An exception is Albert Nelson's analysis of minority incorporation in the lower chambers of 45 state legislatures over three election periods in *Emerging Influentials in State Legislatures: Women, Blacks, and Hispanics*. He explained minority incorporation according to three primary factors: representation, turnover, and potential influence. His analysis basically suggests that minorities have not become fully integrated into legislative systems.

hopefully give us some understanding of whether or not state legislators through their policy preferences have been able to increase their effective linkage of the Black community within the policy environments of state legislators. It is a means for evaluating the degree to which black interests are substantively represented in state legislative politics through an examination of the policy advocacy of Ohio state legislators.

In short, this dissertation contributes to an understanding of the effects of race in influencing policy attitudes of state legislators. This research also seeks to provide a better understanding of how the actors within the Ohio General Assembly function and operate. The broader implications of this study are to predict empirically the actions and inactions of legislators and to evaluate the value of descriptive representation.<sup>2</sup> The study is valuable in advancing theory on racial politics and elite activism at the state level. And, finally, it is important to providing a contemporary view of race in an American state.

## **RACE AND STATE POLICYMAKING**

Understanding legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities is important because state legislatures consider key legislation which disproportionately impact some demographic groups more than others. For example, the administration of social welfare policy is a central responsibility of states. Generally speaking, racial minorities and the poor are the prime recipients of programs such as Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) and Medicaid. Tschoepe (1994, 1997), for example, shows that percent black in state legislatures is statistically related to an increase in state AFDC

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<sup>2</sup> See Jane Mansbridge for a discussion of the costs and benefits of descriptive representation.

participation. In fact, empirical analyses tend to measure Black interests in terms of support for social welfare policy (Bullock and MacManus 1981; Whitby 1987). Based upon a case study analysis of the Mississippi state house of representatives, Bullock and MacManus (1981) found that overall Black state legislators were more supportive of redistributive social welfare policies than White state legislators. Further, examining the representational roles of Black state legislators in Mississippi and Louisiana, Burnside and Haysley-Jordan (2003) found that Black legislators were more likely to propose welfare reform legislation than their White colleagues.

Scholarly evidence exists that an increased presence of African Americans in state legislatures enhances the substantive representation of Black interests (Adams 2003; Barrett 1995; Haynie 1994, 2001; Grose 2005; Haynie and Bratton 1999; King-Meadows and Schaller 2006; Miller 1990; Orey et al. 2006; Preuhs 2006). African American state legislators are significantly more likely to introduce Black interest legislation than White state legislators (Adams 2003; Bratton 1997, 2002; Bratton and Haynie 1999; Haynie 1994, 2001). Haynie and Bratton's (1999) analysis of bill introductions in six states based upon a three-year sample indicate that Black state legislators are substantially more likely to introduce legislation pertaining to Black and women interests, education and welfare policy. In a recent analysis of the lower houses in the Mississippi, Maryland, and Georgia state legislatures, by categorizing legislation according to its content, Adams (2003) studied the agenda setting behavior of African American state legislators, female state legislators, and African American female state legislators by analyzing their bill introductions in the areas of minority and women's interests, children, health care, and welfare policy. She concluded that African American legislators are far more likely to sponsor minority interest legislation than

White state legislators.<sup>3</sup> Although Adams' study is useful for understanding the effects of race upon legislative agenda setting, it is severely limited by only exploring the descriptive model of representation and ignoring the effects of other relevant external variables, such as constituency characteristics.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A significant amount of research has been produced on legislators. However, most research about group differences and similarities pertain to gender. Scholars of legislative politics have studied extensively gender differences and its impact upon policy priorities, legislative activities and behavior (Bratton 2005; Freeman and Lyons 1992; Kathlene 1994; Reingold 1992, 2000; Swers 1998; Thomas 1991, 1994; Thomas and Welch 1991). Despite the growth in the number of Black state legislators over the past several decades, very limited scholarship has comprehensively explored the impact of race upon legislators' policy priorities.<sup>4</sup> The political science literature regarding the policy preferences of African Americans focuses primarily on Congress, rather than state legislatures (Swain 1995; Whitby 1997). Furthermore, previous investigations into the policy behavior of Black state legislators have failed to provide a clear theoretical framework for evaluating Black legislative behavior. This study, therefore, makes both substantive and theoretical contributions to the previous research.

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<sup>3</sup> Instead of narrowly focusing on "Black interests", Adams broadly conceptualizes and categorizes legislative issues as "minority interest" legislation.

<sup>4</sup>For example, see Kenny J. Whitby, *The Color of Representation* (The University of Michigan Press, 1997) for a thorough quantitative analysis of racial differences in congressional voting and the saliency of race in legislators' support of Black policy preferences; For a counter view see Carol M. Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress*. An exception is the recent publication on Black state legislative politics by King-Meadows and Schaller (2006).

Because there is a dearth of research on racial representation in state legislatures, the study substantively contributes to the growing body of literature on the policy impact and effectiveness of African Americans in state legislatures. In doing this, I gauge important similarities and differences in the policy priorities of Black and White state legislators. I expand the literature by utilizing both subjective and objective measures of legislative activity. Much of the prior research has been based primarily on interviews or bill introductions of legislators. A combination of survey data and behavioral analyses of legislators' bill sponsorship patterns yield a more complete understanding of the agenda setting behavior of legislators.

The analysis also contributes to the extant literature by simultaneously considering the impact of both external and internal factors upon Black legislative decision-making. The lack of attention to the influence of external and internal environmental variables upon the agenda-setting behavior of state legislators has been a major weakness of the existing body of research. While prior research has noted the importance of political socialization as an external variable in Black state legislative studies, no efforts have been made to link legislators' political socialization processes to their policy priorities and attitudes. Thus, the present study also seeks to bridge this gap in the literature. Theoretically, I contribute by proposing competing constructs to explain Black legislative priorities and decision-making. On the one hand, the policy preferences of Black state legislators are reflective of their social group interests which are inherently racial in nature. On the other hand, Black state legislators pursue policy priorities devoid of racial content which coincide with a mainstream legislative agenda. The basis of the former explanation is social group identity theory while the latter

perspective is based upon a structural-integrationist understanding of Black legislative behavior.

From surveying the current literature on legislative politics and other relevant work, relatively few studies have empirically analyzed the effects of race upon the policy preferences of state legislators.<sup>5</sup> The extant literature, for the most part, focuses on the policy priorities of African American legislators (Miller 1990; Colston 1972; Simms Maddox 1991). For example, Colston (1972) conducted a comprehensive and systematic study of Black legislators in the Ohio House of Representatives during the 109th session. The principal goal of the research was to analyze the political influence and behavior of Black legislators in Ohio. He assessed the influence of Black legislators as an "informal group" by gauging their self-perceptions. Though the author primarily focused on Black legislators, 16 White legislators were randomly selected to gauge their perceptions of their Black colleagues as an influential group. His findings revealed that 70 percent of the Black legislators felt as though their race impacted their legislative behavior. In sharp contrast, 75 percent of the White legislators reported that race was not a barrier to Black legislators. Despite these conflicting views, both Black and White legislators perceived that Black members of the Ohio House were indeed influential.

The study also examined the ecological origins of Black legislators. Basically, the author concluded that Black legislators are products of the kinds of districts (i.e., poor, urban) they represent. Though Colston's study is quite thorough and informative, its primary focus is on explaining Black political influence and does not fully examine

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<sup>5</sup> For a brief review of state legislative research on Black representation, see Menifield and Shaffer (2005).

other racial groups. In contrast, the present study aims to depict a complete portrait of both racial subgroups. Furthermore, Colston's study was done two and half decades ago (twenty-five years) and consequently may not reflect the current trends of the Ohio legislature.

Building upon the efforts of Colston, Hanes Walton, Jr. (1985) conducted a comparative intra-racial analysis of Black lawmakers across four states which included Ohio. He described the sociodemographic characteristics of Black officeholders at all three levels of government (i.e. local, state, and national). Walton's study revealed that Black legislators tend to be well-educated, predominantly male, and professionally trained with most legislators being attorneys, businessmen, ministers and educators. Like Colston, he recognized the role of race in influencing legislative activity and behavior, but does not fully exploit this idea.

Efforts to understand the behavior of Black legislators were extended in the early 1990's. Simms Maddox (1991) conducted an indepth study of the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio (BEDO). She studied the history and development of BEDO, an organization within the Ohio legislature whose membership consists of all Black Democrats. In the process, she analyzed the political backgrounds, and legislative orientations of Black members.

Similarly, Mathis (1985) studied the sociodemographic characteristics, political perceptions, recruitment processes and representational roles of Black state legislators. Mathis' analysis goes beyond the typical case study based upon one state. Instead, he surveys a national sample of Black state legislators in 1975-1976. In the process, he conducted a comparative investigation of the representational role orientations of Black and White state legislators. Mathis notes that differences in representational styles

emerged for the two subgroups. However, his findings must be viewed with caution given their limitations. A major limitation of the study is the lack of empirical congruence. The data used to assess the representational styles of White legislators derive from the existing literature. In contrast, the data for the Black legislators were obtained at a later point in time. Furthermore, the author analyzes the representational styles of legislators by state which significantly reduced the number of Black state legislators across states and thereby diminished the ability to generalize the results due to the limited sample size.

Some symmetry is found between the present study and the pioneering work of Leonard Cole (1976). In 1972, he conducted a comparative analysis of Black and White elected officials in New Jersey. Cole traced the political behavior and background of local officials in sixteen municipalities before and after they took political office. Specifically, he studied the background features, political socialization process, ideology, and major policy concerns of both Black and White local officials. From his inquiry, he found that Black and White officials differ according to social and political background factors and policy priorities. Yet, he found that they converge in terms of their ideology and perceptions of their representational roles.

A recent study produced by Button and Hedge (1996) also parallels closely with the present one and provides a basic framework upon which the present research builds. In 1991-92, they conducted a national study of Black and White state legislators to determine the similarities and differences of these lawmakers in terms of their personal background characteristics, policy concerns, political ideology, political experience and recruitment. Though their findings were mixed and varied, Button and Hedge found significant black-white differences and similarities among state legislators.

Specifically, they found that Black and White state legislators are similar in terms of general background factors, and policy concerns. Conversely, their research suggests that Black and White state legislators differ in regards to the types of districts they represent. Typically, Black legislators represent poor urban, less affluent districts and White legislators usually represent suburban affluent districts.

Similarly, Haynie (1994) explored the differences between African American legislators and non-African American legislators in five states. The overall goal of the research was to assess the influence African American legislators have upon the legislative policy-making process. In particular, the author sought to determine whether or not Black legislators support a distinctive policy agenda and whether or not different patterns of committee assignments exist between them and non-African American legislators. Haynie (1994, 2001) concluded that Black state legislators typically introduce more "Black interest" legislation than their colleagues and tend to become integrated into the legislative subsystem.

In contrast to Haynie's findings, Edith Barrett (1997) concluded that previously excluded groups, such as women and minorities have not become integrated into legislative structures and remain quite distinct from their male and White colleagues. From a national sample of 230 state legislators, she investigated both gender and racial differences. Barrett asked a series of questions about whether or not women and minorities have a unique impact on legislative agendas, their effectiveness in passing legislation, and their overall legislative experiences in state legislatures compared to their colleagues. She found that women and Black legislators differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of their legislative experiences.

In an earlier study, Barrett (1995) analyzed the policy priorities of African American female state legislators. Although no differences in issue priorities between African American female legislators and their counterparts were found, her analysis suggests that African American female legislators share a strong level of consensus concerning their policy preferences. She argues that African American legislators are the most supportive of women and minority policy concerns. In short, Barrett found that personal characteristics such as race and gender are the best predictors of legislators' policy priorities even when district characteristics<sup>6</sup> and professional background factors are taken into consideration.<sup>7</sup>

Building upon Barrett's work, Smooth (2006) analyzed the influence Black women legislators exercise within legislatures and within their respective areas of policy expertise in the Georgia, Mississippi and Maryland state legislatures. The results of her study indicate that Black women legislators exercise some level of influence within specific policy areas, such as education, healthcare and healthcare reform, but in general, lacked broader institutional power due to their exclusion from formal leadership positions.<sup>8</sup>

Moncrief et al. (1991) also examined both racial and gender differences among state legislators. However, they analyzed only background characteristics (i.e. educational and occupational status) of the group. Their research revealed differences in educational attainment among legislators across racial groups. In particular, the

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<sup>6</sup> Barrett (1995) used proportion white in district instead of percent Black in district as a measure of district characteristics because it performed better in the model.

<sup>7</sup> Professional background characteristics will not be used as predictors in this research given the low variance explained by the variable in Barrett's study.

<sup>8</sup> Holding a position as a committee chair was a key factor in explaining perceptions of influence within all three state legislatures. Committee chairpersons with jurisdiction within specific issue areas were regarded as influential.

analysis suggests that Black legislators tend to achieve higher educational and occupational status than White legislators with Black female legislators ranking the highest in both categories. In addition, they found substantial differences between Black female and White female legislators in terms of educational and occupational backgrounds. Black females were more likely to have higher levels of education and high prestige occupations than White female state legislators.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, based upon survey data, Royster (1992) studied racial differences between Black and White elites in their representation of Black mass policy positions. That is, he empirically tested whether Black or White state legislators better represent the policy positions of Black constituencies. In the process, he observed the differences in the policy attitudes and positions, role orientations, and focal orientations of Black and White state legislators. In general, he found that representation varies according to the issue and that Black state legislators were significantly more likely than White state legislators to represent the policy views of Black citizens on social welfare issues.

The studies discussed above have contributed substantially to increasing our knowledge about how Black and White legislators compare and contrast. However, the studies are not without flaws. The major weakness of the current literature is lack of theoretical innovation. In other words, no coherent frame of reference has been developed to explain racial representation at the state legislative level. Thus, the present analysis is an incremental step to improving the theoretical deficiency of past research. In chapter 2, I outline the theory of this research. Before doing so, a

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<sup>9</sup>Moncrief et al. used state legislators as the unit of analysis to test the "double disadvantage" hypothesis which predicts that Black women state legislators will have to exhibit higher status characteristics relative to their white female counterparts because of their race and Black male counterparts because of their gender. The authors find support for the former proposition, but not the latter one.

historical analysis of the growth in Black representation in state legislatures in general and the Ohio legislature in particular is in order.

## **Part II: Black Representation in State Legislatures**

Similar to the trend at the national level, an apparent increase in Black representation has occurred at the state legislative level. Over the past several decades, we have witnessed a dramatic and steady growth (upward trend) in the number of Black state legislators nationwide. For example, between 1970 and 1980, the number of Black state legislators rose from 168 to 317. By 1990, the number of Black state legislators totaled 415 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies). Over a twenty-five year period, the number of Black legislators rose from less than two hundred in the early 1970's to almost 600 in the late 1990's (Figure 1).

The increase in racial minorities in state legislatures has been widely noted (Arden et al. 1997; Bositis 1992; Bullock 1992; Chambliss 1992; Colston 1972; Grofman and Handley 1991; Hamm and Moncrief 1999; Hedge 1998; Rosenthal 1996; Patterson 1994; Walton, Jr. 1985).<sup>10</sup> Hanes Walton, Jr. (1985), for example, argues in his study on Black legislative behavior that reapportionment and the creation of Black electoral districts are key variables to explaining the growth in the number of Black legislators. Bullock (1992) attributes the increase in Black state legislators to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the active enforcement of its provisions, specifically Sections 5 and 2. Section 5 requires that certain jurisdictions obtain preclearance from the Justice Department concerning electoral districting and voting practices. And,

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<sup>10</sup> Bullock also observes the increase in the number of Hispanics in state legislatures from 1969-1987.

section 2 protects the voting strength of minorities by guarding against vote dilution.<sup>11</sup> Other factors, according to Bullock, include federal court cases dealing with reapportionment which are discussed later in this chapter.

Chambliss (1992) also discusses several possible factors which account for the growth in the number of Black elected officials. She also contends that the increase in the number of Black elected officials is due to the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965. She argues that the VRA of 1965 contributed to a dramatic increase in Black voter registration between 1968 and 1988 and as a consequence helps to explain the surge in Black officeholding. Chambliss also notes that single-member districting is more favorable to the election of African Americans compared to at-large elections.

According to Grofman and Handley (1991), a shift from multi-member to single-member districts greatly increased representation in southern state legislatures between 1965-1985. In addition, the growth in the number of majority Black districts and the likelihood of Blacks being elected from these districts facilitated greater black legislative representation (Grofman and Handley 1991; Arden et al. 1997). Consistent with Bullock's (1992) study, Grofman and Handley also assert that the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, specifically Section 5 (i.e., preclearance requirement of voting rights laws for covered jurisdictions by the Justice Department) contributed to the growth in Black legislative representation.

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<sup>11</sup> See for example Frank Parker's *Black Votes Count* for strategies used to dilute the voting strength of Blacks in Mississippi.

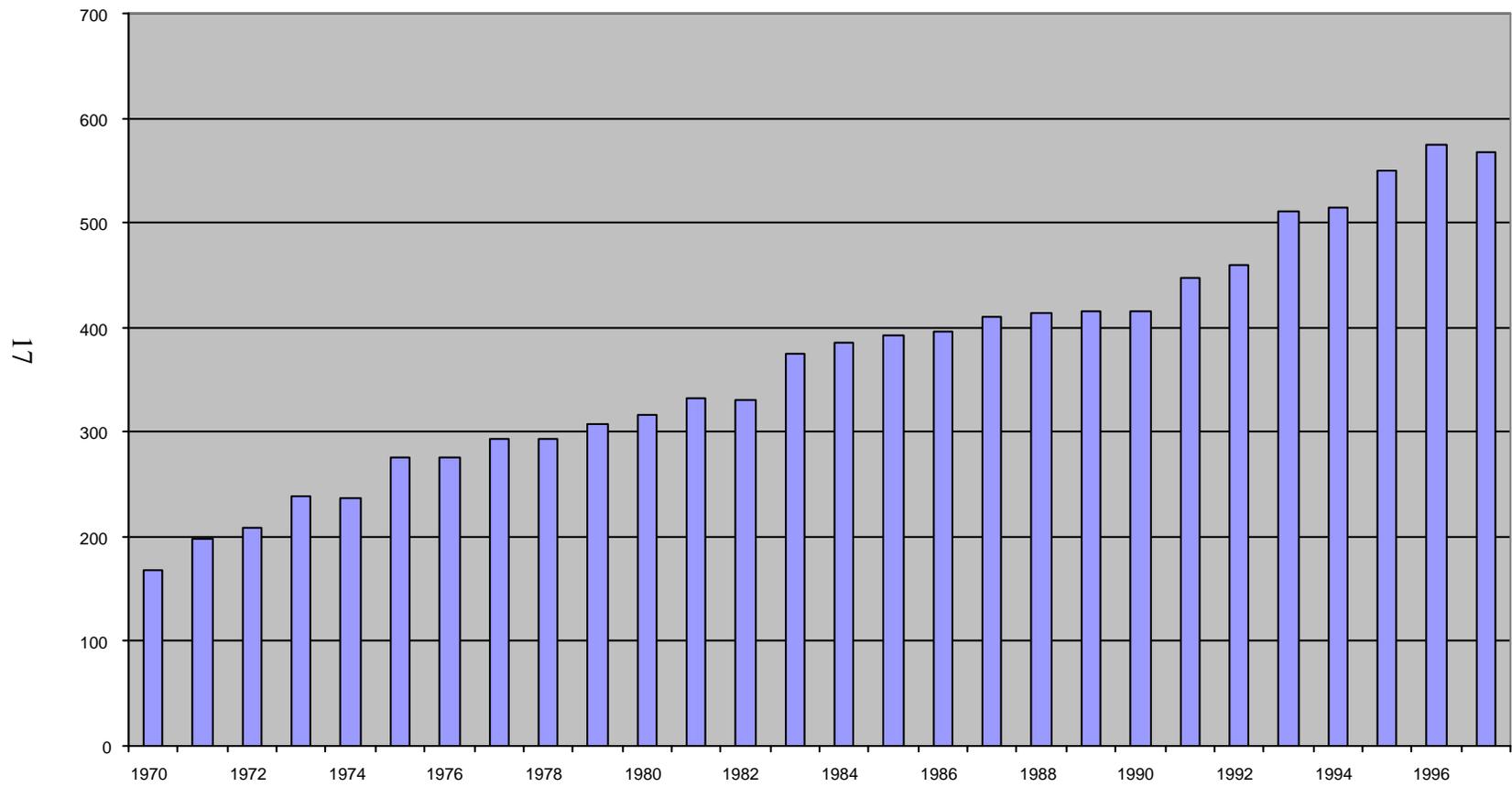


Figure 1.1: Total Number of Black State Legislators, 1970-1997

Although a steady increase in the number of Black state legislators has emerged, stark disparities prevail when comparing the total number of state legislators to the percent of Black state legislators nationwide over the last two decades (see Table 1.1). For instance, in 1980, though Blacks constituted approximately 10.5 percent of the voting-age population, they only composed 4.2 percent of all state legislators. By 1985 and 1990, Black state legislators were only 5.3 and 5.6 percent respectively of all state legislators yet approximately 10.8 and 11.1 percent respectively of the voting age population. Throughout the 1980's until the early 1990's, this pattern remained unchanged. However, in 1995, 7.5 percent of state legislators were Black (see Table 1.1). Although the gap narrowed considerably in terms of the ratio of Black state legislators to the proportion of Blacks in the total population by 1995, proportional representation was not achieved. Also, no significant percent change in Black state legislators occurred between 1995 and 2000. By 2004, the proportion of Black state legislators increased to 8 percent which resulted in a marginal increase of 4 percentage points since 1980. Though African Americans have made great strides in winning election to state legislatures since the 1970's, relative to the percentage of state legislators overall, the net gain in state legislative seats by Blacks are relatively small. Further, representational parity in the percentage of African Americans in state legislatures compared to the proportion of Blacks in the population has yet to occur which implies a persistent challenge to changing the face of state legislative politics.

Year	%Black State Legislators
1980	4.2
1981	4.4
1982	4.4
1983	N/A
1984	5.1
1985	5.3
1986	5.3
1987	5.5
1988	5.5
1989	5.6
1990	5.6
1991	6.0
1992	6.2
1993	6.9
1994	N/A
1995	7.5
1996	7.6
1997	7.6
1998	7.6
1999	7.7
2000	7.7
2001	7.9
2002	N/A
2003	8.1
2004	8.1

Table 1.1: Black State Legislators as a Percentage of all State Legislators (1980-2004)

Sources: 1980-1982, 1984-1991, 1993 editions of *Black Elected Officials: A National Roster*, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; 1997, 1999, 2000 editions of David Bositis' *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary*, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; 1994, 1995, 2000, 2005-2006 *Vital Statistics on American Politics*; 1996 data on Black state legislators from King-Meadows and Schaller (2001).

## **Black Representation in the Ohio General Assembly: The Early Years**

During the nineteenth century, Black political representation was severely restricted. Black Ohioans were effectively disenfranchised by the Black Codes, which were laws passed in 1804 and 1807 by the state legislature which denied Blacks basic political, social and economic rights (Colston 1972; Simms Maddox 1991). The laws imposed rigid monetary sanctions upon Blacks as entry requirements into the state of Ohio, denied educational and job opportunities to Blacks, and deprived Black voting and political participation. The enforcement of these laws relegated Blacks to second class citizenship.

The Black Codes were eventually repealed in 1876 (Colston 1972; Simms Maddox 1991) which eradicated some of the barriers to Black civic participation and enhanced the chances of Blacks getting elected to the Ohio legislature. Approximately four years after the Black Codes were invalidated and almost a decade after the passage of the fifteenth amendment, the first African American, George Washington Williams was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1879. He served from 1880-1882. In 1892, the first African American, John P. Green, was elected to the Senate. Prior to the Senate, Green served in the Ohio House from 1882-1884.<sup>12</sup> From the 1800's until the early 1960's, only twenty-seven African Americans, all of whom were Republicans, were elected to the Ohio legislature (Colston 1972; Simms Maddox 1991) (see Table

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<sup>12</sup>For a complete historical analysis of Black representation in the Ohio House of Representatives since the 1800's, see Freddie Colston, The Influence of the Black Legislators in the Ohio House of Representatives, Ph.D. dissertation.

1.2).<sup>13</sup> During the 1961-1962 General Assembly, only one African American, David Albritton, served. However, in 1962, the first Black Democrat, Carl B. Stokes, was elected to the Ohio legislature. He served three consecutive terms (1963-1964, 1965-1966, and 1967-1968). During the 1963-1964 and 1965-1966 general assemblies, only two Black legislators, David Albritton and Carl Stokes, served in the legislature (Simms Maddox 1991). In 1967, Stokes became the first Black mayor of Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>14</sup> By 1967, the first Black Democrat, Calvin Johnson, was elected to the Ohio Senate.

During the late 1960's, the Black delegation in the Ohio legislature began to substantially increase. Beginning in 1967, a significant number of Black legislators were elected to the legislature, which represented for the first time, the largest Black delegation in the history of the Ohio General Assembly. The total number of Black state legislators was twelve. The increased representation of Blacks in the Ohio legislature was primarily a result of the 1966 legislative redistricting process.<sup>15</sup> In general, increases in state legislatures during the 1960's can be attributed to court decisions, such as *Baker v. Carr* (1962) and *Reynolds v. Sims* (1964) which laid the foundation for the establishment of fair apportionment plans by state legislatures (Miller 1990; Simms Maddox 1991; Swain 1993; Grofman and Chandler 1992; Wright 2000).<sup>16</sup> As David Hedge (1998) notes,

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<sup>13</sup>According to Colston, all of whom were Republican.

<sup>14</sup>For a descriptive analysis and biography of the political history and family background of Carl Burton Stokes, see Richard Bruner, *Black Politicians* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971).

<sup>15</sup>Another factor accounting for greater Black representation in the Ohio legislature is the replacement of multimember House districts with single-member districts. Single member districts, as opposed to multimember districts, tend to enhance Black representation.

<sup>16</sup>*Baker v. Carr* was based upon the reapportionment of the Tennessee legislature. Before this case, the Tennessee General Assembly had not been reapportioned since 1901. *Reynolds v. Sims* was based upon

Federal civil rights policy and the reapportionment “revolution” triggered by the 1962 *Baker v. Carr* decision have ensured that minorities and urban areas are better represented in state legislatures and have contributed to increased legislative activism . . . (p. 4)

The increased presence of Black members in the Ohio General Assembly served as an impetus for the development of the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio (BEDO) in 1967-1968.<sup>17</sup> By 1970, the Black delegation grew to 13, constituting 9.8 percent of the membership in the Ohio General Assembly. However, between 1974 and 1976, a very slight decline in the number of Black legislators resulted. The Black membership comprised of 11 with only modest gains thereafter. The trend in Black representation remained remarkably stable from 1978 to 1986 with the membership comprised of 12. During this period, the first African American female, Helen Rankin was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1978 and served until 1994.

### **Black Representation in the Ohio Legislature: The Contemporary Period**

The most significant growth in the number of Black legislators in Ohio has occurred more recently. The peak period of growth in the number of Black legislators occurred during 1994-1998 with Black members comprising between 10.6-13.6 percent. In the 122nd general assembly (1997-1998), there were a total of 18 Black legislators.<sup>18</sup> On the House side, there were 14 and in the Senate the Black delegation consisted of 4

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apportionment in Alabama. Essentially, the court concluded that malapportioned legislatures and unequal representation were a constitutional violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Furthermore, the court ruled that representation in state legislatures should be based upon population.

<sup>17</sup>For a comprehensive account of Black Elected Democrats of Ohio (BEDO), an informal organization of Black state legislators within the Ohio General Assembly, see Margaret J. Simms Maddox, The Development of the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio, Ph.D. dissertation. C.J. McLin was the founder and first president of BEDO. The organization was initially named Black Elected Officials of Ohio given the partisan loyalties of Black members (i.e. both Republicans and Democrats) in 1967. The name was changed to BEDO during the 1969-1971 session.

<sup>18</sup>One charter member of BEDO, Representative Troy Lee James, was among the delegation.

(see Table 1.3).<sup>19</sup> By 1998, Black legislators constituted 13.6 percent (reaching proportionality to the voting age population) of the membership in the Ohio legislature (see Table 1.3).<sup>20</sup> By 1998, Black legislators constituted 13.6 percent (reaching proportionality to the voting age population) of the membership in the Ohio legislature and represented an important force of the Democratic party. The Black delegation made up about 46% of the Democratic caucus in the House and about 9% in the Senate. During this legislative session, the Black delegation also constituted a major proportion of the Democratic leadership cadre in both chambers. For the first time, an African American female, Charleta Tavares, served as Minority Whip in the House.<sup>21</sup> In addition, African Americans occupied the positions of Assistant Minority Whip in the House, Senate Minority Leader, and Senate Minority Whip.

In the 123rd (1999-2000) general assembly, the number of Black legislators remained constant from the previous session.<sup>22</sup> There were 18 Black members in the Ohio legislature. In the House, there were 14 Black members and in the Senate, there were 4.<sup>23</sup> During this session, Black legislators acquired key leadership positions. For example, for the first time in the history of the Ohio General Assembly, an African

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<sup>19</sup>The first African American female to serve in the Senate, Senator Rhine McLin, was among the delegation. Prior to her election to the Senate in 1994, she served in the Ohio House of Representatives from 1989-1994. McLin is the first African American female to serve in both houses of the Ohio General Assembly. In addition, the first African American Republican female, Senator Janet Howard, to serve in the Ohio Senate was among the Black membership. In addition, Senator Howard as well as Representative Barbara Boyd, a Democrat representing the ninth district of Cuyahoga were not members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC).

<sup>20</sup>The first African American female to serve in the Senate, Senator Rhine McLin, was among the delegation. Prior to her election to the Senate in 1994, she served in the Ohio House of Representatives from 1989-1994. McLin is the first African American female to serve in both houses of the Ohio General Assembly. In addition, the first African American Republican female, Senator Janet Howard, to serve in the Ohio Senate was among the Black membership. In addition, Senator Howard as well as Representative Barbara Boyd, a Democrat representing the ninth district of Cuyahoga were not members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC).

<sup>21</sup> Tavares was the first African American female elected to the Ohio legislature from Franklin County.

<sup>22</sup>Obviously, the composition of the actual Black membership varied according to individuals based upon the entry of newcomers and exit by some of the previous membership. Bullock observes that constancy in Black membership from session to the next is quite typical.

<sup>23</sup>Three former House members, Mark Mallory, C.J. Prentiss and Tom Roberts are now in the Senate. Although Ray Miller, a former House member, returned to the Ohio legislature during the final phase of the data collection for this study, he also currently serves in the Ohio Senate. All Black legislators are

Black State Legislators	Years Served
George Washington Williams	1880-1882
John P. Green	1882-1884 (House)
	1890-1891 (House)
	1892-1893 (Senate)
Jere A. Brown	1886-1888
	1888-1890
Robert Harlan	1886-1888
Benjamin W. Arnett	1886-1888
William H. Copeland	1888-1890
George H. Jackson	1892-1894
Samuel B. Hill	1894-1896
Harry C. Smith	1894-1896
	1896-1898
	1900-1902
William H. Clifford	1894-1896
	1898-1900
William H. Parham	1896-1898
William R. Stewart	1896-1898
	1898-1900
George W. Hays	1902-1904
	1904-1906
H. T. Eubanks	1904-1906
	1909-1911
A. Lee Beaty	1919-1921
Harry E. Davis	1921-1928
Perry B. Jackson	1929-1931
Chester K. Gillespie	1933-1935
	1943-1945

Continued

Table 1.2: Black Members of the Ohio State Legislature, 1800-1964  
(The Early Years)

members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) for the 123rd general assembly. In addition, for the first time in the history of the organization, a female, Senator C.J. Prentiss was elected President. As in the prior general assembly, one charter member of BEDO, Representative Troy Lee James, remained in the House.

Table 1.2 continued

R.P. McClain	1935-1937
David D. Turpeau	1941-1943
	1943-1945
	1947-1949
Sandy F. Ray	1943-1945
Jacob Ashburn, Sr.	1945-1947
Francis E. Young	1947-1949
William B. Saunders	1947-1949
Frederick Bowers	1951-1953
	1953-1955
A. Bruce McClure	1951-1953
	1953-1955
	1955-1957
Carl B. Stokes	1963-1964

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Sources: Colston (1972) *The Influence of the Black Legislators in the Ohio House of Representatives*, Ohio Historical Society, *Ohio House of Representative Photograph Collection*, *The African American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920*; see also Simms Maddox (1991).

American, Representative Jack Ford was elected House Minority Floor Leader. Also, the position of Senate Minority Leader continued to be held by Senator Ben Espy.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, this chapter has shown that historically few racial minorities were elected to political office. However, contemporary political institutions, notably state legislatures, have been characterized by greater Black representation. Despite this, racial minorities continue to be descriptively underrepresented in national and state legislative assemblies.

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<sup>24</sup> In May 2000, Senator Rhine McLin was appointed to fulfill the unexpired term of Espy as Senate Minority Leader.

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Black State Legislators	Years Served
Bobby Blackburn	1965-1965
William F. Bowen	1966-1968 (House) 1971-1994 (Senate)
John W.E. Bowen III	1967-1970
Phillip M. Delaine	1967-1971
Thomas E. Hill	1967-1971
Larry Smith	1967-1974
CJ McLin, Jr.	1967-1988
William L. Mallory, Sr.	1967-1994
Phale D. Hale	1967-1980
M. Morris Jackson	1967-1984
Troy Lee James	1967-2000
Casey Jones	1969-1994
James W. Rankin	1971-1978
John Thompson, Jr.	1971-1984
Ike Thompson	1971-1992
Thomas Bell	1975-1982
Leslie C. Brown	1977-1982
L. Helen Rankin	1978-1994
Otto Beatty, Jr.	1980-1999
Ray Miller	1981-1993 (House) 1999-2002 (House) 2003-present (Senate)
Vernon Sykes	1983-2000 2007-present (Senate)
Vermel Whalen	1986-1998
Michael R. White	1987-1989
Rhine McLin	1989-1994 (House) 1995-2001 (Senate)
Jeffery Johnson	1989-1998
CJ Prentiss	1991-1998 (House) 1999-2006 (Senate)
Ben E. Espy	1992-2002

Continued

Table 1.3: Black Members of the Ohio State Legislature, 1965-present (Contemporary Period)

Table 1.3 continued

Charletta B. Tavares	1993-1998
Barbara Boyd	1993-2000
Mark Mallory	1994-1998 (House)
	1999-2005 (Senate)
Lloyd E. Lewis, Jr.	1994-1998
Samuel Britton	1995-2002
Jack Ford	1995-2001
Janet Howard	1995-2001
Peter Lawson Jones	1997-2001
Sylvester Patton	1997-2006
Dixie Allen	1998-2006
John Barnes, Jr.	1999-2002
Catherine Barrett	1999-2006
Shirley A. Smith	1999-2006 (House)
	2007-present (Senate)
Joyce Beatty	1999-present (House)
Annie Key	2001-2006
Fred Strahorn	2001-present
Barbara Sykes	2001-2006
Claudette Woodard	2001-2006
Tom Roberts	1986-2000
	2001-present
Edna Brown	2002-present
Michael DeBose	2002-present
Lance Mason	2002-present
Larry Price	2003-2004
Tyrone Yates	2003-present
Eric Kearney	2003-present
Mike Mitchell	2005-2006

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<b>Year</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>% of Black Legislators</b>
1970	13	9.8
1972	12	9.1
1974	11	8.0
1976	11	8.0
1978	12	9.1
1980	12	9.1
1982	12	9.1
1984	12	9.1
1986	12	9.1
1988	13	9.8
1990	13	9.8
1992	13	9.8
1994	14	10.6
1996	16	12.1
1998	18	13.6
2000	17	12.8
2002	18	13.6
2004	17	12.9

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Table 1.4: Total Number and Percentage of Blacks in Ohio General Assembly (1970-2004) by Election Years

Sources: 1974, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990 editions of *Black Elected Officials* formerly known as *National Roster of Black Elected Officials*, Joint

Center for Political and Economic Studies, Washington, D.C.; Data for 1970 come from Hanes Walton Jr. *Black Politics: A Theoretical and Structural Analysis*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 199, also found in Ralph C. Gomes and Linda Faye Williams, eds. *From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Long Struggle for African American Political Power*, p. 59; 1972 data derive from the *Supplement to the 1971 National Roster of Black Elected Officials*; 1992 data from David Bositis' *Black State Legislators*; 1994 figure derive from the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL), Washington, D.C.; 1998 figures derive from Ohio House and Senate Clerk Offices, also found in David Bositis' *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary 1998*; 2000 data derive from David Bositis, *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary 2000*; 2002 data calculated by author; 2004 data from Vital Statistics on American Politics, 2005-2006 edition.

## **ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter two describes the internal and external legislative environments of Ohio Black state legislators. The main foci of this chapter are to discuss briefly the structure of the Ohio legislature, including an examination of the committee system and the standing committee assignments of Black and White state legislators. In addition, chapter two describes the nature of Black state legislators' districts. A central component of the chapter is an analysis of how district characteristics influence legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. Chapter three describes the methodology, data collection, and theoretical framework of the study. The fourth chapter is an indepth analysis of the backgrounds and political socialization of Ohio legislators. Chapter five presents the research findings and overall models of legislators' policy priorities and explains what factors influence legislative priorities. Chapter six explains the bill sponsorship patterns of Ohio legislators to assess their impact upon legislative agendas. Finally, chapter seven concludes the study by reiterating some of the major findings and by offering suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2  
DESCRIPTION OF LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTS  
(EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL)

The political environments of Ohio Black state legislators are described in this chapter from two perspectives: their external and internal legislative settings. The nature of Black state legislators' districts and their constituency are analyzed to illuminate the external political context in which they operate. Defining characteristics of who they represent and their perceptions of their districts are presented. An analysis of legislators' districts is absolutely essential for understanding the nature of the representational relationship. Empirically examining legislators' districts provide insight into the degree and styles of representation legislators likely give their constituents. Close inspections of the constituencies of Black legislators helps to answer questions about the essence of Black political linkage. According to Fenno (2003) linkage is a key factor in understanding the nature of the representational relationship. The description of their external political environment is followed by a discussion of the internal context in which Black state legislators function. I describe the standing committee assignments of Black and White legislators to assess their potential influence on race-related issues. As a part of the analysis, I also consider relevant factors which influence the way Black state legislators behave within a

majoritarian institution by examining their connections with the political party structure, and the legislative leadership. The analysis of these issues is important for two reasons. First, the study of formal institutional processes is a basis for understanding the kind of influence and power Black state legislators wield in legislative institutions. Second, the coalitional patterns and strategies used by Black state legislators in shaping legislative outcomes of significance to minority communities are identified. The findings of the analysis suggest that responsiveness to Black interest representation increases as Black state legislators become a part of the dominant governing coalition within the legislature (Preuhs 2006).

The extant literature tends to support the proposition that the political environments of legislators significantly influence their legislative behavior (Briscoe 2005; Colston 1972; Fenno 1978, 2003; King-Meadows and Schaller 2006; Preuhs 2006; Tate 2003).<sup>25</sup> Prior studies indicate that legislative environments are extraordinarily important in shaping the opinions and policy preferences of state legislators (Fenno 2003; King-Meadows and Schaller 2006). Fenno (2003), for example, in his recent study on Black congressional behavior observed Black members in Congress and find that their home districts significantly impact their activities. Thus, a central aim of this research is to examine the extent to which external and internal environments of Ohio legislators shape their perceptions of their policy priorities and their ability to achieve them.

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<sup>25</sup> For example, see Colston, *The Influence of the Black State Legislators in the Ohio House of Representatives*, Fenno, *Homestyle* and Tate, *Black Faces in the Mirror*.

Both external and internal factors impact legislative decision-making and agenda-setting behavior. A major extra-legislative factor affecting legislative decision-making is the electoral constituency. Like all legislators, Black legislators are accountable to a well-defined geographical constituency. Legislators, in general, are re-election seekers (Mayhew 1974) who seek to represent the policy views and positions of their constituencies. Since the vast number of Black legislators' districts consists of sizeable Black populations, they tend to articulate policy preferences related to Black needs and interests. The articulation of Black state legislative priorities by Black members strengthens what can be called the Black electoral connection. Simply put, although Black legislators usually represent "safe" districts, they substantially increase their chances of re-election by supporting Black-related issues.

The central role constituents play in the representational relationship has long been recognized by scholars (Fenno 1978; Kingdon 1989; Miller and Stokes 1963). Past research has shown that legislators' policy attitudes, voting behavior and support for certain policies (e.g., civil rights and redistributive) are greatly influenced by district characteristics (Barrett and Cook 1991; Black 1978; Herring 1990; Combs et al. 1984; Hutchings 1998; Overby and Cosgrove 1996; Swain 1995; Whitby 1987, 1997).<sup>26</sup> Specifically, previous researchers have examined the relationship between percentage of Blacks in districts and legislators' support of legislation salient to Black interests

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<sup>26</sup> For a counter view, see James W. Endersby and Charles E. Menifield in *Black and Multiracial Politics in America* (2000). Their analysis of congressional voting behavior across several policy domains (i.e., economic, foreign and social policy) suggest that partisanship is the best determinant of legislative behavior even when district characteristics, such as percent Black or Hispanic are taken into account.

(Klein and Strizek 1995; Bullock and MacManus 1981; Haynie 2001; Herring 1990).<sup>27</sup>

In general, the extant literature suggests that the greater the percentage Black in districts, the more likely legislators will support Black policy interests. Based upon the Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana state senates in 1980, Mary Herring (1990) found a significant relationship between the proportion of Black voters in a district and the roll call voting behavior of Black and White state legislators in the areas of civil rights.

An analysis of the interview data also indicates that other external variables impact legislative decisionmaking. As described in chapter 4, the political socialization processes, organizational connections and political activism of Black legislators play a role in shaping their legislative agendas. The distinctive political origins of Black legislators compared to White legislators reflect the types of policies they prioritize. The legislative agendas of Black state legislators, in particular, are an extension of their backgrounds which inspires more authentic representation.

In addition to external forces, internal legislative structures and institutional dynamics also affect legislative decision-making. Institutional factors affecting Black legislative decision-making include legislators' committee assignments, the legislative leadership, membership in a political caucus, and the degree of partisan power. As Schaller and King-Meadows note (2000, 2006) "institutional features affect interest articulation and preference aggregation, and legislative structure influences the substantive representation of Black interests in state legislative chambers." Thus, the

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<sup>27</sup> Much of this line of research has been applied to the study of congressional politics as opposed to state legislatures. Typically, scholars, such as Swain (1995) and Overby & Cosgrove (1996) employ voting

extent of structural influences on Black legislative behavior will be closely examined in a subsequent section within this chapter.

Drawing upon previous legislative research, this chapter analyzes the relationship between percent Black in district and Ohio legislators' perceptions of their legislative priorities. In other words, one of the main objectives of this chapter is to investigate the relationship between constituency characteristics and legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. I intend to accomplish these objectives through the presentation of data from my interviews and the use of descriptive statistics to clarify and analyze the data derived from these interviews. Before presenting this analysis, I first describe the racial composition, level of poverty, and degree of urbanization of state legislative districts in Ohio.

***External Legislative Environment: District Characteristics***

The data in Table 2.1 show that overall the percentage of Blacks in Ohio districts is small. The mean percent Black of all districts was 10.8. In contrast, the mean percent Black in districts represented by Blacks was 54.2. Of the 132 legislative districts, only 7.2% were majority Black and all were represented by Black legislators. Not surprisingly, in 1993, over half of the Black legislators were elected from majority Black districts. On the other hand, the mean percent Black in White legislators' districts was 5.5. In terms of the level of poverty of Ohio districts, the mean was 6.6. Striking differences in the degree of poverty, however, emerged for Black versus White legislators' districts. The poverty rate of Black legislators' districts was almost three

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indices, such as the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the AFL-CIO's Committee on

times higher than White legislators' districts.<sup>28</sup> The mean percent poor for Black and White legislators' districts was 14.5 and 5.5 respectively.

The high level of poverty in Black legislators' districts is directly linked to disparities in level of incomes and education. The average family income of citizens residing in Black legislators' districts was \$24,995 and \$36,839 for White legislators' districts. The income range for Black districts was \$16,614-\$32,724. In 1993, Representative Troy Lee James (10<sup>th</sup> District-Cleveland) represented the constituency with the lowest average income and Representative Barbara Boyd (9<sup>th</sup> District-Cleveland Heights) represented the district with the highest average income. In sharp contrast, the range for White districts in the same year was \$22,210-\$69,818. In terms of education, the mean percent college educated in Black districts was lower than White districts. The mean percent college educated in Black districts was 18 and 23 in White districts.

Ohio districts were also highly urbanized in 1993 according to standardized measures. The mean percent urban in all districts was 74.2. The districts represented by Blacks were more urban in character than those represented by Whites. On average, Black legislators' districts were nearly a 100% urban and White legislators' districts were 71%. The results also indicate that Black legislators were more likely to perceive their districts as urban while White legislators' characterized their districts as a mix between urban and rural as well as mostly suburban or mostly rural (see Table 2.2).

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Political Education (COPE), etc. to estimate legislators' support of Black interests.

<sup>28</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> district in Cleveland, formerly represented by Troy Lee James was the poorest House district and the 21st district represented by C.J. Prentiss was the poorest Senate district.

The standardized data above confirm Black state legislators' qualitative assessments of their districts. Although some indicated that they represent minority influence districts, most view their districts as predominantly Black.<sup>29</sup> The most heavily populated Black districts were represented by legislators from Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) which included the districts of Representatives Troy Lee James, Verma Whalen and Senators Jeff Johnson and subsequently C.J. Prentiss.<sup>30</sup> The senate district was perceived to be about 65 percent Black while Representative Whalen's district was perceived to be approximately 80 percent Black.<sup>31</sup> Those who defined their districts as minority Black were likely to represent areas of Montgomery County (Dayton) which encompassed the districts of Representatives Dixie Allen, Tom Roberts, and Senator Rhine McLin. For the most part, legislators of minority influence districts noted that the Black population within their districts was quite sizeable with most ranging between 40-48 percent Black.

The socioeconomic reality of Ohio Black state legislative districts described earlier is consistent with legislators' perceptions of the economic conditions within their districts. Generally speaking, they perceive their districts to be economically

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<sup>29</sup> For an analysis of all Black state legislators' districts nationwide, see the study, "The State of Black State Legislators and Legislative Black Caucuses at the Turn of the Century" and *Black State Legislators in an age of Devolution* by Tyson King-Meadows and Thomas F. Schaller.

<sup>30</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> Senate District was represented by Senator Jeff Johnson in the 122<sup>nd</sup> and by Representative C.J. Prentiss in the 123<sup>rd</sup> assembly. Prentiss had previously represented the 8<sup>th</sup> House district. The anomaly was the 11<sup>th</sup> House District, Shaker Heights, a suburban district represented by Peter Lawson Jones.

<sup>31</sup> Data were obtained through personal interviews with Senators Johnson and Prentiss. The approximation given for Representative Whalen's district was provided by former Representative Jack Ford. No information was reported concerning perceptions of former Representative Troy Lee James' district.

disadvantaged.<sup>32</sup> The following statements by Black state legislators<sup>33</sup> provide examples of their perceptions of their districts' socioeconomic status:

Working class to upper middle class, but the district also has some of the poorest precincts as you get to the downtown area those would be annual incomes of \$8,000-\$12,000 which would be mostly seniors on fixed incomes and welfare (Representative Jack Ford, 49<sup>th</sup> House District, Toledo).

Poor, poor. We have a lot of public housing so the income level is probably less than \$10,000 up to \$200,000 that will be some of the Black folks that live in Jefferson Township (Representative Dixie Allen, 38<sup>th</sup> House District, Dayton).

The district is very diverse we've got very very very poor areas of the district, very poor Appalachian areas of the district, very poor African American areas of the district with very high unemployment rates in both areas, we've got middle income working areas of the district and we've got higher income areas of the district, the German Village area, the Berwick, the Eastmoor areas of the district so its very diverse (Representative Charleta Tavares, 22<sup>nd</sup> House District, Columbus).

My definition of my district is that it is the poorest urban district in the state. However, I've got one of the richest communities which is Bratenahl and I've got a very middle class community which is Cleveland Heights . . . . but the majority of the people in my district is either underemployed or unemployed or just working class a lot of homeowners, a lot of low-income housing, a lot of projects. I have all of the projects on the eastside of Cleveland (Senator C.J. Prentiss, 21<sup>st</sup> Senate District, Cleveland).

Overall, the analysis reveals that Blacks represent vastly different districts than their White counterparts. Black legislators are more likely to represent districts that have a greater proportion of Blacks, tend to be poor, urban and have a less educated

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<sup>32</sup> Representative Peter Lawson Jones of Cleveland Heights (House District -11) classified his district as middle class and suburban.

constituency. On the other hand, White legislators tend to represent districts that have significantly less Black constituencies, tend to be affluent, less urban and more educated. Hence, the distinctive socioeconomic and racial profile of Black districts suggests that Black legislators disproportionately believe they have a unique responsibility to deliver policy benefits that will reverse the subordinate material plight and relative socioeconomic situation of their Black constituencies. The incorporation and realization of the policy interests and needs of African Americans is a true test of our representative democracy. The next section considers whether or not the racial makeup of legislators' districts influences the kind of policy priorities they support.

### ***Relationship between District Characteristics and Policy Priorities***

Table 2.3 reports a crosstabular analysis of percent Black in district and legislators' perceptions of their primary policy priorities. The findings suggest that legislators with fewer Blacks (<10 percent) in their district were more likely to state budget as a top legislative priority. Also, over half of the legislators who represent districts between 10-50 percent Black mentioned budget as a top priority. Regardless of the districts' racial composition, legislators, in general, perceive budget as an important policy priority. In sharp contrast, those with greater numbers of Blacks (51-68 percent) in their district were more likely to state social welfare as a primary legislative

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<sup>33</sup> I thank the legislators who participated in this study for granting me permission to use their names for the purposes of this research.

priority.<sup>34</sup> No clear pattern, however, emerged for education although nearly one-fourth of legislators who represent districts between 10-50 percent Black mentioned it as a key legislative priority. Surprisingly, legislators who represent majority Black districts were significantly less likely to report education as the primary legislative priority. These results provide preliminary support for the hypothesis that legislators with greater proportions of Blacks in their districts will be more likely to support Black policy interests, such as social welfare. However, the findings are less conclusive regarding the relationship between other important Black interest areas, such as education. The reason education did not emerge as a primary policy priority of legislators from majority Black districts is because it is an issue of universal concern which cuts across racial lines. Other district variables, such as percent poverty and percent urban yield no discernible patterns of association across policy domains.

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<sup>34</sup> Broad categories of the policy issues were created by aggregating them. For example, the broad category of social welfare encompasses welfare reform, Medicaid, and health reform.

<b>District Characteristics</b>	<b>All Legislators</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>% Black</b>			
Mean	10.8	54.2	5.5
Standard Deviation	17.01	11.0	7.3
Range	0-68	36-68	0-43
<b>% Poverty</b>			
Mean	6.6	14.5	5.5
Standard Deviation	4.1	4.6	2.8
Range	1.50-23.30	8.30-23.30	1.50-13.60
<b>% Urban</b>			
Mean	74.2	99.5	71.2
Standard Deviation	25.7	.91	25.7
Range	13-100	97-100	13-100
<b>Total N</b>	132	14	112

Table 2.1: Descriptive Statistics of Ohio Districts by Race of Legislator (mean percent Black, poverty and urban), 1993

<b>District Composition</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>
Mostly Urban	10.8%	78.6%
Mostly Urban/Suburban	4.5%	14.3%
Mostly Suburban	25.2%	0%
Mixed Suburban/Rural	3.6%	0%
Mostly Rural	25.2%	0%
Mixed Urban/Rural	27.9%	7.1%
Other	2.7%	0%

Table 2.2: Legislators' Perceptions of their Districts' Composition (1993) by Race of Legislator

**Percent Black in District**

<i>Policy Priorities</i>	< 4	<10	10-50	51-68	<b>TOTAL</b>
Budget	43 (58.1)	19 (86.4)	11 (57.9)	3 (33.3)	76 (61.3)
Social Welfare	16 (21.6)	1 (4.5)	1 (5.3)	5 (55.6)	23 (18.5)
Education	7 (9.5)	1 (4.5)	4 (21.1)	1 (11.1)	13 (10.5)
Other	8 (10.8)	1 (4.5)	3 (15.8)	0 (0.0)	12 (9.7)

$X^2=19.8$ ;  $p<.05$ ;  $n=124$

Notes: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Table 2.3: Descriptive Analysis of Percentage Black in Districts and Perceptions of Legislators' Primary Policy Priorities, 1993

***Internal Legislative Environment: The Role of Partisanship, the Legislative Leadership, OLBC, and Standing Committee Assignments***

Similar to the external legislative milieu of Black state legislators, their policy priorities and legislative decision-making are shaped and constrained by the internal legislative environment. The role of political parties, the relationship with the legislative leadership, committee assignment patterns, and OLBC are key factors in understanding the internal dynamics of the Ohio legislature in which Black legislators function.

Political parties are central features of the policy environment within the Ohio general assembly. The bicameral body is composed of two political parties in each

chamber: House Democrats and Republicans and Senate Democrats and Republicans. Each political party in both houses has its own leadership team and rank-and-file membership organized as a party caucus. The dominant party in each chamber is the majority party while the other party is designated as the minority.

The sustained transfer of partisan control over the past decades reveals the competitive nature of political parties in the Ohio legislature. From the mid-1960's through 1973, the Republicans constituted majorities in both the House and the Senate. However, in the early 1970's, Democrats gained control over the House. In 1975 until 1980, the Democrats continued to amass partisan control by acquiring majorities in both the House and the Senate (Arnold and Patterson 1995). The exclusive Democratic party domination, however, was short-lived.

With the advent of the Reagan administration in the 1980's, the Republican party regained power in the Ohio Senate and held onto the majority position throughout the 1990's with the exception of the 1983-1984 session. However, during the same period, Democrats maintained partisan power in the House (Patterson 1994; Arnold and Patterson 1995). In 1993, at the outset of the Ohio Legislative Research Project (OLRP),<sup>35</sup> the general assembly was under divided control. Democrats controlled the House and Republicans constituted the majority in the Ohio Senate. The majority status of the House Democrats was favorable for Black members because they have been and remain to be the most solidly loyal partisans and the backbone of the Democratic Party caucus in the Ohio legislature, which enhanced their ability to satisfy their policy

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<sup>35</sup> The Ohio Legislative Research Project data set will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

priorities and goals. In our survey in 1993, we asked legislators several questions about their partisan attitudes and the role of political parties in the legislature. Ohio Black legislators overwhelmingly exhibited strong partisan loyalty and attachments. The majority of Black members believe that voting along partisan lines is important even if it costs some support in the district compared to a plurality (i.e., near majority) of their White Democratic colleagues. They also think it is extremely necessary to support their party on party votes as a matter of principle and they overwhelmingly agree that party loyalty is vital to getting ahead in the legislature relative to White Democrats. In addition, Black legislators had great deference for the party leadership. Virtually all Black legislators perceived that the party leadership encouraged party discipline in roll call voting and believed in supporting the party leadership in the legislature over the governor.<sup>36</sup> However, most do not feel they should support their party when their position is inconsistent with the party leadership. In terms of the party reform measures, Ohio Black legislators do not advocate nonpartisanship or fully responsible partisanship (see partisan reform measures in Table 2.4)<sup>37</sup>. The latter findings corroborate a prior analysis of the data by Scully and Patterson (2001) although they do not account for racial differences in partisan attitudes. Table 2.4 shows the extent of legislators' agreement and disagreement regarding the partisanship items for Black and White Democrats.

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<sup>36</sup> Data for this analysis derive from the 1993 Ohio Legislative Research Project (OLRP).

<sup>37</sup> Responsible partisanship refers to political parties taking clear cut stands on issues.

Partisan interview Items		Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<b><i>Partisan Loyalty Measures</i></b>							
If a bill is important for his or her party's record a member should vote with the party even if it costs some support in the district.	<b>B D</b>	0.0%	50%	21.4%	21.4%	7.1%	100%
	W D	10.4%	37.5%	14.6%	29.2%	8.3%	100%
A legislator should vote with the majority of his or her own party in the legislature whenever the majority of one party opposes the majority of another, and he or she should do this a matter of principle and not merely as a matter of self-interest.	<b>B D</b>	38.5%	30.8%	15.4%	7.7%	7.7%	100%
	W D	6.5%	43.5%	15.2%	30.4%	4.3%	100%
To get ahead in the legislature a member must support the stands taken by a majority of his or her own party.	<b>B D</b>	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	100%
	W D	10.6%	57.4%	8.5%	19.1%	4.3%	100%
<b><i>Party Leadership</i></b>							
The leadership of my party in the legislature makes a concerted effort to hold the party together on roll-call votes.	<b>B D</b>	57.1%	35.7%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
	W D	17.0%	42.6%	14.9%	21.3%	4.3%	100%
A legislator's first loyalty should be to the party leadership in the legislature rather than the governor if they disagree.	<b>B D</b>	61.5%	23.1%	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	100%
	W D	25.0%	47.9%	16.7%	8.3%	2.1%	100%

Continued

Notes: “**BD**” refers to Black Democrats and WD refers to White Democrats

Table 2.4: Democratic Legislators’ Partisan Attitudes and the Role of Party by Race  
Source: 1993 Ohio Legislative Research Project (OLRP)

Table 2.4 continued

Legislative leaders of my party helped to get me elected to the legislature, so I have an obligation to vote with our party even if I disagree with its stand.	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	53.8%	30.8%	100%
	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	2.1%	10.4%	12.5%	47.9%	27.1%	100%
<b>Partisan interview Items</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
A legislator should support the plans and programs of a governor belonging to his own party whether or not the governor can impose rewards or punishments.	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	21.4%	14.3%	0.0%	57.1%	7.1%	100%
	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	0.0%	25.5%	8.5%	51.1%	14.9%	100%
<b>Party Reform</b>								
The best interests of the people would be better served if legislators were elected without party labels.	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	35.7%	35.7%	100%
	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	2.1%	8.3%	14.6%	37.5%	37.5%	100%
The two parties should take clear-cut, opposing stands on the important state issues in order to encourage party responsibility.	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	7.1%	14.3%	7.1%	50.0%	21.4%	100%
	<b>W</b>	<b>D</b>	0.0%	21.3%	8.5%	40.4%	29.8%	100%

The legislative effectiveness and success of Black legislators in the 120<sup>th</sup> Ohio general assembly (1993-1994) was also due, in part, to their strong connection to the legislative leadership. The firm foundation of effective working relationships with legislative leaders was established early on by the BEDO leadership. Most notably, the late Representative C.J. McLin, Jr., former BEDO leader, was a close friend and ally of the late Vernal Riffe, Jr., longtime former Speaker of the House who was extraordinarily powerful and influential in the legislative affairs of the legislature. C.J. McLin, Jr.'s close friendship with Riffe was highly beneficial in negotiating and

accomplishing the policy goals of Black legislators. In the mid 1970's, for example, C.J. McLin, Jr. was able to bargain with Riffe by getting the Black membership to support the Democratic budget bill in exchange for additional funding for welfare and Central State University (Simms-Maddox 1991; Patterson 1994). Under the exemplary leadership of C.J. McLin, Jr., Black members were central participants in the legislative decision-making process and were extremely effective in acquiring policy benefits for their constituencies. McLin was central for laying the groundwork which linked Black legislators to institutional power through the acquisition of leadership positions.

During the 120<sup>th</sup> general assembly, African American legislators were a significant part of the leadership structure. In the House, William Mallory and Vern Sykes served as Majority Floor Leader and Assistant Majority Floor Leader respectively, while, Ben Espy served as the minority whip in the Senate (Arnold and Patterson 1995). The attainment of leadership positions coupled with majority status in the House represented the opportunity for Black members to powerfully influence the legislative process and to more effectively push their policy agenda.

The partisan dynamics and leadership cadre, however, changed dramatically in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> sessions compared to the 120<sup>th</sup> general assembly. The legislature was Republican-dominated and the first woman and first Republican in twenty years, JoAnn Davidson, served as Speaker of the House. The transformation in House party leadership from Riffe to Davidson greatly impacted the power relations and legislative strategies of the Black legislators. The relationship between the legislative leadership and OLBC in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly was characterized as nonexistent by a

few and good to very good by most of the Black membership. The relations were viewed as positive, for the most part, because the legislative leadership consisted of members of OLBC. Jeff Johnson, president of OLBC during the 122<sup>nd</sup> general assembly explains:

Our relationship with the leadership is very good. We are a part of it; we've mainstreamed into the general leadership of the House and Senate instead of sitting outside of the leadership circles influencing leadership we made a decision to integrate. In fact, one of our members is actually the top Democratic leader in the Senate, Ben Espy. First time we have ever had that and I'm the third ranking Democrat so over in the House we have the third and fourth ranking.

Tom Roberts expressed a similar sentiment regarding relationships with the legislative leadership. According to him,

With the Democrats it was good. Speaker Davidson, it's also good. It's a very good relationship but philosophically we may not agree. We met with her earlier and presented our policy priorities. While the relationship is one that is cordial, whether it turns into results of public policy is another thing.

Despite Black members' connection to the legislative leadership, they found it difficult, at times impossible, to accomplish their policy priorities and to effectively push legislation. Johnson describes how the changes in leadership and partisan control affected the caucus' policy strategies. He states:

We try to build relationships to provide power through the unification with other White Democrats because we're working from a minority status and it is a much different approach. We cajole, conflict with, and confront more through speeches and behind the scenes. Rather than trying to get entire bills passed,

we've moved to an agenda of preventing harmful policies from being passed to influence policy through amendments.<sup>38</sup>

Representative Jack Ford also commented on the constraints Black legislators confronted as a consequence of their minority party status.

Well, it [OLBC] doesn't have much clout because before some of the members were not ranking members on committees, they were the committee chairmen and so they decided it was different from day and night so they can't move legislation, they can't give legislation priority and their party doesn't control the speaker's chair so they have no clout.<sup>39</sup>

Basically, this was the prevailing viewpoint among Black state legislators. One respondent sums up the point: "The fact we're in the partisan minority is a major problem. A major problem that impacts our political effectiveness."

In sum, the data suggest that the legislative effectiveness and agenda setting behavior of Ohio Black state legislators are influenced by three internal factors: partisan loyalty, party status, and their relationships with the legislative leadership within the Ohio legislature. As discussed above, Black legislators were integrally connected to the leadership in the 120<sup>th</sup> general assembly as a consequence of their partisan loyalty, strong BEDO leadership, and their party's control over the speakership. Hence, the realization of their policy priorities and goals were largely achievable. In contrast, in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> sessions, Ohio Black state legislators, although a part of the formal leadership, were weakly linked to the legislative power structure and relationships were not as solidly strong. A loss of leadership and partisan power in the

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<sup>38</sup> Personal interview by author 5/14/98.

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview by author 5/21/98.

122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> general assemblies sharply reduced their ability to effectively fulfill their policy goals which present major challenges for Black state legislators in effectively connecting the Black community to the resources and institutional power of the state legislature.

Standing committees are also central to the policymaking process. It is in committee where legislation is shaped and members advance their policy goals and objectives (Deering and Smith 1997). The committee assignments of legislators typically reflect their policy priorities and their district's needs. Since Black legislators predominantly represent majority Black districts which disproportionately have distinctive social and economic needs, the expectation is that they will serve on committees whose jurisdiction over policy areas pertain to Black interests (Haynie 2001). According to Haynie (2001), committees relating to Black policy interests include health, social welfare, education, civil rights, and employment opportunity.<sup>40</sup> I therefore examine the standing committee assignment patterns of Ohio Black and White state legislators in the 122<sup>nd</sup> and 123<sup>rd</sup> general assemblies to determine their level of representation on Black interest committees. I include in the analysis only the committees that had at least one African American member. The data are based upon information from the senate and house journals for both the 1997-1998 and 1999-2000 sessions. Black representation on committees is measured by the percentage of African Americans on each committee. This method is used because it has been widely applied

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<sup>40</sup> In the Ohio lower house, instead of judiciary, criminal justice is the committee name. Conversely, judiciary is the committee title for the upper house. Hence, judiciary and criminal justice are

by other researchers in estimating Black committee representation (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Haynie 2001). An examination of committee assignments of Black and White legislators indicate the potential influence each group has upon race-related policy priorities.

Although Ohio Black state legislators were fairly dispersed throughout the legislative committee system, their greatest level of concentration was found on Black interest committees. In both sessions, African Americans were proportionally represented on Children and Family Services and Human Services and Aging committees<sup>41</sup>. In the 1997-1998 general assembly, Black house members were fairly represented on the Housing and Public Lands and Education committees. They also acquired additional seats on the Economic Development and Small Business committees in 1999-2000 relative to their representation in the previous session. However, given the seriousness of criminal justice issues within the Black community, they were vastly underrepresented on criminal justice (i.e., judiciary committees) in both assemblies.

Although White legislators were well represented on committees, such as Economic Development and Small Business in the lower house of the 122<sup>nd</sup> legislative session and education in both houses in the 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly, in contrast to Black state legislators, they were significantly underrepresented on Black interest committees,

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synonymous. Haynie includes judiciary as a Black interest committee and it will also be defined as one in this study.

<sup>41</sup> An exception was Black members' representation on Black interest committees, such as Health, Human Services, and Aging in the Senate. Low representation on Black interest committees in the Senate reflects the small number of Black senators.

in both legislative sessions of the lower house.<sup>42</sup> Generally, White legislators were likely to hold positions on committees with jurisdiction over issues regarding the environment, energy policy, insurance, financial institutions and constituency oriented committees, such as veteran's affairs.

Legislators, in general, also attempt to acquire committee positions that will enhance their status, power and prestige within the legislative institution (Deering and Smith 1997). They tend to seek out committee assignments that will increase their influence. These committees include Finance and Appropriations, Rules and Reference, and Ways and Means. Black members were successful in obtaining appointments to prestigious committees in 1997-1998 and 1999-2000. Nearly a majority of Black house members were appointed to the powerful finance and appropriations committee in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> general assemblies. They achieved proportional representation on the committee for both legislative sessions. Black legislators also attained significant representation on the House Ways and Means committee and the Rules and Reference committees in the 122<sup>nd</sup> and 123<sup>rd</sup> general assemblies respectively. Key political factors explain Black members appointment to prestige committees during the two sessions. First, members of the Black delegation held leadership positions which aided in developing a special relationship with the mainstream leadership which enhanced the prospects of African Americans' appointments to powerful committees. Second, the Black legislators as a group discussed committee assignments and networked with the House and Senate leadership to ensure representation of Blacks on key committees.

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<sup>42</sup>An exception was that overall White legislators were significantly represented on Black interest

Unlike Black legislators, surprisingly, White legislators were not proportionally represented on major committees, such as Finance and Appropriations. Their representation on prestige committees varied according to the legislative session and chamber. For example, White legislators were slightly underrepresented on the Ways and Means committee during the 122<sup>nd</sup> general assembly and were significantly underrepresented on the Rules and Reference committee during the 123<sup>rd</sup> session of the lower house. In the Senate, White legislators were well represented on the Ways and Means committee in both legislative sessions, but were not proportionally represented on the Rules or Reference committees.

The analysis suggests that the committee assignments of Black state legislators correspond with their perceptions of their policy priorities (i.e., as outlined in Chapter 5). In collaboration with the legislative leadership, African American legislators strategically positioned themselves on committees that facilitate their representation of Black policy interests. Because Blacks are disproportionately in need of government services given socioeconomic disparities between Blacks and Whites, Black state legislators are more likely to serve on socially oriented committees. These committees include human services, family and children services, education, criminal justice (judiciary), and economic development and small business. At the same time, they acquire appointments to influential committees, such as Finance and Appropriations and Ways and Means. Their representation on these types of committees is also crucial because they give Black legislators the opportunity to have input in the decision-making

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committees, such as criminal justice.

process about budget priorities and allocations as well as enhance their standing and prestige within the legislature.

### ***Implications of Black Interest Committee Representation***

The representation of Black legislators on “Black interest” committees is important for the advocacy of issues pertinent to the Black community. The strategic positioning of Blacks on “Black interest” committees enhances the chances that public policy concerns of interest to the Black community will receive serious consideration within the deliberative process in state legislatures. Their service on these types of committees gives them the unique opportunity to significantly shape legislation that affects Black community interests.

The presence of Black legislators on “Black interest” committees is vital because they bring to the table special knowledge and insights about the reality and needs of the Black community. Their awareness of the internal conditions and problems within the Black community gives them the capacity to “authoritatively” speak about issues impacting their Black constituents. In addressing racial group interests within the context of state legislative politics, Black legislators add to committee deliberations by crystallizing perspectives and interests (Mansbridge 1999) not commonly expressed in legislative decision-making.

<b>Committee Assignments</b>	<b>N of Black Legislators</b>	<b>% African American</b>	<b>N of White Legislators</b>	<b>% White</b>
Civil and Commercial Law	2	18	9	81
Commerce and Labor	2	11.7	15	88
<i>Criminal Justice</i>	2	14.2	12	85.7
<i>Economic Dev. and Sm. Business</i>	2	12	15	88.2
<i>Education</i>	4	19	15	79
Energy and Environment	1	7	13	92.8
<i>Family Services</i>	3	21	11	78.5
Finance and Appropriations	6	19	25	80.6
Financial Institutions	1	4.7	20	95.2
<i>Health, Retirement and Aging</i>	4	19	17	80.9
<i>Housing and Public Lands</i>	3	27	8	72.7
Insurance	2	9.5	19	90.4
Public Utilities	3	13	20	86.9
Rules and Reference	2	10.5	17	89.4
State Government	1	9	10	90.9
Transportation and Public Safety	3	23	10	76.9
Veteran's Affairs	1	9	10	90.9
Ways and Means	3	15.7	16	84.2

Table 2.5: House Committee Assignments of Black State Legislators (122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio General Assembly, 1997-1998)

<b>Committee Assignments</b>	<b>N of Black Legislators</b>	<b>% African American</b>	<b>N of White Legislators</b>	<b>% White</b>
<i>Children and Family Services</i>	3	20	12	80
Civil and Commercial Law	1	9	10	90.9
<i>Criminal Justice</i>	1	7	13	92.8
<i>Economic Dev. and Sm. Business</i>	3	18.7	13	81.2
<i>Education</i>	3	14	18	85.7
Energy and Environment	1	9	10	90.9
Finance and Appropriations	5	16	26	83.8
Financial Institutions	2	9.5	19	90.4
<i>Health, Retirement and Aging</i>	4	19	17	80.9
<i>Housing and Public Lands</i>	2	18	9	81.8
Insurance	3	13	20	86.9
Local Gov. and Townships	3	15	17	85
Public Utilities	1	4	22	95.6
Rules and Reference	4	21	15	78.9
State Government	2	14	12	85.7
Technology and Elections	3	27	8	72.7
Transportation and Public Safety	2	15	11	84.6
Ways and Means	2	10	18	90

Table 2.6: House Committee Assignments of Black and White State Legislators (123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assembly, 1999-2000)

<b>Committee Assignments</b>	<b>N of Black Legislators</b>	<b>% African American</b>	<b>N of White Legislators</b>	<b>% White</b>
Agriculture	1	12.5	7	87.5
<i>Education</i>	1	12.5	7	87.5
Energy, Nat. Resources and Environment	1	12.5	7	87.5
<i>Human Services and Aging</i>	2	25	6	75
<i>Judiciary</i>	1	10	9	90
Reference	1	20	4	80
Rules	2	18	9	81.8
Ways and Means	1	11	8	88.8

Table 2.7: Senate Committee Assignments of Black and White State Legislators (122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio General Assembly, 1997-1998)

<b>Committee Assignments</b>	<b>N of Black Legislators</b>	<b>% African American</b>	<b>N of White Legislators</b>	<b>% White</b>
Agriculture	1	11	8	88.8
<i>Economic Dev., Technology, Aerospace</i>	1	11	8	88.8
<i>Education</i>	1	11	8	88.8
Energy, Nat. Resources and Environment	1	11	8	88.8
Finance and Financial Institution	1	8.3	11	91.6
<i>Health, Human Services and Aging</i>	1	9	10	90.9
Highways and Transportation	1	11	8	88.8
<i>Judiciary</i>	1	11	8	88.8
Reference	1	20	4	80
Rules	2	20	8	80
Ways and Means	1	11	8	88.8

Table 2.8: Senate Committee Assignments of Black and White State Legislators (123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assembly, 1999-2000)

### *Satisfying Legislators' Committee Preferences*

The legislative leadership exercises great control over committee assignments. The distribution of committee assignments are significantly influenced by a combination of factors: seniority,<sup>43</sup> members' areas of policy expertise, geographic distribution and district needs and loyalty to the legislative leadership. The legislative and party leadership use committee assignments as a means of rewarding members in exchange for their party loyalty and support. When legislators defect from the wishes of the legislative and party leadership, members run the risk of losing appointments to preferred committees. In fact, failure to support winning candidates for leadership positions can result in the denial of legislators' committee requests.

In general, the committee preferences of state legislators are usually affirmed. As Haynie (2001) notes, the accommodation of committee assignments of legislators seems to be the norm within state legislatures. The pattern of accommodating legislators' committee preferences enhances the chances of legislators serving on committees which satisfy both their policy interests and their constituents' needs. One of the prime motivations of state legislators in acquiring committee positions is to represent the interests of their constituents (Haynie 2001; Fenno 1973; Eulau and Karpis 1977). In discussing her committee assignments, Rhine McLin acknowledges that her district's interests are a priority when making her committee requests. She states, "I take care of my district first. It is a farming, agriculture district. Consequently, I serve

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<sup>43</sup> Tenure has had less of an effect on committee appointments, in recent times, due to the enactment of term limits in the legislature in the early 1990's.

on the agriculture committee. I'm the only female on the Senate agriculture committee, and needless to say the only African American.<sup>44</sup>

While state legislators are usually successful in getting their committee preferences met, Black state legislators have historically relied upon the Black caucus leadership to bargain with the mainstream legislative leadership to gain access to desired committees. The Black leadership has used resources such as, members' knowledge and policy expertise, and the potential voting strength and cohesiveness of the caucus as leverage in negotiating committee assignments. C.J. Prentiss, formerly the OLBC president, was very effective in networking with the legislative leadership to ensure that a Black presence exists on most committees. As a group, the caucus discusses committee representation to make certain Black members are adequately placed within the committee system. The deliberate strategy of committee selection adopted by the caucus has been described by Ray Miller in the following terms: in coordinating committee preferences of OLBC members, "we try to distribute people based on interest, but sometimes it is not based upon interests" (quoted by King-Meadows and Schaller 2006) but the fact that it is an important committee and there is a need for Black representation.

In gaining their committee requests, the expectations are that Black legislators deliver support and loyalty to the legislative leadership in terms of voting on key policy decisions. In addition, Black state legislators are expected to deliver votes and mobilize support for favored candidates seeking leadership positions inside the legislature.

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<sup>44</sup> Personal interview by author 4/14/98.

Outside of the legislature, Black members are expected to galvanize electoral support for party candidates running for the state legislature. In more recent times, the amount of campaign funds raised for the party caucuses (e.g., Democratic) has been an increasingly important factor in influencing committee appointments.

### ***Conclusion***

In the final analysis, the political environments (i.e., external and internal) of Black state legislators affect their perceptions of their policy priorities and their ability to pursue them. Their external environments (i.e., districts) are extraordinarily racially and economically homogenous. Black state legislators, in general, represent Black majority districts which are disproportionately low-income and less educated. Consequently, given the racial nature of their districts, they advocate Black policy priorities, especially in terms of social welfare policy.

The internal political environments of Black state legislators are influenced by several variables: partisanship, party status, legislative leadership and connections, and committee assignments. Black legislators are overwhelmingly Democratic and liberal and are extremely loyal to the Democratic party and its leadership which results in greater influence in policy areas central to the representation of Black-related issues. In addition, their connections to the legislative leadership and their party status within the Ohio legislature significantly shape or constrain their policy priorities and their legislative effectiveness. When Black legislators are solidly connected to the political power structure and the Democratic party is in control of the legislature, they have more flexibility in prioritizing and advancing their policy interests. In contrast, when

Republicans are in power, the policy priorities of Black legislators may be more constrained.

Lastly, the committee assignments of Black legislators reflect their policy priorities. Black legislators overwhelmingly acquire committee positions that are amenable to the articulation of Black policy interests. Simultaneously, they gain appointment to prestige committees which advance their legislative careers and institutional status. All in all, the committee appointments of Ohio Black state legislators symbolize the duality dilemma as explained by Haynie (2001). On one hand, they are race representatives through their service on Black interest committees. On the other hand, they are “responsible legislators” because of their participation on other committees that pertain to important nonracial legislative concerns.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **DATA COLLECTION: THE OHIO LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT**

The data for this inquiry derive from personal interviews with members of the Ohio legislature conducted in the spring and summer of 1993 as part of the Ohio Legislative Research Project (OLRP). The Ohio Legislative Research Project is an on-going effort designed to increase the understanding of legislative politics in Ohio. The goal of the project is to develop a data source about the characteristics, perspectives, and orientations of individual legislators to better understand legislative decision-making.

In 1993, one-hundred and twenty six members of the Ohio General Assembly were interviewed. The response rate was 95%. One-hundred and twelve were White and fourteen were Black. The interview schedule consisted of a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions about a variety of issues concerning the legislature, and its members. The questionnaire contained primarily nominal and ordinal level data.

Other sources of data collection include supplementary elite interviews conducted by the investigator in the spring of 1998 and early winter 1999 with current members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) formerly known as the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio (BEDO).<sup>45</sup> In early winter 1998, I contacted the former executive director of OLBC, Kevin Boyce to introduce the study and to request his assistance in informing the OLBC leadership about the purpose of the research and

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<sup>45</sup> All OLBC members at the time were interviewed with the exception of two who refused the interview.

interviews. During a regularly scheduled meeting of the Black caucus, the executive director and the former OLBC president, Jeff Johnson notified the membership about the study. Shortly thereafter, follow-up letters, describing the intent of the research and interviews, were sent by the researcher to all current OLBC members. Subsequently, personal phone calls were made to the staffpersons of all OLBC members to arrange a time for the interviews.

The additional data were collected to bolster the number of Black legislators included in the study and to obtain indepth information about their political orientations and recruitment processes, social backgrounds, policy attitudes, and their environmental contexts. Many of the survey items used in 1998 were drawn from the 1993 interviews. The data obtained from the second round of interviews capture a detailed understanding of the influence and policymaking behavior of the OLBC. The OLBC was selected as a case study analysis because historically it has been an active, durable and influential organization within the Ohio legislature. In addition, since its inception in 1967, the caucus membership has steadily increased. Thus, although limited in terms of generalizability, it is an ideal research case study for analyzing the policy role and initiatives of Black state legislators. Census data extracted from the Political Atlas of Ohio, 1990 Census Edition were also used to estimate the level of poverty and the percent urban/rural populations in each legislative district.

In general, elite interviewing is a highly beneficial method for observing social phenomena and processes. Since the 1950's, elite interviewing has been a methodology used by political researchers to study the legislature and its members. Wahlke et al. (1962) pioneered one of the first interview studies of American state legislators in four states designed to broadly understand legislative institutions and

legislators' attitudes and orientations. Describing their methodology, Wahlke and colleagues noted:

It was not our primary purpose to ask respondents for information about their overt actions, though such a course might be justified for some research. Our interviews were designed rather to secure data primarily about legislators' perceptions, so that we could inferentially construct portions of their cognitive and evaluative maps.

The current research is approached from a similar perspective. The overall aim is to acquire an understanding of legislators' perceptions and attitudes about a variety of factors both external and internal to the legislative institution to gain broad knowledge about legislative decision-making and behavior. Some of the questions used in this research are based upon Wahlke et al.'s study.

Elite interviewing allows the interviewer to obtain a clearer understanding of issues, such as patterns in political behavior and attitudes through the use of probes and contingency questions (see Babbie 2004). In-depth elite interviews, in particular, increase the richness of the text and are extremely useful for clearly discerning the political motivations and actions of legislators. The interviewing of elites also produces well-thought out, informed and rational responses. In his seminal study on mass belief systems, Converse (1964) finds that elites as compared to the mass public have a constrained and coherent set of beliefs and attitudes. Thus, the interviewer lessens the risk of measuring nonattitudes and instead is more likely to obtain "genuine attitudes".

The personal interview technique was adopted to observe legislators' interactions and behaviors within their political milieu.<sup>46</sup> This approach was also used to yield a high response rate. Although elite interviewing has many advantages, there are some drawbacks (see Asher 1992; Dexter 1970). For example, the interviewing process was fraught with some difficulties. The second wave of elite interviews spanned over a one-year period. The data collection process was prolonged due to the busy schedules and inaccessibility of some legislators. Past researchers have also noted the difficulty in gaining access to political elites (see Wahlke et al. 1962; Weisberg et al. 1999). Hunt et al. (1964), for instance, conducted interviews of state legislators in various countries, including the United States, and on occasion, found it challenging to obtain interviews with state legislators. To counteract this problem in this study, the interviewer allowed great flexibility in her schedule. Extending the interviewing process resulted in some respondents' recall of information from the previous legislative session. Despite a few problems, insightful information was gleaned from the interviewing process.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Hypotheses**

The theory of this study grows out of a tradition of legislative and racial politics (e.g., Colston 1972; Hedge & Button 1996; Haynie 1994, 2001; Hedge et al. 1996;

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<sup>46</sup> At the time of this study, Representative Charleta Tavares was a candidate for Ohio Secretary of State, I therefore, agreed to conduct the interview at her campaign headquarters.

Simms Maddox 1991; Patterson 1994; Wahlke et al. 1962). It posits that race is a key factor to explaining differences in policy priorities among legislators. Some credence in this theory is found in the work of Button and Hedge (1996) who argue that differences between Black and White legislators are largely attributable to race even when other variables, such as party status, racial composition of district, and gender are taken into consideration. The importance of race in understanding legislative priorities has been observed by one scholar who states:

In the United States racial issues have been embedded in the country's primary institutions from its very inception; over the years racial politics has permeated every facet of American life, infusing itself into the policy priorities of national, state, and local institutions.<sup>47</sup>

While few theoretical expectations are made, some hypothesized relationships are noteworthy. I expect to find that the primary policy priorities of Blacks and Whites will differ. Black legislators usually articulate and represent the demands and concerns of the Black community and other minorities. Therefore, they are more likely to support policies in favor of Black interests. In fact, empirical studies have shown that Black legislators are more likely to propose "Black interest" legislation than White legislators (Bratton 1997, 2002; Bratton & Haynie 1999; Haynie 1994, 2001). Likewise, Royster (1992) found that race is an important variable in explaining the differences in policy attitudes between Black and White state legislators even after controlling for other variables, such as region.

In addition, studies at the congressional level suggest that Black representatives are most responsive to Black policy preferences (Lublin 1997, Whitby 1997).<sup>48</sup> The mainstream literature in legislative politics has traditionally shown that Black legislators

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in William E. Nelson Jr.'s (2000) *Black Atlantic Politics: Dilemmas of Political Empowerment in Boston and Liverpool*.

<sup>48</sup> For a counter view, see Swain (1995).

are more likely to support redistributive policies, social policies and civil rights policy (Singh 1998, Whitby 1987, 1997 etc.).

In this research, political socialization is also used as an explanatory variable of legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. I investigate whether or not the political socialization processes of legislators influence policy priorities. In particular, I posit that the political socialization process of Black and White state legislators differ as a result of the different historical conditions, backgrounds, and life experiences of Blacks and Whites. Generally speaking, the predecessors of contemporary Black legislators became involved in politics through less mainstream political routes. Many Black legislators tend to be by-products of the civil rights movement. Consequently, I predict that legislators who became involved in the political process through group activities such as protest movements and civil rights organizations and campaigns may be more likely to advocate Black policy interests. The reasoning behind this theory is that Black political leadership originating from the civil rights era was internally recruited by indigenous grassroots organizations and institutions within the Black community. They were culturally and consciously aware of the pervasive racial and socioeconomic inequalities that plagued the African American community and were inherently committed to racial advancement.

I also postulate that district characteristics, such as racial composition, level of poverty and degree of urbanization in districts will influence legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. Specifically, I predict that legislators with a greater proportion of Blacks in their districts will be more likely to support policy priorities in the interest of Blacks. While most legislators strive to represent their constituents, African American legislators, in particular, tend to have a significantly higher percentage of Black constituents in their districts in comparison to their White colleagues. Thus, the

explanation underlying this assumption is based upon a shared racial identity and linked fate of Black legislators and their constituents. African American legislators push Black-related policy issues because they perceive that their individual fate is connected to the group. The expectation is also consistent with past research (Bratton and Haynie 1999; Swain 1995; Haynie 2001). Whitby (1997), for example, found that racial composition of districts influences legislators' policy preferences. Based upon an analysis of the voting behavior of congresspersons, his analysis showed that the percent Black population in districts had a statistically significant impact upon legislators support for civil rights issues, such as fair housing. Haynie (2001) also concluded that higher percentages of Blacks in districts were positively related to legislators' support of civil rights legislation. In addition, since Blacks are disproportionately more likely to live in poverty than Whites,<sup>49</sup> I expect legislators representing impoverished districts to be more likely to support Black policy priorities. These expectations are also based upon prior research (Whitby 1987; Barrett 1995).

The agenda setting behavior of legislators is also likely to be shaped by the internal legislative environment. In particular, I argue that structural factors, such as party, leadership status and connections, and committee assignments impact the policy agenda and decision-making of legislators. Past research has shown that party has a significant impact upon legislators' support of Black policy preferences (Whitby 1997, 1987) and powerfully influences legislators' voting decisions (Scully & Patterson 2001; Clausen 1973). Recent research has also examined the relationship between Black legislators' committee assignments and the representation of Black interests (Haynie 2001; Tate 2003). According to this body of research, Black legislators are highly

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<sup>49</sup> Michael Dawson (1994) examines the Black-white ratio on a variety of economic indicators. In particular, he compares the income, unemployment, and poverty levels among the two groups over time.

represented on Black interest committees which significantly heighten their chances of influencing and shaping race-related policy issues.

### **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: THEORIES OF BLACK LEGISLATORS**

The theoretical framework of this analysis is based upon two rival explanations of legislative activism. One model argues that the differences between White and Black state legislators are attributed to social group identity theory.<sup>50</sup> The other model suggests that similarities among the two racial subgroups are based upon a structural-integrationist explanation of politics. Structural-integrationist means that legislators conform to institutional norms and behavioral expectations of legislatures in order to become integrated within legislative institutions. The former model suggests that racial differences are due to legislators of similar racial backgrounds having a strong desire to identify with their social group as a result of common cultural experiences, similar electoral constituencies (racial), and shared racial identity. The theoretical underpinnings of this model are based upon the notion of group consciousness.<sup>51</sup> From the political science literature, widespread evidence suggests that a sense of group consciousness is prevalent among African Americans (Dawson 1994; Nelson 2002; Miller et al. 1981; Shingles 1981; Tate 1993, 1994). Michael Dawson's (1994) study on Black political attitudes and behavior shows that despite the growing economic

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<sup>50</sup> For a conceptual review of social identity theory and a discussion of a social psychology approach of intergroup behavior, see Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior in Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Also, Henri Tajfel, "Social categorization, social identity and social comparison" in Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology

<sup>51</sup> The concept of group consciousness in relation to the political participation levels of various demographic groups has been studied extensively by political scientists. Traditionally, the concept of group consciousness has been defined as a psychological attachment/identification to one's social group. However, scholars such as Miller et al. (1981) have challenged this unidimensional definition, and argue that the concept encompasses several components. Miller et al. found that for subordinate groups, a sense of group identification, polar affect (i.e. a liking for one's group and a disliking for the counter group), and systemic blame stimulate collective action from the subordinate group.

heterogeneity within the Black community, African Americans have a remarkably high degree of racial consciousness. According to Dawson, Blacks perceive that their individual “fate” is linked to that of their racial group. And, therefore, African Americans’ perceptions of their racial group interests, defined as the Black utility heuristic, shape their evaluations of political parties, candidates, and policies and are important to understanding African Americans’ political unity and behavior. Hall and Heflin (1994) apply the theory of group consciousness to members of Congress. They suggest that Black members of Congress will manifest a strong sense of racial group identification and as a result will support policies central to Black constituencies. Similarly, Mathis (1985) measures the degree of racial consciousness among Black state legislators. He postulates that Black legislators will exhibit a high degree of racial solidarity as a result of past discrimination and historical oppression. Contrary to his expectations, he found that Black legislators did not have a high level of racial consciousness. Perhaps, the findings of his study can best be explained in terms of contemporary Black elected officials as opposed to traditional Black political leaders.

Historically, Black political leadership has been the catalytic agent for fostering and cultivating an awareness of Black consciousness in order to stimulate political action and the attainment of group goals (Nelson 2002). Black political leaders, for example, emanating from the civil rights movement, displayed a strong sense of political consciousness. They were prime advocates in altering and improving the economic, political and social conditions of the Black community.

In comparison, the shift from “protest to politics” characterized as the “new Black politics” has occasionally resulted in a new style of Black political leadership. The new generation of Black elected officials tends to practice the politics of

deracialization.<sup>52</sup> Deracialization is a political strategy in which explicitly racial issues and concerns are not emphasized in an effort to appeal to a broader constituency.<sup>53</sup>

Canon (1999) argues that newly elected Blacks to Congress are more likely to exhibit a “politics of commonality” as opposed to a “politics of difference”, a strategy advocated by older Black congresspersons. CBC members who adopt the politics of commonality approach represent their districts by “balancing” the interests and concerns of their constituencies both Black and White.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the goal and exclusive focus of Congresspersons who embrace “the politics of difference” strategy is to represent the distinctive nature of Black interests. Robert C. Smith (1996) contends that the integration of Black elected and appointed officials into mainstream institutions in the post civil rights era has resulted in the neglect and marginalization of “Black interests”. Unlike the civil rights leadership, according to Smith, the cooptation, integration, and institutionalization of contemporary Black leaders have caused them to be divorced from “internal communal” problems within the Black community which leads him to conclude that Black political leadership has become increasingly irrelevant in the post civil rights era.

The latter perspective of legislative activism posits elite accommodation and consensus-building. A necessary condition for the enactment of desired policies may require that legislators from different racial backgrounds work together in biracial alliances. Participation in dominant governing coalitions produces substantive policy responsiveness and results for minority groups’ interests (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984). Lani Guinier (1994) argues that without effective legislative allies in a

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<sup>52</sup> See Joseph McCormick II and Charles E. Jones, “The Conceptualization of Deracialization: Thinking Through the Dilemma” in *Dilemmas of Black Politics: Issues of Leadership and Strategy*

<sup>53</sup> See Lucius Barker and Mack Jones (1994) *African Americans and the American Political System*.

<sup>54</sup> Empirically analyzing the nature of racial representation of CBC members, Canon develops two variants of the “politics of commonality” approach, the balancing and deracialization perspectives.

majoritarian system, even Black “authentic” legislators are unable to influence public policy and respond to “Black interests”.

Matthew Holden’s (1973) seminal analysis on the character of Black political leadership proposes three distinct forms of external politics or roles adopted by Black leaders: clientage, opposition, and withdrawal. He vehemently rejects clientage (synonymous with an accommodationist ideology and strategy of leadership) based upon the idea that no direct challenge to the racial status quo is likely to be fruitful and withdrawal (comparable to a Black nationalist strategy) based upon a separatist ideology and the creation of a Black nation-state as viable approaches. Instead, Holden argues that opposition (analogous to an integrationist perspective) is the optimal strategy for altering the power relations and arrangements between Blacks and Whites. In accordance with Holden’s logic, therefore, Black legislators must become integrated into legislative institutions and must negotiate and develop cooperative alliances with White legislators, especially their Democratic colleagues in their efforts to articulate and pursue their policy agenda. One of the major precepts of the oppositionist strategy is that Black leaders (e.g., Black state legislators) must be willing to challenge their White counterparts and to hold them accountable to democratic norms in order to promote change and to reverse the Black predicament. Button and Hedge (1996) contend that “similarities among legislators are a prerequisite for accommodation while differences often result in discrimination and conflict”. In the context of these findings, this research will demonstrate which polar conception of legislative activism, social group identity or structural integrationist, best characterizes the reality of Black state legislators in Ohio.

## **DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**

A variety of methodological techniques including descriptive statistics, chi-square, lambda, the independent t-test, multiple response and multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to estimate the percent Black, percent poverty, and percent urban of districts represented by Black and White state legislators. To discern the relationship between percent Black in district and the dependent variable, legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities, chi square was employed as a test of statistical significance. It was also used to ascertain the degree of statistical differences between two independent variables, race of legislator and political socialization. Since the political socialization variable is categorical, lambda, a proportion in reduction of error (PRE) measure was used to determine the association between political socialization and policy priorities.

The principal data analysis techniques employed in this study are multiple response, multiple regression analyses and the independent sample t-test. Multiple response analysis is a procedure used to obtain the frequencies of a series of responses generated from the open-ended questions to measure the differences in legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. Multiple regression is used to estimate the effects of the independent variables upon the dependent variable. Through the use of the multiple regression technique, the proportion of variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. In particular, a host of variables involving demographic characteristics, district composition, and institutional factors are used to predict the dependent variable, legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. The independent variables include race, percent Black, percent poverty, and percent urban in districts, party affiliation, and ideology. The political socialization processes and committee assignments of legislators are also used as explanatory variables.

In a separate analysis, legislators' bill introductions, measured as the number of bills which contain positive racial content, are used as the dependent variable. The independent sample t test is used to analyze the bill sponsorship patterns of legislators. The t-test estimates the difference of means between groups and determines whether or not significant differences emerge between and within demographic groups.

A multimethod approach was used in order to comprehensively understand the subtleties associated with racial representation. Recent scholarship on race and representation has shown that the triangulation of methods and data enhances the strength of analyses (Canon 1999). For example, using a variety of research methods and data including case study analyses, elite interviews, content analyses and various statistical procedures to study racial representation, Canon provides one of the most complete accounts of racial representation at the congressional level. The methodological approach adopted resulted in the identification of new patterns to explain the dynamics of race and representation which were undetected in prior studies that relied upon limited research methods and data. Based upon this idea, I use elite interviews, case studies, bill analyses, and a series of data analyses techniques as a means to more fully understand the nature of racial representation at the state legislative level.

The primary criterion for selection of methods was based upon the fact that the data were principally nominal level. Basically, I used data analysis techniques (e.g., chi square, lambda, multiple response analysis) appropriate for categorical (or nominal) data. The use of nominal level data is very restrictive because only a limited number of statistical procedures are applicable. After using appropriate methods of analysis for nominal level data, the data used to measure the dependent variable, perceptions of policy priorities, were transformed to ordinal levels of measurement for the purposes of

rank ordering and assessing relative importance of legislators' policy preferences. The conversion of the data necessitated the use of multiple regression. I chose multiple regression, instead of ordinal logistic regression,<sup>55</sup> because it allows for a full range of possibilities on the dependent variable. Logistic regression, in contrast, requires narrowing the scope of the dependent variable by constructing a dichotomous variable which results in a loss of information and does not provide a full understanding of legislative thought.

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<sup>55</sup> Multinomial logistic regression was not applied because of the need to rank-order policy preferences.

## CHAPTER 4

### POLITICS IN BLACK AND WHITE: KEY PATTERNS OF LEGISLATIVE SOCIALIZATION

Political orientations often have some influence upon individuals' political preferences, judgments and decision-making. In fact, past research shows that political socialization influences political attitudes and behavior (Walton, Jr. 1985; 1997). The goal of this chapter is to analyze the patterns of political socialization of Ohio state legislators. In particular, I test the hypothesis that political socialization processes will differ across the two racial subcultures of state legislators. As a result, I argue that the different political-social development processes of black and White legislators will significantly shape their perceptions of their policy priorities. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I expect to find that legislators who became socialized into politics through the civil rights experience will be more likely to support black policy interests. Ultimately, I seek to analyze the influence of political socialization upon legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities.

The political socialization processes of American state legislators have been studied extensively by scholars (see Colston 1972; Eulau 1959; Kornberg & Thomas 1970; Wahkle et al. 1962; Patterson 1994; Prewitt et al. 1966; Simms Maddox 1991). The extant research, however, does not take into consideration racial differences in the political socialization of legislators. Rather, sources of political socialization are viewed as identical for majority and minority racial groups (Wahkle et al. 1962). Wahkle et al.'s. (1962) classic study, for instance, found that political socialization of

Black and White state legislators are influenced by the same primary institutions: the family and schools.<sup>56</sup> The analysis, however, does not address the deeper questions of whether or not the processes of political socialization are the same for Black and White legislators.

Other studies focus on explaining only black political socialization (Marvick 1965; Morris et al. 1997; Perry 1976; Walton, Jr. 2000; Walton, Jr. 1985; Walton, Jr. et al. 1997). For example, Morris et al. (1997) argue that the political socialization process of African Americans has been shaped by the group's historical and structural situation. Specifically, these scholars link the political socialization process of blacks to protest politics, namely the civil rights movement. They contend that the civil rights movement was a central socialization agent for the black community. Button and Hedge (1996), for example, found that the majority of black state legislators are socialized into politics through the civil rights movement. In addition, in his analysis of the civil rights movement, Steven Lawson (1997) persuasively argues that black elected officials, in general acquired much of their political training as a result of the civil rights movement. The political science literature dealing with black political socialization commonly asserts that black political socialization is different from White political socialization (Walton, Jr. 2000; Walton, Jr. 1985; Walton, Jr. et al. 1997; Morris et al. 1997).<sup>57</sup> However, the empirical evidence substantiating the distinctive socialization experiences of Black and White state legislators is lacking.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> An exception is Button and Hedge (1996).

<sup>57</sup> Morris et al. assert that African Americans/Blacks use unconventional means to become socialized into politics. According to them, protest strategies, such as the civil rights movement, are significant to the political socialization process of Blacks.

<sup>58</sup> Here again, an exception is Button and Hedge (1996) as well as Perry (1976).

## **CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION**

The concept, political socialization, has been defined and measured in numerous ways. According to Eulau et al. (1959), political socialization is the "process by which people selectively acquire the values, attitudes, interests or knowledge that fit them for particular political roles and make them take these roles in characteristic ways." More precisely, political socialization is a learning process which is usually shaped by formal institutions, such as the family or school and occasionally may be influenced by informal interactions. According to Robert Lane (1959), the family exerts considerable influence upon the political attitudes of children. At the same time, he argues that other agents, such as school and group membership, have an impact upon the development of political attitudes and behavior.

In this study, political socialization refers to the process by which legislators acquire their political orientations. It adopts Wahlke et al's. (1962) measurement of political socialization. They studied the political socialization processes of state legislators by identifying major sources of political interest. This section taps into Wahlke et al's. measure of political socialization by discussing Ohio legislators answer to the question: How did you happen to get interested in going into politics?

The open-ended question yielded a variety of responses. Responses were collapsed and aggregated into broader categories.<sup>59</sup> The chi-square test was used to measure whether or not a statistically significant relationship exists between race of legislator and the political socialization variable. Although the 1993 survey revealed various sources of political socialization among Ohio legislators, the chi-square result indicates no statistical differences in the principal source of political socialization among White and Black legislators. Both groups were likely to attribute their political

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<sup>59</sup> Some categories were adopted from Wahlke et al's. study.

socialization to personal predispositional factors such as a longtime interest. This finding is consistent with Wahlke et al.'s (1962) classic study of nearly four decades ago which found that a majority of Ohio legislators' (52%) principal source of political socialization derives from a longtime interest in politics. In addition, White legislators, in contrast to Black legislators, were likely to report that their political family background served as a prime stimulant in their political socialization process (Table 4.1). Black legislators were 4.5 percentage points less likely than White legislators to mention political family background as their primary source of political socialization.<sup>60</sup> Notwithstanding as Blacks become a growing part of legislative bodies, primary family connections are emerging as a key component of Black legislative politics. Evidence of this pattern can be clearly seen in legislators' description of their political socialization experiences provided by Black state legislative interviews completed for this study.

<b>Sources of Political Interest</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>
Longtime Interest	18.8%	21.4%
Political Family	18.8	14.3
Group Activities	13.4	14.3
Prior Political Experience	13.4	14.3
School-related Activities	11.6	14.3
Civic Responsibility	10.7	14.3
Other	<u>13.4</u>	<u>7.1</u>
Total %	100.0	100.0
Total N	112	14

$X^2=.798; df=6$

Table 4.1: Percentage Differences of Major Sources of Political Interest for White and Black Legislators

<sup>60</sup> Button and Hedge (1996) found that a third of both Black and White state legislators reported that their parents were active in politics.

Congruent with the pattern for primary sources of political socialization, no statistical differences were found for secondary sources of political socialization among White and Black legislators. However, of the Black legislators reporting a secondary source of political socialization, a plurality (40%) mentioned previous political experience (e.g., party work, campaigns, etc.). On the other hand, White legislators (27%) viewed an opportunity to compete for an open seat as their secondary means of political socialization<sup>61</sup>. Similarly, White legislators (25%) were as likely to note previous political experience as their secondary source of political interest. An interesting component of the data was that proportionately more Black legislators perceived civic responsibility as a secondary reason for shaping their political socialization processes. Shared linked fate among Blacks fosters an obligatory sense of empowering the Black community by participating in community-based movements designed to uplift the race. In turn, in many cases, these efforts form the basis of the political socialization processes of Black state legislators. A similar pattern is not clearly evident among White state legislators. Though variations appear in the sources of political socialization of Black and White state legislators, no consistent pattern of racial differences emerged for primary and secondary agents of political socialization for both White and Black legislators (Table 4.2).

The lack of statistical difference in political socialization among the two groups is most likely a result of the small number of cases. According to Paul Allison (1999), sample size has a major impact upon tests of significance. He states that "in a small

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<sup>61</sup> According to the data, opportunity was defined as a vacancy of office.

sample, statistically significant coefficients should be taken seriously, but a nonsignificant coefficient is extremely weak evidence for the absence of an effect." Hence, the findings of the quantitative data are tentative and statistically inconclusive.

To estimate the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable, political socialization, a proportion in reduction of error (PRE) measure of association, lambda, was used.<sup>62</sup> Contrary to theoretical expectations, the lambda value was 0 which indicates that political socialization is no help in predicting the dependent variable. In a study of bill sponsorship cohesiveness of the Congressional Black Caucus, Pinney and Serra (2002) postulated that political styles (i.e., civil rights background vs. traditional political recruitment patterns) affect bill cosponsorship cohesion of Black members of Congress. In other words, they argue that CBC members with civil rights experience will be more likely to perceive politics in racial terms and will have higher levels of bill cosponsorship cohesiveness with the caucus in comparison to newer CBC members without a civil rights background. Despite these differences in civil rights political orientation, in the final analysis, this issue of differences appeared to have no discernible impact on their level of bill sponsorship cohesion. Pinney and Serra (2002) indicate that similarities in bill cosponsorship cohesion among Black members of Congress stand out boldly regardless of civil rights orientations. Similarly, the result presented here does not indicate a clear connection between legislators' policy preferences and political orientations.

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<sup>62</sup> Lambda was used because it was the most appropriate measure of association for categorical data.

Analysis of secondary sources of political interests suggest a greater degree of difference in patterns of political socialization for Black and White state legislators. These data, however, do not fully reflect the range of differences that tend to exist in the political socialization experiences of Black and White state legislators. Limitations associated with the quantitative data require that we move beyond the numbers to examine the socialization experiences of state legislators in Ohio through the use of qualitative techniques. In this regard, we should note that qualitative data gathered in early to mid 1998 and 1999, provide some support for the theory that the political-social development of state legislators varies by race.<sup>63</sup>

<b>Sources of Political Interest</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>
Opportunity	27.8%	20.0%
Prior Political Experience	25.3	40.0
School-related Activities	13.9	10.0
Civic Responsibility	8.9	20.0
Other	<u>24.1</u>	<u>10.0</u>
Total %	99.9	100.0
Total N	79	10

$X^2=2.88; df=4$

Table 4.2: Percentage Differences of Secondary Sources of Political Interest for White and Black Legislators

The qualitative data suggest that Black legislators are socialized into politics in both conventional and unconventional ways. In particular, the data show that Black legislators, in contrast to their White colleagues, are socialized through Black advocacy

<sup>63</sup> Only data for Black legislators were gathered during the second data collection. Unfortunately, parallel data were not obtained for White legislators.

groups and civil rights organizations, such as the NAACP and the Urban League.<sup>64</sup>

These results corroborate Robert Perry's (1976) classic study on Black state legislators in the Missouri House of Representatives who also found that a majority of Black state legislators affiliate with civil rights organizations, most notably the NAACP.

The following analysis describes the political history and patterns of political socialization for a selected number of Black state legislators in Ohio. Four major sources of political socialization were identified. The family and school were the principal traditional agents of political socialization while membership in Black political organizations, civil rights participation, and mentoring were nontraditional forms of political socialization. As a complement to the quantitative analyses of legislators' socialization processes reported above, the analysis below qualitatively assesses patterns of political socialization of Black state legislators in Ohio.

### ***Family Background and Civil Rights Participation***

Senator Rhine McLin (Senate District-5) links her process of political socialization to her family background and her ambition to further the civil rights legacy of her father, the late Representative C.J. McLin, who served in the state legislature for twenty-two years. According to Senator McLin,

My grandfather was the first African American in the city of Dayton to run for mayor, I mean run for the city commissioner. He didn't win but in the process they bombed our building a lot of racist things were done in the paper to see that he didn't win. So

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<sup>64</sup> Historically, the NAACP and Urban League have been organizational structures which represent the interests of the Black community. Even today, these civil rights organizations continue to articulate the needs and interests of the Black community.

there's a history of the family always being politically involved maybe not as elected, but my grandfather help integrate some of the stores that were in the neighborhood that if they were going to be in our neighborhood they had to hire Blacks so I come from a family of strong civil rights.<sup>65</sup>

Shaped by her family environment, Senator McLin also actively participated in the protest marches and demonstrations of the 1960's civil rights movement. Her fight for civil rights continues through her involvement in organizations such as the NAACP and SCLC.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, Senator C.J. Prentiss' (Senate District-21)<sup>67</sup> political socialization process was shaped by her family environment. While both of her parents were politically active, her father, in particular, was centrally involved in political organizations and activities in Cleveland. Prentiss' father, for example, was responsible for the integration of an amusement park, Buford Beach, in Cleveland. He also worked with a group called the Future Outlook League led by John O'Howley ( a pre-Dr. King in Cleveland according to Prentiss) in the 1940's. This organization was critical in mobilizing the Black community to put pressure on corporate entities such as Ohio Bell to hire Blacks.

Encouraged by her formative political training and experiences, Senator Prentiss became centrally involved in civil rights groups and political organizations in Cleveland. Most notably, Prentiss was a key player in the civil rights struggle for school desegregation in Cleveland during the late 1970's. In 1978, a court ordered the

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<sup>65</sup> Interview by author 4/14/1998.

<sup>66</sup> Follow-up personal interview on 7/31/2001. Senator McLin is a life member of the NAACP.

desegregation of Cleveland public schools. Prior to this decision, a similar court order was handed down in Boston which precipitated race riots and protests in that city. To help reduce racial tensions and animosity in Cleveland, Prentiss organized a group of Black community leaders to promote peaceful school desegregation. Eventually, the all Black organization joined forces with the all White group led by Michael Turney, her husband, to develop an interracial political organization known as WELCOME to fight for peaceful school desegregation in the public schools in Cleveland. Prentiss states, “I met my husband, he is White, I am Black and we began to organize the city and have one of the largest bridge walks where the westside and eastside met across I think it was Lorraine Karney Bridge so that was the beginning of me looking at organizing, politicizing people.”

Her civil rights activism was complemented by her involvement in women’s movements and groups. For example, in 1976 she was among a few Black women who were integrally involved in the Cuyahoga Women’s Political Caucus, a women’s organization primarily comprised of White women. In the early stages of her political career, the women’s group was primarily her base of support. Interestingly, Prentiss had no Black support in her initial election to the state legislature. Instead, she drew upon the electoral support of the women’s caucus. She commented:

When I ran for state representative in 1986, I ran against an incumbent, a Black male who had been a state representative for 18 years. I had absolutely no support from the Black power structure because I was running against the incumbent, one of the old boys. So, the women really rallied around my candidacy.

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<sup>67</sup> C.J. Prentiss succeeded Jeff Johnson in office to represent Senate district 21.

In short, Prentiss' career as a political activist and her political-social development process was significantly influenced by the civil rights revolution, women's groups and her family.

Representative Mark Mallory (House District-31) also developed an interest in politics as a result of his strong family tradition. His father, former representative and House Majority Leader, William Mallory served in the House for twenty-eight years. Mallory's political socialization was greatly influenced by his father's involvement in public service. As noted by Mallory:

I grew up in a household thinking about, talking about being involved in politics at an early age. I spent a lot of time with him [his father] here in Columbus as a youngster so it was a process of being raised in a household where it was expected that you would go into public service. . . My whole family is involved in politics. I got a brother who is a municipal court judge and another brother who is a vice-mayor.<sup>68</sup>

In contrast, Representative Dixie Allen (House District-38) attributes her socialization into politics to her employment history and her longtime effort to combat discrimination in the employment sector. She states

My socialization has come from being brought up in the 50's seeing discrimination and not liking what I saw and saying that somebody has to speak out, somebody has to take a position sometimes. You put your career on the line. . . they have no problem with coming in telling you to hire their kids their neighbors' kids you know, but when I say hire minorities all of sudden its like well you're saying hire unqualified people, no that's not what I'm saying you know that's not even the issue. I will find you qualified minorities. . . I was their ears their eyes anything to

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<sup>68</sup> Interview by author 4/15/98. For a critical review of correlational studies which argue that family is the primary agent of political socialization, see R.W. Connell, "Political Socialization in the American Family: The Evidence Re-examined." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36, 1972, pp. 323-333.

do with EEO I was their conscious. . . my interest in helping people stems from that it wasn't just minorities I needed to help, but other people so when I thought about the political arena I said it's no different than what I had done.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to her employment background, Representative Allen acknowledges the support of Senator McLin and civil rights groups for her appointment to political office. Her involvement in organizations such as the NAACP and SCLC played a central role in her political socialization process. For example, Allen notes that "some of the so-called leaders of churches, ministerial alliances, civil rights organizations and the local union decided that I was the candidate." Representative Allen's political-social development represents a typical prototype of Black state legislators. According to Button and Hedge (1996) Black state legislators are socialized into politics through the civil rights movement, the church, and unions.

### ***Schools and Black Political Organizations as Agents***

Other major agents of political learning in conjunction with nontraditional modes of political socialization for Black legislators were high school and college. Representative Jack Ford (House District-49), for instance, became interested in a career in politics as a result of taking political science classes at the University of Toledo in 1976. Representative Ford states that "I decided back when I was in graduate school being in the legislature was the optimum position that I desired".<sup>70</sup> After obtaining a Master's degree in political science from UT in 1977, he became actively involved in the political arena. Ford began his political career by serving as campaign

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<sup>69</sup> Interview by author 4/8/98

manager for school board and city council elections.<sup>71</sup> He also directed the political campaigns of his predecessor, Former Representative Casey Jones.<sup>72</sup> Ford's involvement in the NAACP as membership councilman for 7 years further solidified his political interest and also helped him to establish a firm base of community support for his candidacy to the state legislature.

The political socialization process of Representative Charleta Tavares (House District-22) closely resembles the profile of Representative Jack Ford.<sup>73</sup> Representative Tavares became interested in politics during high school. Similar to Representative Ford, she began actively participating in politics by working as a campaign volunteer for an African American candidate in a local city council election. Representative Tavares was also active in the NAACP during college. Ultimately, she developed an interest in the state legislature, in particular, by serving voluntarily as a legislative aide to her predecessor, Representative Ray Miller who groomed her for the position.<sup>74</sup>

Similar to most legislators discussed previously, Representative Tom Roberts' (District-39) political socialization process is also attributed to many sources.<sup>75</sup> Primarily, he developed an interest in politics during high school. Representative Roberts was also inspired by his brother and former Representative C.J. McLin to

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<sup>70</sup> Interview by author 5/21/98.

<sup>71</sup> Representative Ford sought an unsuccessful appointment to the Toledo school board in 1985. In 1986, he won a seat on city council.

<sup>72</sup> Former representative Casey Jones was one of the charter members of BEDO.

<sup>73</sup> Interview by author 5/28/98. During the interviewing period, Representative Tavares was also a candidate for Secretary of State. She lost the election and is now a Columbus city councilwoman.

<sup>74</sup> Representative Ray Miller has returned to the state legislature and currently represents the 15th Senate District and serves as Minority Whip.

<sup>75</sup> Former Representative Tom Roberts is no longer in the House as a result of term limits, but now represents the 5<sup>th</sup> Ohio Senate district.

become involved in politics. In 1972, he became actively involved in the Young Democratic Voters League. The Young Democratic Voters League was a Black grassroots organization co-founded by former Representative C.J. McLin. The purpose of the organization was to establish a strong political base for Black candidates in the Dayton area by mobilizing the Black community.

Senator Jeff Johnson (District-21) also cultivated an interest in politics by his participation in a Black political organization. Much of his political learning stems from his participation in campus politics while at Kent State University.<sup>76</sup> At Kent State, Senator Johnson was involved in student government and served as president of a Black student organization called Black United Students. After graduating from Kent State, he continued to be a political activist by participating in the politics of his community. In turn, most of his electoral support came from community based organizations. Senator Johnson explains

Glenville community organizations were real supportive because I had been a councilman and they encouraged me to go into the legislature before that it was community based organizations such as the Ward 8 community club and street clubs the Columbia Avenue street club and some other street clubs in Glenville so organizationally those were the ones.

### **Indigenous Resources as Agents: Black Civic Responsibility and the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC)**

While many Black legislators became involved in politics to improve their respective communities, Representative Sylvester Patton (House District-60), a relatively newcomer during the time of this study, unequivocally attributes his political

interest to his dissatisfaction with the neighborhood he lived in for twenty-two years and his desire to change it.<sup>77</sup> The lack of community and economic development compounded by serious social problems (e.g., crime, drugs, poverty, etc.) in the area were major issues which he hoped to alleviate.

Unlike the old-style Black politician and some of the senior members in this study, Representative Patton did not have any civil rights experience to draw upon to tackle the chronic problems of his community.<sup>78</sup> Instead, Black political organizations, notably the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) played an integral role in his political-social development process by providing guidance on how to navigate the legislative system to accomplish his policy priorities. OLBC was instrumental in socializing him to the norms and behavior of the institution. Current OLBC members, community activists, and the ministerial alliances (i.e., the Black clergy) supported his campaign.

The relatively recent election of State Representative Samuel Britton of Cincinnati (House District-30) to the state legislature was also backed by Black members who were formerly affiliated with OLBC. Former State Representatives Jim Rankin and Helen Rankin, who succeeded her husband in office, were important forces in socializing Britton for the House seat. Dating back to the 1970's, Representative Britton made his first attempt to get elected to the Ohio legislature. However, Representative Jim Rankin, Britton's friend won the seat. Despite this, Britton

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<sup>76</sup> During the interviewing process, Senator Jeff Johnson was serving as the president of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus. He is no longer in the Senate.

<sup>77</sup> Interview by author 1/26/99.

continued to support the subsequent campaigns and elections of the Rankins. Upon Helen Rankin's retirement from the legislature, she facilitated and supported Britton's bid for elective office. Describing his base of political support, he notes that

We actually don't have a lot of groups in Cincinnati certainly I have the support of the Democratic party, and most importantly though was the support of Representative Rankin because her support made it very clear to everybody that I was the person that she wanted to follow her seat.<sup>79</sup>

In short, new sources and agents of Black political socialization for state legislators have been identified. In the absence of more traditional forms of political socialization and a strong civil rights background, legislative Black caucuses, such as the OLBC have assumed the role of socializing prospective and current Black members to the legislature and familiarizing them with the legislative process.

### ***Other Sources of Political Socialization***

Although Representative Peter Lawson Jones (House District-11) shares some of the formative socialization experiences of other Black state legislators, his pattern of political socialization is a slight departure from the previous respondents. His political social development reflects more mainstream processes.<sup>80</sup> His political origins derive from working as a legislative aide in the U.S. Congress and as a speechwriter and spokesman for the Carter-Mondale 1976 presidential campaign. Representative Jones' interest in politics was further developed by accepting a political appointment with HUD. After graduating from law school in 1983, he was elected to the city council in

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<sup>78</sup> He did however have some formal political experience and training as the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair of the Mahoning County Democratic Party.

<sup>79</sup> Interview by author 1/28/98.

Cleveland. In general, Representative Jones, like the majority of legislators, expressed a longtime interest in politics.<sup>81</sup>

His involvement in politics is due purely to internal motivations to advance a certain worldview. The data suggest that his worldview is based upon a personal ideology and belief system which is grounded in protecting and promoting the interests and needs of the Black community. Representative Jones asserts that “one of the roles of African American legislators traditionally has been to represent the views of the disenfranchised which has often in our society been African Americans and to articulate those views and try to have those views responded to by the political institutions and icons.” His representational goal epitomizes the notion of Black political linkage as put forth by William E. Nelson, Jr. (2000). Nelson uses the concept of Black political linkage as a theoretical lens for analyzing the level of Black political empowerment in two major cities. It refers to the extent to which Black elected officials, in this case Black state legislators, are able to connect the Black community to institutional power and resources.

Representative Jones’ major base of electoral support came from the Black community. Organized groups, such as the Black Ministerial alliances, in particular, have been very supportive of his candidacy. According to Representative Jones, Black Ministerial groups have been a critical resource in terms of heightening the level of awareness and exposure of his political campaigns within the Black community.

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<sup>80</sup> Former Representative Peter Lawson Jones no longer serves in the Ohio House. He is currently a commissioner for Cuyahoga county.

<sup>81</sup> Representative Otto Beatty also stated that he became interested in politics as a result of a

Historically and in modern times, the Black church has occupied a dominant position in the political empowerment and experiences of the Black community. In fact, scholars have argued that the church is the most important source of political socialization for Blacks (Walton 1985, 1997; Calhoun-Brown 1999) and is a central element of Black political culture which is defined based upon a principle of moralism and racial consciousness (Walton 1985, 1997). These components of Black political culture are an outgrowth of unique historical and life experiences encountered by Blacks.

Other groups that have supported the political development processes and political training of Representative Jones include unions, and the Democratic party organization. For example, his election to the state legislature in 1996 was encouraged by unions. The UAW, in particular, played a pivotal role in his election and campaign. Representative Jones has also relied upon the endorsement of the Democratic party organization for most of his political races. He states that “Black candidates for office [90-95 percent] at least in Ohio tend to be Democrats rely on the Democratic party and rely on the support of unions . . . . .” In sum, the recruitment patterns of Representative Jones closely mirror other Black state legislators, namely Representative Dixie Allen.

Representative Sykes’ political development process is similar to Representative Jones in the sense that Representative Sykes also became involved in politics through traditional channels. He primarily became interested in politics as a result of working as a planner for the Summit County Criminal Justice Commission (the regional unit of

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longtime interest.

an anti-crime program). Representative Sykes realized that his position as a planner did not yield much influence in terms of policymaking. Instead, the elected officials serving on the board were the key players in the decision-making process. He asserts that the “real-decision-makers were the peoples’ choice, i.e., elected officials.”

While it appears that the primary groups and socialization experiences of Black state legislators are the same as their White colleagues, a closer examination of the contours of their environments reveals that they are vastly different. The political socialization processes and recruitment patterns of Black state legislators, in contrast to White state legislators, are shaped by a unique political culture, ideology and environment which involve indigenous organizations, institutions, and agents. The Black church, Black advocacy groups and civil rights organizations, in particular, play a powerful role in the political socialization process of Black state legislators. All these factors and experiences shape the kinds of policies they will support in the legislature. Specifically, the unique socialization patterns and experiences of Black legislators promote a racial consciousness which leads to the sponsorship of race-related legislation and constituency service to the Black community. David Canon (1999), for example, underscores the effects of political socialization upon the political behavior of Black legislators by arguing that traditional Black candidates with backgrounds in the civil rights movement and Black churches embody a “politics of difference” based upon an ideology of exclusively representing “Black interests”. The normative importance of studying the relationship between the socialization experiences and political behavior of legislators thus involves the issue of representative democracy. Legislators who derive

from their communities and mirror the social-cultural experiences of their constituents are better informed about how to substantively represent their needs.

Following the lead of Hanes Walton, Jr. (1985), the analysis indicates that processes and agents of Black political socialization are fundamentally unique in comparison to White political socialization. The richness of the African American experience deeply rooted in historical, cultural and social circumstances significantly impacts the process of political learning for Blacks. Political activity, civil rights initiatives, and ideologies originating within the Black church, Black political organizations and grassroots movements, and institutions are key features of Black political socialization.

In essence, the findings of this chapter cast doubt upon Carol Swain's (1995) analysis on Black representation. Based upon primarily case study analyses, she argues that descriptive representation is not a requisite condition for the substantive representation of Black interests. Swain's theory of racial representation suggests that liberal White legislators can just as effectively represent Black community interests as Black legislators which led her to conclude that ideology, as opposed to race is more important in maximizing Black interest representation. The analysis reported here underscores that the social backgrounds, political socialization processes, and recruitment patterns of Black state legislators are distinctly different from White state legislators. Thus, the policy priorities, foci, and goals of Black state legislators will also differ because they are an outgrowth of their socio-political histories and life experiences. Their political-social development processes affect the kind of

representation Black legislators provide which, in many cases, is profoundly different from White legislators despite similarities along ideological lines. Swain's major argument that Whites can just as effectively represent Black interests as Blacks is therefore highly questionable and continues to be an area of research worthy of further empirical investigations.

## CHAPTER 5

### POLICY PRIORITIES OF OHIO STATE LEGISLATORS

Major findings of the study are presented in this chapter. It focuses on the extent to which Ohio Black state legislators influence the policymaking process. The core questions analyzed are: Do Black state legislators make a difference? How do they decide their legislative priorities? Do they support a unique set of policy issues relative to White state legislators? and what are the effects of race upon legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities? These questions serve as an analytical framework for evaluating the representation of Black interests in the Ohio legislature.

During the last decade, considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to studying the political representation of Blacks in legislative institutions. Scholars have empirically investigated the nexus between descriptive and substantive representation to discern whether or not Black legislators better represent the policy interests of Black constituents (Swain 1995; Lublin 1997; Whitby 1997; Canon 1999; Whitby & Krause 2001; Haynie 2001; Fenno 2003; Tate 2003; King-Meadows & Schaller 2006). While the results of this research have largely been mixed, the overwhelming evidence suggests that race matters in the substantive representation of Blacks. Much of the data to substantiate these findings have been based upon legislators' bill introductions and roll call voting behavior. Unlike past studies, I analyze perceptions, attitudes and bill

sponsorship patterns of legislators to gauge whether or not Black state legislators are more likely to advocate Black policy interests and needs compared to their White counterparts. An investigation of legislators' attitudes and perceptions, as opposed to looking at voting indices, increases our knowledge about their actions, motivations and routine legislative behavior.

The relationship between attitudes and behavior has been well established by social psychologists and political scientists (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen 1996; Miller and Stokes 1963; Barrett and Cook 1991, 1992). Previous research has shown that attitudes influence behavior. Miller and Stokes' (1963) classic study on the policy congruence between congresspersons and their constituents, for example, showed that constituents' opinions and legislators' policy views and perceptions significantly shape their roll call behavior. In addition, Edith Barrett and Fay Lomax Cook (1991, 1992) found that the attitudes of U.S. Congresspersons on social welfare predicted their voting behavior on the issue.

The analysis in Table 5.1 shows that constituencies are the most important variable in influencing the focus of legislators' policy priorities. Approximately one-third of legislators reported that their constituents and their district's needs were central to their agenda setting behavior. Past research has shown that constituencies are important to the representational relationship (Fenno 1978, 2003) and significantly impact legislative decision-making (Clausen 1973; Kingdon 1989). Furthermore, bills introduced in the legislature and their committee work were the second most important factors shaping their policy priorities. An equal percentage (13.5%) of Ohio legislators

stated that both bill introductions and their committee work were key factors taken into consideration when deciding their legislative priorities.

A similar pattern emerged as a result of comparing which factors influence legislators' decision-making regarding policy priorities by race. Both White and Black state legislators asserted that their districts' needs were the most important in determining their policy priorities. However, Black legislators were just as likely to report that bills introduced in the legislature and the level of importance of issues were central concerns which shaped their policy priorities.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
Constituents/ District	41	30.8	33.3	33.3
Bill Introductions	18	13.5	14.6	47.9
Committee Work	18	13.5	14.6	62.5
Personal Interest	13	9.8	10.6	73.1
Importance of Issues	9	6.8	7.3	89.3
Political Agenda/Ideology	7	5.3	5.7	95
Legislators' Expertise	6	4.5	4.9	99.9
Other	11	8.3	8.9	82
Total N	123	92.5	89.3	

Table 5.1: Factors Influencing the Decision-making of Ohio Legislators' Policy Priorities (First Mention), 1993

<b>Factors</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>
Bill Introductions	13.8%	21.4%
Committee Work	14.7%	14.3%
District	34.9%	21.4%
Political Agenda/Ideology	6.4%	
Importance of Issues	5.5%	21.4%
Expert	4.6%	7.1%
Personal	11.0%	7.1%
Other	9.2%	7.1%
Total	100%	100%
Total N	109	14

$$X^2=6.769 \text{ df}=7$$

Table 5.2: Factors Influencing the Decision-Making of Ohio Legislators' Policy Priorities by Race (First Mention), 1993

### *Comparison of Black and White State Legislators' Policy Priorities*

To determine the most frequently cited policy concerns of state legislators and to assess whether or not the policy priorities of Black and White state legislators differ, a multiple response analysis was performed. All responses from the open-ended question were categorized according to policy domain and total percentages were calculated for all respondents and each subgroup. As Table 5.3 shows, over half of the legislators stated budget as a major legislative priority. This is not surprising given that the establishment of a budget is critical to determining allocations for all other legislative priorities. Although a majority of Black state legislators mentioned budget, they were significantly less likely to state budget than their White colleagues. The finding corroborates Barrett's (1995) study on policy priorities of state legislators which found

that Black state legislators in general are less likely to mention taxation issues and significantly less likely to state budget. The data also show that over half of the legislators identify either education, health care or both as priority policy issues which further confirms Barrett's analysis. Education was the most frequently cited policy issue among Black state legislators although White state legislators were just as likely to mention it. In contrast, followed by budget, health care was the most commonly stated policy priority by White state legislators. Sixty-four percent of White state legislators mentioned health care compared to only 48% of Black state legislators.

Other top legislative policy concerns included social welfare and workman's compensation with approximately one third of respondents citing these issues. Surprisingly, White state legislators were significantly more likely to mention social welfare (i.e., medicaid, child support, welfare reform, etc.) than Black state legislators. An explanation of the finding is that White state legislators tend to embrace social welfare issues in circumstances in which the policy issue appears to be neutral. That is, it appears to impact citizens equally regardless of race. In the context of legislative decision-making, social welfare may be viewed as an issue that affects the socioeconomic standing of constituents across racial lines. However, White support for social welfare declines when these issues are designed to promote the social, cultural, and economic interests of Black and minority communities. Public opinion research has shown that the use of racial cues in describing nonracial policy issues can profoundly influence White and Black opinions and evaluations of public policies

(White 2007). No differences, however, were found between the two groups regarding the frequency in mentioning workman's compensation.

The remaining policy issues were cited by less than 25 percent of all state legislators. Of these issues, the most noteworthy findings were that Black legislators were significantly more likely to state campaign finance reform and criminal justice as priority issues compared to White legislators. Since no clear evidence was gleaned from the data why campaign finance reform was more salient for Black legislators than White legislators, I speculate that because Black state legislators have been virtually "locked out" from effectively acquiring campaign funding through the state party organization and mainstream political action committees, they may be more interested in pushing for reforms in this area. A second explanation is that the contentious nature of the 1992 campaign finance reform bill may have prompted Black legislators to perceive the issue as more critical to their interests. House Democrats sought to include provisions in the bill that would limit individual contributions to candidates while the Senate Republicans fought to restrict the use of labor union dues for campaign funding (Patterson 1994). Since Black legislators tend to rely heavily upon the financial backing of labor unions, they were in opposition to the anti-labor measure. As discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, criminal justice issues, such as drug policy and prison reform, were also key concerns of Black state legislators because of the disparate and pervasive impact the criminal justice system has upon the Black community.

Interestingly, although Black and White state legislators share a consensus on the key policy areas (i.e., budget, education, and health care), they differ in their level of agreement concerning the policies that should receive priority. The evidence also lends some support for the hypothesis that the policy interests of Black and White state legislators differ. Contrary to White state legislators, Black legislators are distinct in their strong advocacy of criminal justice and campaign finance reforms.

The differences between Black and White state legislators reported in Table 5.3 are not as great, as expected, because the issues (e.g., education, economic development, environmental concerns etc.) are broad-based policy concerns which are common in legislative decisionmaking. That is, the policy issues are of general interest to legislators regardless of race. Differences are suppressed because the policies are devoid of an explicit racial orientation. Stark differences in the issue priorities of Black and White state legislators are more likely to emerge when racial meaning is attached to an understanding of the issue.<sup>82</sup>

This preliminary examination of legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities is suggestive at best and requires further analyses to fully confirm or disconfirm the proposition. Hence, the next section provides a more indepth investigation of how Ohio Black state legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities differ from White state legislators.

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<sup>82</sup> Tate (1993) provides empirical evidence that public opinions of race specific programs for Whites and Blacks are strikingly different.

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<b>Policy Issue</b>	<b>Overall %</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>N</b>
Budget	66.7 (21.8)	50.0 (15.9)	68.8 (22.6)	82
Education	57.7 (18.9)	57.1 (18.2)	57.8 (19.0)	71
Health Care	49.6 (16.2)	47.7 (20.5)	64.3 (15.7)	61
Social Welfare	37.4 (12.3)	28.5 (9.1)	38.5 (12.6)	46
Workman's Compensation	35.0 (11.5)	35.7 (11.4)	34.9 (11.4)	43
Campaign Finance	14.6 (4.8)	28.5 (9.1)	12.8 (4.2)	18
Environment	13.8 (4.5)	14.3 (4.5)	13.8 (4.5)	17
Economic Development	10.6 (3.5)	14.3 (4.5)	10.1 (3.3)	13
Criminal Justice	9.8 (3.1)	21.4 (6.8)	8.3 (2.7)	12
Other Issues	10.6 (3.6)	0.0 (0.0)	11.9 (3.9)	13

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Table 5.3: Multiple Response Analysis and Rank Ordering of Policy Priorities, 120<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly (1993)

***Qualitative Description of Black Legislators' Policy Priorities: 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assembly***

Personal interviews with Black members of the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio general assembly revealed that the policy agenda of Black state legislators is indeed distinct from their White colleagues. Ohio Black state legislators are primary advocates of Black policy interests and they share an acute awareness of their obligation to substantively represent the concerns of the Black community. They are interested in articulating policy priorities which address economic redistribution, social justice reform, and the overall enhancement of the quality of life for African Americans. The race-based legislative agenda of Black legislators included issues such as urban education, affirmative action, welfare reform, job development, and crime control/prison reform.

As in the 120<sup>th</sup> Ohio general assembly, education was the top legislative priority of Black state legislators during the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> legislative session. Their primary objectives were to secure funding for urban public education and the state's historically Black college, Central State University, which was on the brink of fiscal decay. The most vocal and recognized proponent of urban public education was State Senator C.J. Prentiss, then President of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC)<sup>83</sup> who has worked tirelessly to promote educational reform in public schools, especially in Cleveland. According to Senator Prentiss, "anything that defers from public education, such as the school voucher program . . . I'm going to work extremely hard against . . . I've been very aggressive with my constituents on that issue." She has been extremely

effective in obtaining benefits for her district in the area of urban education reform. Some of the provisions that Senator Prentiss have fought for include after school programs for kindergarten, alternative schools, and smaller class sizes. Over time, with the backing of OLBC, she has managed to get many proposal ideas included in the budget.

During the Republican controlled legislative session, an ultra conservative movement dominated the Ohio legislature. Policy debates and deliberations took place over the future of the state's minority set aside programs. Many conservative elements inside and outside the legislature including the governor sought to strike down minority set asides statewide. The conservative coalition known as the Caveman Caucus in the House led by William Batchelder was one of the most contentious opponents of race-based policies. Affirmative action and minority set asides were focal policy priorities of Black state legislators. Their major goal was to protect the gains won by their predecessors, the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio (BEDO) in the area of minority set asides. BEDO was a pivotal force in the passage of the Minority Enterprise Set Aside bill HB 584 in 1980. The legislation mandated that a proportion of state contracts be set aside for minority businesses. On the issue of set asides, State Representative Samuel Britton commented

Well, right now they are trying to come up with a plan of action to try to bring some relief to the court cases which have found minority set asides unconstitutional in the state --- and we're working very hard on that to try to like I said bring some relief. The courts will ultimately decide whether it is constitutional or not constitutional, but we as members of OLBC have to provide

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<sup>83</sup> Senator C.J. Prentiss is currently serving as the Senate Minority Leader.

some relief so minority contractors, services and goods providers of this state can continue to get some business from this state.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to affirmative action issues, a central component of the legislative agenda of Ohio Black state legislators has been welfare reform. Because the majority of their constituents are disproportionately impacted by the new welfare reform laws, such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PWORA) of 1996, an initiative which requires welfare recipients to seek employment after five years of assistance, Black state legislators have acted as a watchdog over welfare issues by taking steps to prevent the passage of punitive legislation. They have also introduced welfare bills which include allocations for job training and development and have worked cooperatively with interest groups, such as the Ohio Empowerment Coalition (OEC), a welfare rights organization that is comprised of low to moderate income citizens who seek to change and impact welfare laws and issues in order to mitigate the negative effects of welfare reform.

An overwhelming majority of Ohio Black state legislators also view criminal justice issues as a major policy priority. As with welfare reform, issues of crime have a disproportionate negative effect upon their constituents and thus, they have collectively worked very hard to introduce bills that promote criminal justice reform. As a part of the criminal justice action plan proposed by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC), they have pushed for prison reform, crime control measures, and equal sentencing guidelines for drug offenses (crack cocaine versus powder cocaine). The

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<sup>84</sup> Interview by author 1/28/98.

general focus of the OLBC plan was to insist on the development of an equitable criminal justice system overall.

The salience of criminal justice issues on the legislative agenda of Ohio Black state legislators is clearly evident from the interview data. Jeff Johnson, who was the president of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) during the 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly, states

“White legislators within themselves differ based upon their political philosophy. White legislators who are so called moderate to liberal Democrats will share some of the same policy concerns such as education funding, but may not prioritize it the same as we do. We prioritize prison reform; it is a priority of OLBC. We push prison reform because of the disproportionate impact of Black people in prisons. In addressing the needs of our community, we focus on rehabilitation, reform, and crime control.”<sup>85</sup>

Reinforcing the urgency of addressing the issue of prison reform, as a state representative, Tom Roberts<sup>86</sup> discussed the need to formulate and implement policies to correct deficiencies within the system in the area of rehabilitation. Roberts asserts

“Our priorities differ because we [OLBC] address issues that are important to the African American community. One major concern is where the parole board is headed. Some changes need to be made. Flopping people back and forth into the system which is called the superflop without concerning themselves with whether this individual is gone through intensive rehabilitation and training is a major problem.”<sup>87</sup>

Drawing upon his legal expertise, as state representative, Peter Lawson Jones initiated and supported policy priorities which aimed to eliminate racial disparities within the criminal justice system. Jones comments

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<sup>85</sup> Interview by author 5/14/98.

<sup>86</sup> Tom Roberts has returned to the state legislature and represents the 5<sup>th</sup> Senate district.

“OLBC has been working to devise regulations and policies to ensure that the criminal justice system is fair and equitable on every level and equal treatment under law is upheld within our judiciary system.<sup>88</sup>

The data described above indicate that Black legislators were strongly supportive of the prioritizing of social and racial justice issues. Overwhelmingly, members of the legislative Black caucus perceived criminal justice and prison reform as major issue priorities during the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> legislative session. Improving urban education, reforming social welfare, protecting minority set aside programs were key issue priorities shaping the agenda setting behavior of Black state legislators in the 122<sup>nd</sup> -123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly.

### ***Multivariate Analyses***

Multivariate analysis technique, multiple regression, was used to assess the effects of race, if any, upon legislators’ perceptions of their policy priorities. The major policy areas were identified and seven dependent variables were created (i.e., budget, social welfare, education, criminal justice, economic concerns, workman’s compensation, and campaign finance reform). To estimate relative importance, all responses based upon policy domains were aggregated and recoded according to rank order. For example, if legislators stated budget first, a high score was given. Conversely, if they reported budget last, a low score was computed.

Contrary to expectations, race was statistically insignificant in all the models regardless of policy issue. A few explanations can be offered to justify the findings.

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<sup>87</sup> Interview by author 4/8/98.

First, two of the independent variables, race and percent Black in the district were highly correlated ( $r=.875$ ) which yielded a high degree of multicollinearity. Thus, the effects of race may have been cancelled out by the percent Black in district variable. Second, the effects of race may be attenuated by the general nature of the policy concerns. As the qualitative analysis above shows, very specific types of policy issues (e.g., affirmative action, welfare reform, prison reform, etc.) can produce distinctive patterns in legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities which are racially based. In their analysis of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, Whitby and Krause (2001) argue that the effects of race vary based upon the type of legislative issues. They contend that the racial gap in the voting behavior of Black and nonblack legislators will be larger on legislative proposals that are of primary rather than secondary importance to the African American community. In contrast, legislative issues or proposals that have diffuse effects across populations (secondary issues) rather than concentrated effects (primary issues) upon Blacks will reduce racial polarization in legislative decision-making between Black and nonblack legislators. They maintain that issue heterogeneity is key to fully understanding the policy representation of Black interests.

Another factor which has been central to the debate on the representation of Black interests is party (Swain 1995; Whitby 1997; Whitby & Krause 2001 etc.). Carol M. Swain, for example, argues that party, as opposed to race, is the most important variable influencing the substantive representation of Blacks. She maintains that White Democrats from majority Black districts are just as effective in representing Black

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<sup>88</sup> Interview by author 5/28/98.

interests as Black Democrats. Though the findings of this study are not conclusive concerning the significance of party, it appears to be an important determinant of Black policy priorities dealing with social welfare policy. Party is also statistically significant, albeit in a negative direction, for legislators who perceive budget as the most important policy priority. In short, although the multivariate analysis suggests that party plays some role in the representation of specific Black-related policy issues, the effects are not clear. Thus, the overall findings of this study do not necessarily imply that the effects of party supersede race. Contrary to the quantitative analysis, the qualitative results indicate that race powerfully influences legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities.

Prior research on Black interests has also investigated the effects of district characteristics (e.g., percent Black in district) upon legislators' agenda setting behavior (Bratton & Haynie 1999; Canon 1999; Haynie 2001; Barrett 1995; etc.).

Notwithstanding expectations, negligible effects were found for district characteristics. Neither percent Black, percent poverty, nor percent urban had a significant impact upon legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. The findings coincide with Barrett's study which found that district characteristics did not significantly impact African American female state legislators' policy priorities.<sup>89</sup> Haynie (2001) also found that the percentage of Blacks in districts had no significant effect upon legislators' bill introductions in policy areas, such as education, health care, and social welfare.

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<sup>89</sup> However, her measure of racial composition is different from the traditional use of %Black in district. Instead, she employs proportion of Whites in districts.

Overall, the models did not perform well. Of all the models, only 10 percent of the variance was explained. The workman's compensation model explained the most variance and the least amount of variance was explained in education. In addition to the aforementioned regarding multicollinearity, the lack of significant effects of the independent variables upon the dependent variables may be attributable to the fact that a general consensus exists within legislative institutions regarding the most pertinent legislative concerns. Some legislative issues, such as the budget and education, simply may be static and routine to legislative decision-making. Simultaneously, Black legislators seek to influence the policy process by articulating issues that are reflective of Black policy interests. Hence, the legislative agenda of post-civil rights Black legislators is more broadly defined than their predecessors which may not only include traditional Black policy interests, but also more general policy concerns. Contemporary Black legislators, therefore, may be confronted with "balancing" dual representational roles as a "race representative" and "responsible legislator" (Haynie 2001). That is, Black legislators tend to represent racial group interests and to transform legislative institutions, and at the same time, push a more mainstream policy agenda that adhere to the norms and patterns of behavior within the legislature.

Independent Variables	<b>Model I</b> Budget	<b>Model II</b> Social Welfare	<b>Model III</b> Education	<b>Model IV</b> Criminal Justice
% Black	.175	.039	.079	-.191
Race	-.172	.107	-.114	.289
% Poverty	.102	-.305(**)	-.104	.102
% Urban	.060	-.087	-.009	-.005
Party	-.252(**)	.217(*)	.106	.046
Ideology	-.037	.130	-.062	.122
R <sup>2</sup>	.058	.073	.022	.097

\*\* $p \leq .05$

\* $p \leq .10$

Table 5.4: The Effects of Race upon Legislators' Perceptions of their Policy Priorities (N=119)

Independent Variables	<b>Model V</b> Economic Concerns	<b>Model VI</b> Workman's Compensation	<b>Model VII</b> Campaign Finance Reform
% Black	-.178	.064	-.063
Race	.149	.070	.188
% Poverty	.128	-.086	-.290
% Urban	.157	.119	-.114
Party	-.045	-.073	.131
Ideology	-.026	-.270(**)	.082
R <sup>2</sup>	.030	.106	.046

\*\* $p \leq .05$

\* $p \leq .10$

Table 5.5: The Effects of Race on Legislators' Perceptions of their Policy Priorities (N=119)

\*Note: Responses were aggregated according to the relative importance of the policy issues.

*The “Duality Dilemma”: Ohio Black State Legislators’ Representational Roles*

Evidence of the “duality dilemma” Black state legislators confront is seen through their perceptions of how their policy priorities and representational roles differ from their White colleagues. Representative Dixie Allen, for example, states “Blacks always have an interest in giving back to the community---set asides and things like that but in terms of other issues, it is not that much of a difference.” Reinforcing the dual responsibilities of Black state legislators, Senator Rhine McLin asserts that Black legislators do pursue a racial policy agenda in order to articulate the needs of their Black constituents in their districts and within the state, but also support legislative issues that are not necessarily race related in an effort to represent their entire district, not just their African American constituencies. She maintains that “we [Black state legislators] do, but we don’t have distinct policy priorities. I say that we do because as Black legislators regardless of where you from we are representatives of Black folks no matter where they live or whose district they are in . . . we spend a lot of time trying to put out fires like reacting to affirmative action when it gets attacked. However, Senator McLin speaks more broadly about her representational roles when describing her minority influence district.

Well, see my district is somewhere about 20-25 percent minority I only have three hundred and thirty thousand constituents in my district. It covers from Jefferson township, Dayton, Trotwood, Huber Heights, and parts of Riverside, Tipp City, West Milton, Troy and parts of Piqua so when I start talking about helping people I can’t limit to helping just Black folks but now I do help Appalachians I have a large population of Appalachians so when I help the Appalachians I help the Black folks see you have to change your focus whether you become a staunch person on an issue so you may not see me out there carrying a banner or

attacking an issue that is seen as totally Black I don't go with Black or White issues I just go with issues that help people.

State Representative Charleta Tavares who also represents a minority influence district echoes similar sentiments and views. She states “we [the legislative Black caucus] have been out front on every issue that impacts the African American community and will try to do as individuals or as a bloc as much as we possibly can to help our community and those communities that are disadvantaged”. Representative Tavares asserts that when she represents the less advantaged, she is indeed acting in the best interest of her entire district. She contends “I believe in doing what's right, what's fair, what's in the best interest of my constituents those who are at the bottom of the economic scale, whether they are African American or poor Appalachian people . . . when I do for people who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, it helps everybody in the district . . . you may help constituents in need on one issue and on some other issue you may help another constituency group.” Similarly, State Senator C.J. Prentiss who represents a predominantly Black district is very clear about her representational roles:

I see my role as improving the lives of poor folks. Now, I can say improve the lives of African Americans, but I'm real clear on the history. The civil rights movement before that, the suffrage movement before that, our movement against antislavery we empowered everyone we lifted all over as we zeroed in on the African American challenge.

Consistent with the above perspectives, Representative Peter Lawson Jones, who represents a suburban district outside of Cleveland, expresses the following:

I think that on the major issues we as African American legislators [the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus] tend to represent, to articulate, and to advocate on behalf of what are traditionally viewed as quote “Black” end quote issues. We have had some potency in fighting for affirmative action, the amelioration of poverty by devising welfare reform laws, a fair and equitable criminal justice system . . . equal treatment under the law which transcends the whole issue of affirmative action.

On the other hand, Jones expands his conceptualization of his representational obligations by stating: “I’ve always felt that the function of African American politicians or public officials is first and foremost to serve their constituents irregardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, and religion.” Representative Sylvester Patton, who represents a diverse district in Youngstown, also notes the importance of “balancing” constituents’ interests by prioritizing both racial and nonracial policy issues. He commented: “some Black members champion only Black issues; you can’t just champion Black issues and be an effective representative of your district.” Tom Roberts describes the essence of the balancing perspective of commonality: “I think it’s a balance, you’re the advocate of all the community and you kind of know where they are coming from . . . . . there are some issues that my constituents are more vocal about such as pro-choice and women’s right to life but overall I have to balance all constituency interests within my district.”<sup>90</sup>

Explaining the distinctive nature of Black representation and the overall influence of Ohio Black state legislators upon the policymaking process, Senator Jeff Johnson provides a classic example of the duality dilemma and how Black legislators attempt to cope with it. He argues:

Our job is to articulate the interests of African Americans primarily and minorities in general. Every issue we look at we look at the impact on Black folks. Every bill we look at the specific impact on African Americans and based on that judgment we determine what course of action to take. . . .but we also know that most of the bills we sponsor also usually have a positive impact on nonminorities. . . .We make our own determination on what it means to our constituency. Most of our districts are majority Black but we also know that when we fight for more funding for AIDS, more education for AIDS that White folks benefit by it because we are not saying just help Black folks with AIDS. So, our motivation and focus is race-based, but the bills in which we draft are deracialized, as I may use your term, in impact.<sup>91</sup>

Clearly, the evidence suggests that Ohio Black state legislators practice what David Canon (1999) terms the “balancing” perspective of the “politics of commonality” which means that African American state legislators attempt to balance the needs and interests of all of their constituents irrespective of race. They do not, however, do this at the expense of their Black constituents. Black state legislators remain the primary defenders of “Black interests” although they do devote attention to policy issues with no racial content.

In sum, Ohio Black state legislators are solidly committed to a policy agenda which advances the collective interests of the Black community. The analysis, in general, suggests that Black legislators do make a difference in legislative bodies as indicated by the set of race-related policy issues they articulate and support compared to their White colleagues. Black state legislators are principally concerned with articulating a legislative agenda which involve issues dealing with human services (e.g.,

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<sup>90</sup> Interview by author 4/8/98.

<sup>91</sup> Interview by author 5/14/98.

welfare reform, medicaid), economic development and minority businesses, affirmative action, urban public education, and criminal justice reform. The data also show that while they champion “Black interests”, Black state legislators also advocate traditional policy priorities (e.g., budget, education, health care, etc.) which are normal to legislative decision-making and consistent with being a “responsible” legislator. Corroborating Haynie’s (2001) study, in other words, Ohio Black state legislators act as both “race representatives and “responsible legislators.”

### ***Implications of the Deracialization Approach***

The evidence indicates that the majority of contemporary Black state legislators embrace a deracialization approach to legislative decision-making. As a consequence, they identify less as race representatives. Lucius Barker and Mack Jones (1994) argue that a deracialization strategy results in subordination of the socioeconomic needs of the Black community and legitimizes structures and practices which create and maintain socioeconomic inequalities on the basis of race. In their view, deracialized politics leads to the maintenance of the system as opposed to efforts to change the system.

The results presented here suggest that the deracialization strategy may be useful for integrating policy preferences of Black state legislators within the legislative agenda setting process. However, since deracialization entails minimizing the role of race, the representation of “authentic” Black policy interests may be marginalized within state legislatures. Thus, the tactic of deracialization may actually thwart as opposed to facilitate Black legislators’ ability to redistribute resources to their Black constituents.

Orey and Ricks (2007) empirically tested the effects of deracialization strategies upon the Black community. They found that leaders who employ deracialized tactics actually undermine the representation of Black interests by opposing policies which are important to the Black community. McCormick and Jones (1993) argue that despite the fact that a deracialization strategy of governance is not explicitly race-specific, Black elected officials who advocate deracialized tactics should not negate the material reality and needs of the Black community. To safeguard against this potential problem, they argue that Black political organization and mobilization within the Black community are critical in pressuring African American elected officials to respond to the interests of the Black community. The implications of a deracialization approach, in the context of state legislative politics, suggest that Black state legislators who adhere to this political orientation may provide descriptive representation for the Black community without effectively promoting Black community interests in the legislative process. This analysis underscores the fact that the process of Black political empowerment must move beyond simply the election of Black politicians in key positions to encompass broader strategies for linking the policy priorities of the Black community to the formal structures and processes of primary decision-making in state politics.

## CHAPTER 6

### Bill Sponsorship Patterns of Ohio Legislators

Bill sponsorship patterns of Black and White state legislators are analyzed to assess the extent to which race-related issues are substantively addressed in the Ohio legislature. The theoretical expectation is that Black legislators will disproportionately introduce legislation with racially significant content in support of Black interests compared to White legislators who will be less likely to sponsor Black interest legislation. Recent scholarship on legislative policymaking suggests that Black legislators as well as women propose bills which reflect their group interests (Adams 2003; Bratton & Haynie 1999; Bratton 2002; Haynie 2001; Orey et al. 2006; Sinclair-Chapman 2005). For example, Orey et al. (2006) in their analysis of bill introductions within the Mississippi House of Representatives found that Black state legislators, specifically African American female state legislators, are more inclined to introduce progressive legislation<sup>92</sup> in the interests of Blacks. Adams' (2003) multi-state study on the bill sponsorship patterns of state legislators also indicate that African American legislators are substantially more likely to introduce minority interest legislation than White legislators. Based upon the analyses of five state legislatures, Haynie (2001) found that Black legislators disproportionately introduce Black interest bills than White

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<sup>92</sup>Progressive legislation is understood as legislation which promotes the interests of the underserved (Orey & Adams 2003).

legislators. In fact, empirical studies show that the descriptive model of representation is the most influential in shaping the bill sponsorship patterns of state legislators and supersede constituency and party interests (Bratton & Haynie 1999).

The present analysis is based upon original data of legislative bills introduced in the Ohio legislature in 1999.<sup>93</sup> The total number of bills sponsored was 1160. Each bill was analyzed to determine whether or not it contained racially relevant content. In other words, legislation which seeks to alleviate discrimination and promote racial justice was included in the analysis. Only bills with positive racial significance were counted while bills with negative racial implications were not counted. Examples of bills with racially relevant content are House Bill 277 which broadens the scope of ethnic intimidation and proposes stricter penalties against it and House Bill 278 which proposes a commission to study racial inequities in the justice system and the legal profession. Joint and concurrent resolutions were excluded from the analysis. Further, I categorize the primary sponsor of each piece of legislation according to race and race-gender groups: African American, White, African American male, African American female, White male, and White female. I disaggregate race and gender to discern intragroup differences in bill sponsorship patterns among African American legislators to test the claim borne out of the extant literature that African American female legislators introduce Black interest legislation at a greater rate than African American male legislators (Orey et al. 2006; Adams 2003).

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<sup>93</sup> Since comparable data on legislators' policy attitudes were collected during the 1998-1999 legislative session, the analyses of bill introductions were conducted on the same legislative assembly for consistency purposes.

The independent sample t-test was used to compute differences of means to discern whether significant differences exist between and within the subgroups of legislators based upon race and race-gendered factors. The results indicate statistically significant differences in the bill sponsorship patterns of Black and White state legislators. Black legislators were more likely to introduce racially relevant legislation than White legislators (see Table 6.1). The mean score for Black legislators was (.882) compared to (.060) for White legislators. Black legislators, therefore, provide not only descriptive representation, but seek to substantively represent Black interests through sponsorship of racial justice legislation.

Contrary to prior studies, no statistically significant differences were found between Black female legislators and Black male legislators regarding the introduction of racial justice legislation. The intragroup analysis revealed a mean score of (.833) for Black female legislators and (.909) for Black male legislators. An explanation for the lack of statistical differences between the two groups may be attributable to their shared linked fate. African American legislators, as a whole, view representation of the Black community as a dominant responsibility because they perceive that their interests are connected to the group's interests. As noted by Richard Fenno (2003), African American legislators pursue a group intensive strategy of representation. Their ultimate goal is to promote the social, political and economic well being of the Black community. The strong commitment of Black state legislators to advance African Americans' interests through their bill sponsorship activity is reflected in the following statement by Senator Ray Miller. Miller, who formerly represented the 22<sup>nd</sup> House

district during the 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly, unequivocally states “my principal motivation in sponsoring legislation is to improve the quality of life for African Americans. I am the 14<sup>th</sup> African American senator to serve in the Ohio legislature in 203 years. I know whose shoulders I stand on and I have a responsibility to help my people.”

	Black Legislators N=17	White Legislators N=116	Sig.
Racial Justice Legislation	.882	.060	.017
	Black Female Legislators N=6	Black Male Legislators N=11	Sig.
Racial Justice Legislation	.833	.909	.360

Table 6.1: Mean Scores for Introduction of Racial Justice Legislation by Black Legislators by Gender

	Black Female Legislators N=6	White Female Legislators N=20	Sig.
Racial Justice Legislation	.833	.100	.128

	Black Female Legislators N=6	White Male Legislators N=96	Sig.
Racial Justice Legislation	.833	.031	.102

Table 6.2: Mean Scores for Introduction of Racial Justice Legislation by Race-Gender Groups

The substantive content of each piece of legislation with racial implications was evaluated to more fully explain the bill sponsorship patterns of Ohio legislators. Closer analyses of legislative records revealed the specific nature of bills. The indepth description of race-related bill introductions was critical to determine whether or not a relationship exists between legislators' perceptions and attitudes and their legislative behavior. The goal is to discern the level of agreement between perceptions of policy preferences and types of legislation sponsored. I categorize racial justice legislation into the following categories: civil rights legislation includes issues of affirmative action and equal opportunity initiatives; social welfare includes legislation pertaining to

minority health issues and welfare reform; economic development bills address capital improvement efforts for community based organizations; educational issues include legislation to improve urban education; and criminal justice measures which address racial disparities within the justice system.

The bills included under the civil rights category sought to eliminate systemic barriers which inhibit the economic and social advancement of African Americans and other disadvantaged groups. The major objective of many of the legislative proposals was to enforce civil and equal rights protection of racial minorities. House Bill 296, for example, sponsored by Ray Miller is a broad based effort to combat discrimination in the areas of employment, education and housing. The major thrust of the legislation is to ameliorate institutional and individual discriminatory practices which violate civil rights law. The motive behind the bill was to illuminate the pervasiveness of discrimination beyond the cases reported through the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) and the Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission (EEOC). House Bill 324 proposes a predicate study on discrimination in the awarding of state contracts and subcontracts with respect to racial minorities. A principal objective of the bill was to stimulate a vigorous dialogue about the extent of discrimination in the dissemination of state contracts. The legislation requires that a percentage of contracts are set aside for minority businesses. Simultaneously, a counter proposal to repeal set aside programs was introduced in the legislature by a conservative coalition known as the Caveman Caucus. Despite these efforts, African American legislators have been extremely effective in blocking legislation designed to reverse the gains acquired

through the passage of House Bill 584, one of the most comprehensive laws on minority businesses passed by the legislature in 1974. Bill introductions within the realm of equal rights also addressed issues, such as the elimination of income disparities on the basis of race and gender for comparable work and the lack of minority representation on corporate boards.

In addition to civil rights issues, urban education was a key concern shaping the bill introductions of Black legislators. The principal basis of these bills was securing funding for postsecondary urban education and reforming the curriculum of urban public schools. House Bill 317, for example, was an initiative to acquire appropriations for the development of an Institute of Urban Policy at the state's historically Black institution, Central State University. The central mission of the institute is to prepare educators to teach in urban settings and to promote their professional development through workshops and seminars on urban education. The enactment of the legislation required biracial cooperation and collaboration. An amendment to the budget to establish the institute was introduced in the House by Ray Miller, a Black Democrat, and in the Senate by Merle Kearns, a White Democrat. The collective efforts of the two legislators resulted in the passage of the bill which established the Institute for Urban Education at Central State.

While some of the legislation on urban educational development has the potential to substantively impact the Black community, the majority of the bills were symbolic in nature. For example, a bill was introduced which proposed creating an Underground Railroad license plate fund. A proportion of the proceeds from the license

plates would benefit the Freedom Center in funding educational programs on the Underground Railroad in Ohio. Another bill related to expanding the core requirements of the model citizenship proficiency exam to include topics, such as the effects of racism, genocide and religious intolerance. Although these measures received some support from members of the legislative Black caucus, neither bill passed the legislature. The fate of the bills was a consequence of the sponsors' inability to penetrate dominant institutional structures and to mobilize broader group interests within the general assembly.

Though African American legislators, in general, had difficulties passing legislation during the Republican dominated 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly, they made remarkable efforts to use the budgetary process to redistribute resources to the Black community. They have introduced bills to acquire capital grants for community-based organizations and minority health initiatives. Black legislators have effectively lobbied for funding support of smaller community-based organizations, such as the local urban league, Martin Luther King, Jr. community arts center, and the OSU African American and African Studies Extension Center. Ray Miller, for example, was instrumental in obtaining appropriations to support programs and activities sponsored by the King Arts Center. In addition, Shirley Smith who represented the 10<sup>th</sup> House district in Cleveland worked vigorously to secure appropriations to fund organizations and agencies which serve the health needs of minority communities. She has actively sponsored legislation to address the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic upon minority communities. The primary aim of the bill was to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS by launching a

statewide prevention campaign targeted at women and minorities. The bill received great opposition in the legislature because it was narrowly conceptualized to apply only to minority groups. The low level of support for the measure and Smith's inability to gain backing from the leadership and bipartisan elements within the legislature resulted in failure to pass the legislation. As a consequence of the outcome of the bill, members of the Black delegation within the state legislature was inspired to work strategically with a community-based organization, the Commission on Minority Health, to address key priorities identified in the legislation. In short, Black legislators work cooperatively with community-based agencies to meet the needs of their constituents. Concomitantly, they serve a powerful advocacy role for smaller community-based organizations which traditionally have been excluded from receiving state funding.

In addition to minority health issues, Black legislators have also built alliances with community-based groups to impact welfare policy. For example, C.J. Prentiss, who formerly represented the 21<sup>st</sup> senate district in Cleveland, obtained the support of the Ohio Empowerment Coalition, an interracial grassroots community-based welfare rights organization, in her sponsorship of welfare reform legislation. The primary purpose of the bill was to eliminate punitive sanctions imposed upon welfare recipients as consequences of new federal and state welfare laws. In 1996, a federal welfare law, the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was passed by Congress. The legislation required welfare recipients to transition from welfare to work after five years of collecting benefits. The program administered on the state level was known as Ohio Works First. Reform of the welfare system, according to

Black state legislators, had far-reaching and negative effects upon their constituents. With the implementation of PRWORA, many of their constituents receiving welfare subsidies were faced with major cuts in entitlement programs, such as Medicaid and food stamps. Therefore, C.J. Prentiss and Tom Roberts, co-sponsors of the welfare reform bill, sought revisions of the Ohio Works First program to comply with federal policy. Some of the proposed changes to the existing law included eliminating stringent time limits which conflicted with federal requirements and maintaining necessary funding support for eligible welfare recipients. Black legislators were concerned that welfare recipients also receive the necessary job training and educational skills in order to obtain and retain employment. As Roberts stated, “We’ve got welfare reform that says you are getting out of the system after so many months, but these folks are not getting training for jobs, something is wrong . . . we have to put money into training.”<sup>94</sup> Hence, Black legislators managed to get \$10 million appropriated in the budget to fund welfare initiatives although the original bill did not pass in the legislature during the 1999-2000 legislative session.<sup>95</sup>

Different patterns in the sponsorship of race-related legislation between Black and White state legislators are also reflected in bills addressing criminal justice. Black legislators are proportionately more likely than White legislators to introduce bills advocating reformation of the criminal justice system for the purpose of promoting racial equity. House bill 49 sponsored by Sylvester Patton<sup>96</sup>, for example, was

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<sup>94</sup> Interview by author 4/8/98

<sup>95</sup> Interview by author 3/18/99

<sup>96</sup> Patton formerly represented the 60<sup>th</sup> House District in Youngstown

developed to reduce racial disparities in sentencing procedures for drug offenses involving powder versus crack cocaine. The bill was a corrective measure of rigid drug abuse policies which disproportionately impacted minority communities, especially African Americans. Since Black legislators have a higher chance of representing districts that are negatively impacted by disparate drug abuse laws, they strongly supported the bill. The solid advocacy and voting bloc of Black legislators and a coalition of White Democrats resulted in the passage of an amendment to the bill which eliminated distinctions in penalties associated with drug abuse offenses related to powder and crack cocaine.

As expected, the pattern in sponsorship of racial justice legislation for White state legislators was quite limited. Only three bills sponsored by White legislators were racially significant. Both House bill 232 and Senate bill 51 addressed the issue of ethnic intimidation. The bill proposals called for increasing penalties associated with the desecration of places of worship and to increase to \$15,000 the maximum amount recoverable in a class action suit based upon offenses of ethnic intimidation, vandalism and desecration committed by minors. Another example of legislation with racial implications for the Black community sponsored by a White legislator was a hate crime bill. The bill called for the establishment of the Center for the Study of Hate Crimes in Ohio for the purposes of collecting and maintaining information about hate crimes committed in the state. The patterns in White state legislators' sponsorship of race-related legislation suggests that the bills have largely a symbolic impact.<sup>97</sup> The analysis

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<sup>97</sup> Tate (2003) shows that all legislators sponsor symbolic legislation.

of bills sponsored by White legislators within the category of racial justice does not suggest that the sponsors of the bills were advocates of racial parity; rather bills sponsored by White legislators merely reflected racial content without any significant value for promoting Black community interests.

Category	Type of Bill	Sponsor	Racial Identity
Civil Rights	Affirmative action (HB 296)	R. Miller	Black
	Affirmative action (HB 324)	R. Miller	Black
	Equal Rights (SB 133)	C.J. Prentiss	Black
	Equal Rights (HB 330)	P. Jones	Black
Education	Urban School Dev. (SB 220)	C.J. Prentiss	Black
	Urban School Dev. (HB 317)	R. Miller	Black
	Urban Education (HB 793)	Britton	Black
	Urban Education (HB 279)	Barrett	Black
Economic Development	Community Development Grants (HB 459)	R. Miller	Black
	Minority Businesses (HB 500)	Britton	Black
Social Welfare	Minority Health (HB 696)	S. Smith	Black
	Minority Health (HB 454)	R. Miller	Black
	Minority Health (HB 455)	R. Miller	Black
	Welfare Reform (HB 275)	C.J. Prentiss	Black
Criminal Justice	Religious Intimidation (HB 232)	Padgett	White
	Ethnic Intimidation (HB 277)	Beatty	Black
	Racial Justice Reform (HB 278)	Barrett	Black
	Drug Abuse Policy (HB 49)	Patton	Black
	Death Penalty (HB 299)	Jones	Black
	Death Penalty (HB 300)	Jones	Black
	Racial Profiling (HB 363)	Jones	Black
	Ethnic Intimidation (SB 51)	Kearns	White
	Hate Crime (SB 348)	Fingerhut	White
	Prison Reform (HB 131)	Boyd	Black
	Death Penalty (HB 733)	S. Smith	Black
Prison Reform (SB 115)	Mallory	Black	

Table 6.3: Race-Related Bill Introductions by Type and Race of Sponsor, 123<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (1999)

### *Analysis of Bill Introductions: Symbolic or Substantive Legislation?*

All bills introduced by Black state legislators in the 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly were analyzed according to content to determine whether or not the legislation had a symbolic or substantive impact. Bill proposals were further divided into Black interest and nonracial legislation to illuminate the full range of Black bill sponsorship behavior. Legislative proposals which indicated material benefits (e.g., economic) for the Black community were coded as substantive bills. An example of substantive legislation includes House bill 455 which called for the establishment of a Minority Health Tobacco Settlement Fund. The legislation specifies that a proportion of funds derived from tobacco settlement agreements would be used by the Commission on Minority Health to provide grants to organizations that serve minority health needs. Another example of substantive legislation is House bill 500 which addresses the expansion of minority business enterprises. In contrast, bills devoid of “tangible” benefits for the Black community were coded as symbolic. Symbolic legislation is defined as bill proposals which do not entail the redistribution of public goods or resources, but are reflective of constituents’ interests and preferences (Tate 2003). An example of a symbolic piece of legislation is House Bill 330 which calls for the development of a registry of women and minorities available to serve on corporate boards.

The analysis of all bill introductions of Black state legislators in the 123<sup>rd</sup> general assembly indicates that they are significantly likely to sponsor symbolic, rather than substantive legislation regardless of whether the bill proposals pertain to Black interests or nonracial concerns. Fifty-four percent of Black interests bills introduced

were symbolic. However, forty-six percent of Black interests' bills were substantive in content. In contrast, eighty-six percent of nonracial bills sponsored by Black legislators were symbolic legislation and only fourteen percent were substantive. Overall, the results indicate that for both Black interests and nonracial legislation, Black legislators overwhelmingly introduce symbolic legislation (see Table 6.4). However, Black legislators are more likely to introduce substantive proposals when they address Black interests, rather than nonracial issues.

Black state legislators have been less effective in passage of legislation for both Black interest and nonracial bills. Only nine percent of Black interest bills introduced were passed in the legislature. Similarly, only eight percent of nonracial bills introduced by Black members passed in the legislature. Explaining the bill sponsorship activity of Black state legislators, Jeff Johnson says “ we don't get a lot of bills passed per se; we get a lot of amendments and we have been effective in stopping the passage of draconian”<sup>98</sup> measures which work against Black interests. One of the major obstacles of Black legislators in successfully getting legislation passed was associated with their minority partisan status within the Ohio legislature during the 1999 legislative session. Jack Ford, for example, notes

“The ones that tend to do the best as far as getting legislation passed here obviously are those who are in the majority. I've gotten two bills passed this year which is very unusual for a Democrat so my view is that if the bill is a good idea then that should carry at a certain level, further connections are important. I help other people with their bills if they need co-sponsorship; sometimes they ask me to speak on the floor for a bill.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Interview by author 5/14/98

<sup>99</sup> Interview by author 5/21/98

The interview data also indicate that intraracial co-sponsorship of legislation is a pattern of Black legislators within the Ohio legislature. That is, Black legislators are more likely to cosponsor bills with other Black members. Perhaps, the chances of passing legislation are reduced because Black legislators are constrained in the kinds of policy networks they are able to develop within the legislature. When seeking to pass Black interest legislation, interracial rather than intraracial coalitions may be more viable. The effective passage of Black interest legislation requires broader bases of support beyond members of the legislative Black caucus within state legislatures.

Type of Bill	Symbolic Legislation (in percent)	Substantive Legislation (in percent)	Fate of Bill (% Passage Rate)
Black Interest Bills	54	46	9
Nonracial Bills	86	14	8

Table 6.4: Bill Introduction Patterns of Black State Legislators, (Black Interest and Nonracial Legislation) and Passage Rate of Bills, 123<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (1999)

The findings presented here confirm the extant literature on bill sponsorship patterns and the representation of Black interests. A strong connection exists between the race of the legislator and the propensity to sponsor racial justice legislation. Black legislators compared to White legislators specifically use bill sponsorship as a means of focusing attention on salient issues affecting Black constituents in their districts and within the state of Ohio. Through their bill sponsorship activity, Black legislators have an opportunity to “symbolically” represent the interests of their constituents. Katherine

Tate (2001, 2003) argues that symbolic representation is an extraordinarily important dimension of the way Black members of Congress represent constituency interests. Based upon an analysis of bill sponsorship, Sinclair (2005) also found that the majority of legislation sponsored by Black members of Congress was symbolic rather than substantive. Both contend that the passage of symbolic legislation by Black legislators give “voice” to group interests that otherwise would be excluded from legislative decision-making.

The results presented here also confirm that the majority of bills introduced by Black state legislators have a symbolic value. The immediate effect of Black legislators’ bill sponsorship behavior is the articulation and crystallization of policy interests that have been routinely excluded from legislative agendas. The presence of Black legislators within state legislatures changes the nature of legislative deliberations and debates by bringing attention to issues that impact minority communities, thus lessening the chances of “nondecision making”<sup>100</sup> in state legislative politics. Black bill sponsorship of symbolic legislation has psychological, rather than material benefits for the Black community. Symbolic representation affirms for constituents that legislators are seeking to represent their concerns. Thus, bill sponsorship of symbolic legislation helps to forge “connections” between legislators and their constituents (Fenno 2003; Sinclair 2005).

The sponsorship of symbolic legislation is an efficient way for Black legislators to represent their constituents given the workload and complexities associated with

legislative decision-making. Legislators may find it less difficult to gain support for symbolic bill proposals in contrast to substantive ones because they usually have no material impact upon constituents.

The results also indicate that Black legislators, to a lesser extent, are effective in forging political linkage between the Black community and state institutional power by using the budgetary process to acquire and to redistribute resources and funding to indigenous community-based organizations. While Black legislators disproportionately sponsor symbolic legislation, they also seek to gain “tangible” benefits to improve the quality of life for their constituents and urban minority communities.

In the final analysis, the research suggests that Black state legislators are significantly more active in their sponsorship of “Black interests” bills than White state legislators. The study also confirms that bill sponsorship patterns of Black legislators mirror their policy priorities. Black legislators prioritize racial justice issues, such as civil rights, affirmative action, welfare reform, educational parity, and criminal justice which serve as the basis of their bill sponsorship activity. In contrast, no similar pattern in support of racial equity issues reflected in bill sponsorship behavior emerged for White state legislators.

The value of Black bill sponsorship of symbolic legislation is that Black interests and concerns are recognized within the policymaking process. However, symbolic representation is severely limiting in terms of the acquisition of major policy

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<sup>100</sup> Nondecision making is a theoretical concept used in urban politics. It refers to the capacity to prevent issues that are pertinent to lower strata groups from getting on the agenda.

gains for the Black community. The downside of sponsoring symbolic legislation is that no allocation of scarce resources and socioeconomic benefits are channeled to the Black community. The resulting effect of this pattern is low levels of Black political empowerment. Enhancing Black political empowerment within the state legislative arena requires that Black state legislators go beyond simply introducing symbolic legislation and play a larger role in the sponsorship and passage of legislative proposals which produce greater substantive outputs for the Black community.

In the final chapter, I review the major findings and broad implications of the study. I also discuss the theories of Black state legislators and demonstrate how the differing conceptions fit into a general framework for interpreting Black legislative behavior. Finally, I draw upon relevant theories of Black politics and the nascent literature on Black representation in synthesizing the general findings and provide suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation empirically investigated the policy priorities of Ohio Black state legislators to discern whether or not they articulate a distinctive policy agenda relative to White state legislators. The principal purpose of the study essentially was to understand what factors (i.e., district characteristics, institutional factors and political socialization) in addition to race shape legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. To assess actual legislative behavior, the bill sponsorship patterns of legislators were also examined in effort to establish whether or not legislators' perceptions match their actual behavior. Ultimately, the research contributes to the burgeoning literature on the representation of Black interests in legislative institutions. The majority of empirical studies on this topic have been conducted at the congressional level. A paucity of research, therefore, exists regarding the representation of Black interests in state legislatures. As lawmaking entities, state legislatures are important in shaping policies (e.g., affirmative action, welfare reform, medicaid, criminal justice etc.) that are critical to the representation of "Black interests". More recently, with the implementation of new federalism initiatives, state legislatures have assumed a more vital and larger role in influencing policies that are critical to Black interests (Haynie 2001; King-Meadows & Schaller 2006).

Though the findings of this study are mixed, the evidence leans toward the side of the debate on the representation of Black interests which argues that “race matters”. As expected, the policy priorities of Ohio Black state legislators generally differ from White state legislators. They are more likely to advocate race-based policy priorities, such as affirmative action, welfare reform, criminal justice and urban education reform. Race-related policy preferences are also reflected in the bill sponsorship patterns of Black legislators. As reported in Chapter 6, key evidence from this study suggests that Black legislators are significantly more likely to sponsor “Black interest” bills as compared to White state legislators. According to Richard Fenno (2003), Black legislators adopt a group intensive strategy of representation. In other words, they make a concerted effort to articulate and to protect the policy interests of the Black community. Consistent with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3, the concept of “linked fate” proposed by Michael Dawson (1994) also applies. African American state legislators perceive that their individual fate is tied to that of their racial group. They, therefore, use their perceptions of racial group interests when evaluating a policy [also political parties and candidates] which is known as the “Black utility heuristic”. The findings in general suggest that Ohio Black state legislators exhibit a high degree of racial consciousness. Thus, social group identity, identified as a quasi theory of Black legislative activism in Chapter 3, helps to explain the differences in policy priorities between Black and White state legislators. Because of their strong identity with their social [racial] group which is rooted in the shared life experiences and historical oppression (e.g., de jure and de facto discrimination) of African

Americans, Black state legislators often advance policy priorities which are beneficial to the Black community.

Conversely, the alternative explanation, structural integrationist, of Black legislative behavior also has some merit in understanding the overall findings. As reported in Chapter 5, in addition to articulating race-based policy priorities, Black state legislators also advocate policy priorities which are not exclusively related to race. They adopt the representational role of a “responsible legislator” which is more amenable to Black state legislators becoming integrated into state legislatures because they work cooperatively with their colleagues and share some of the same policy priorities which are a natural part of the legislative decision-making process. For example, an overwhelming majority of Ohio state legislators perceive that the state budget is the primary legislative priority followed by education and health care. These findings coincide with previous scholarship on state legislators (Barrett 1995; Button and Hedge 1996). A caveat of the findings is that the effects of race are conditioned by the type of policy issue. In short, the evidence suggests that both quasi-theories, social group identity and structural integrationist, are valid frameworks for evaluating and explaining contemporary Black legislative behavior.

Clearly, the results further substantiate the view that descriptive representation is necessary and important to representative democracy. Without the inclusion of members of underrepresented groups in state legislative bodies, the “deliberative function” of representation would not be adequately performed (Mansbridge 1999). As Jane Mansbridge (1999) argues descriptive representatives enhance substantive

representation by improving the quality of deliberation. The presence of Black state legislators increases the chances of the articulation of racially specific policy priorities that may otherwise be left off of the legislative agenda. David Canon (1999) notes that “Deliberative democracy recognizes the importance of multiple perspectives and identities within the political process. Representatives of varying races bring perspectives to the legislature that can change agendas and alter preferences.” Therefore, electoral districting strategies and methods (e.g., majority Black districts, proportional representation) should maximize as much as possible the representation of historically underserved groups to ensure that their policy preferences are included in legislative deliberations and decisionmaking.

In addition to race, the distinctive style of representation by Black state legislators is also attributable to both their external and internal political environments. As shown in Chapter 2, Ohio Black state legislators represent racially homogeneous districts which are disproportionately socioeconomically disadvantaged. Although some Black members represent minority influence or mixed districts, in general, most Black state legislators represent Black majority districts. The racial and socioeconomic character of these districts, therefore, places a greater burden on Black state legislators in comparison to their White colleagues to deliver tangible benefits and to articulate race-related policy priorities that will help to ameliorate the social and economic problems of their constituencies. In fact, the findings suggest that legislators with a greater percentage of Blacks in their districts were more likely to advocate policy priorities, such as social welfare which disproportionately benefit Black and poor

communities. No relationship, however, existed between the percent Black in districts and other increasingly important policy issues (e.g., education) central to Black interest representation in the post-civil rights era. Additionally, contrary to expectations, other district characteristics, such as percent poverty and percent urban were unrelated to legislators' perceptions of their policy priorities. Notwithstanding, corresponding with the extant literature, the findings (both quantitative and qualitative) provide some support for the hypothesis that the racial composition (i.e. percent Black) of districts matters concerning the kinds of policies Ohio legislators advance.

The internal political environment of Ohio Black state legislators also shapes and constrains their perceptions of their policy priorities and their ability to accomplish them. Their partisan attachment and loyalties, connections with the legislative leadership, and their standing committee assignment patterns influence the priority policies they push. Black state legislators are overwhelmingly Democratic and extremely loyal partisans. They therefore are liberal in ideology and support policy priorities that are in agreement with their party. As shown in Chapter 2, in return for their partisan support, Black legislators have been largely effective in negotiating with the party leadership to satisfy their policy priorities, especially when their party is in the majority. Likewise, the analysis also reveals that strong connections with the legislative leadership influence their policy agenda and increases the likelihood of addressing key policy priorities relevant to Black interests, particularly in the 120<sup>th</sup> Ohio general assembly when Black members held key leadership positions and Vern Riffe served as House Speaker. However, perceptions of policy priorities and strategies of Black state

legislators shift when their relationship with the legislative power structure is relatively weak as in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> sessions when Republican JoAnn Davidson was House Speaker. During Republican-controlled legislative sessions, Black state legislators are severely limited in influencing legislation, particularly on policy issues involving race despite their leadership status.

This analysis also showed that the standing committee assignment patterns of Black state legislators are quite distinctive and correlate strongly with their perceptions of their policy priorities. Though they were relatively distributed throughout the committee system, Black members were significantly likely to serve on committees which have jurisdiction over policy concerns pertaining to Black interests. These committees included human services and aging/family and children services, education, housing, and economic development and small business. Although judiciary/criminal justice committees are important to the representation of Black interests, Black state legislators were vastly underrepresented on these committees. Despite this, the results indicate that in general they acquire committee assignments that are relevant to pursuing a racial policy agenda and their district needs and interests.

Simultaneously, Ohio Black state legislators seek out committee assignments that will enhance their status, prestige and influence within the legislature. In both legislative sessions (1997-1998/1999-2000), they were extremely successful in obtaining prestigious committee assignments. Black legislators, for example, attained an unprecedented level of representation on the Finance and Appropriations committees in the 122<sup>nd</sup>-123<sup>rd</sup> general assemblies. They were also effective in gaining appointments to

other powerful committees, such as Ways and Means and Rules and Reference. The growing presence of Black members on prestigious committees is, perhaps, a function of more Black legislators acquiring party leadership positions and their connections with the general legislative leadership. In short, the committee assignment patterns of Black state legislators coincide with balancing dual representational roles as a “race representative by serving on Black interest committees and a “responsible legislator” through service on prestigious committees. Through their committee appointments they are able to fulfill their policy goals.

The data also show that the political socialization processes, recruitment patterns, and social backgrounds of Ohio Black state legislators significantly shape their perceptions of their policy priorities. In general, the political-social development processes of Black state legislators differ from White state legislators. Black political socialization is characterized by a unique political culture which is defined by several factors including a distinctive liberal ideology, the Black church, and Black advocacy and civil rights organizations. As expected, the political socialization of many Black state legislators derives from their involvement in the civil rights movement and Black political organizations. Thus, the evidence suggests that the socio-political histories and life experiences of Black legislators powerfully influence their styles of representation and the types of policy priorities they support. Black elected officials who emanated from the civil rights era were viewed in Lani Guinier (1994) terms as “authentic” representatives who provided culturally rooted and community-based leadership. They

were the key proponents in articulating a progressive social and economic agenda and the guardians of Black interests.

The move from “protest to politics”, however, has resulted in alternative sources of Black political socialization. Although the political socialization of newly elected Black officials include traditional agents (e.g., family, school, etc.) and more mainstream processes, the findings implicitly show that newly elected Black officials are often socialized by Black community-based organizations and Black legislative caucuses. In particular, the analysis suggests that OLBC has been an important socializing agent for Black state legislators in the post-civil rights era. They have assumed a key role in recruiting new members to the legislature and familiarizing them with the norms and behavior of the institution. Thus, though the political socialization processes of newly elected Ohio Black state legislators differ from their civil rights predecessors, their political learning process through indigenous institutions and organizations have equipped them to continue the advancement of Black policy interests.

In the final analysis, I argue that legislators’ perceptions of their policy priorities are shaped by several factors: legislators’ race, the racial and socioeconomic composition of their districts, institutional characteristics such as partisanship, leadership status and connections, and their committee assignments. The study also illuminates the importance of how legislators’ political socialization and recruitment processes influence their policy foci and priorities.

### ***Implications of Study and Further Research***

The broader implication of the study is that in order to uphold the constitutional promise of a representative democracy, historically disenfranchised and racially excluded groups must occupy a central position within the American polity. Their inclusion and full integration within legislative institutions legitimize governmental decision-making and promotes political fairness (Guinier 1994). According to Guinier (1994, p. 70), “for those at the bottom, a system that gives everyone an equal chance of having their political preferences physically represented is inadequate. A fair system of political representation would provide mechanisms to ensure that disadvantaged and stigmatized minority groups also have a fair chance to have their policy preferences satisfied.” Simply put, descriptive minus substantive representation is not sufficient and does not necessarily result in the reallocation of state legislative policy outcomes and power. The legislative presence of descriptive representatives should translate into policy influence.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments were major civil rights victories which propelled us on the road to achieving Black political empowerment by eliminating legal barriers to Black political participation and increasing the prospects of Black representation. Yet, the current political climate and recent voting rights litigation regarding the constitutionality of race-conscious districting, threaten the likelihood of increasing racial group representation. In January 2000, for example, the Supreme Court diminished the power of the U.S. Justice Department under Section 5 (preclearance provision) of the Voting Rights Act to

enforce states to increase the number of minority majority districts (Tate 2003).

Without the implementation of electoral districting strategies and institutional remedies that take into consideration the political underrepresentation of African Americans, the representation of Black interests will remain tenuous.

The legal challenges regarding racial redistricting and the changing racial character of legislative bodies necessitate ongoing investigations into the level and styles of Black representation in state legislatures to assess how Black (racial group) interests are handled. For more than a decade, the high court has been extremely ambivalent about the permissibility of single-member Black (minority) majority districts. In the landmark decision of *Shaw v. Reno* (1993), based upon the 12<sup>th</sup> congressional district in North Carolina, the court ruled that bizarre odd-shaped districts were unconstitutional although they did not completely invalidate the creation of Black majority districts. In a subsequent court case, *Miller v. Johnson* (1995), the Supreme Court was more decisive in their ruling arguing that race could not be the “predominant” factor in the drawing of district lines and could not subordinate traditional districting principles, such as geographic compactness, contiguity, and commonality of interests. Yet, in *Vera v. Bush* (1996) the court stated that each redistricting case should be evaluated based upon its own merits and held that minority districting was constitutional. The continuous debates centered on racial redistricting indicate that this will be a contentious issue of litigation in the future.

The establishment of minority-majority districts has produced different and competing perceptions about the consequences or outcomes of the districts. On the one

hand, conservative scholars, such as Abigail Thernstrom (1987) argue that minority-majority districts promote political apartheid, balkanization, and polarization and thus, impede the possibility of color-blind representation. On the other hand, liberal thinkers contend that Black majority districts provide an opportunity for Black representation by Black politicians and thereby ensure some measure of inclusion, diversity and empowerment (Canon 1999). However, new empirical evidence indicates that neither view is an accurate portrayal of the new Black majority districts which was a consequence of a “politics of commonality” or biracial politics as opposed to a “politics of difference” (Canon 1999). In other words, representatives of these districts strike a balance by representing all of their constituents both Black and White. A dominant representational strategy adopted by contemporary Black state legislators is characterized in terms of a “deracialization” perspective of the “politics of commonality”. These conclusions lead to questions, such as: Will the “politics of commonality” eventually result in the dilution or abandonment of Black interests? Will issues of a racial nature ultimately receive less attention and become de-emphasized?

Further research on the connection between the patterns of legislators’ political socialization processes and perceptions of their policy priorities and representational roles warrant more attention given the scant nature of these issues in the legislative politics literature. An exception is Canon’s (1999) study which argues that the political socialization of traditional Black candidates is rooted in the civil rights movement and Black churches which results in a “politics of difference” school of thought. However, as we become increasingly removed from the 1960’s civil rights revolution, the political

socializing experiences of new Black representatives are beginning to resemble mainstream processes. Thus, due to their socio-political backgrounds, the new-style Black representatives according to Canon (1999) are more attached to the party organization and are more susceptible to a “politics of commonality”. What does this mean for the representation of Black interests in state legislatures? Will the growing diversity among Black legislators result in the subordination of Black interests?

Finally, I plan to extend the study by collecting additional data on state legislators’ bill sponsorship and co-sponsorship patterns, voting records, floor speeches, committee assignments, and leadership positions to more fully understand the nature of racial representation in state legislatures

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**APPENDIX A**

1993 OHIO LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

Key Interview Questions

## **1993 OHIO LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT, Key Interview Questions**

The first data collection of the Ohio Legislative Research Project was conducted in 1988 as part of the seminar in Legislative Behavior Research at The Ohio State University (see Patterson 1994). A subsequent data collection took place in the spring and summer of 1993. The major purpose of the research was to acquire indepth knowledge about the political attitudes and orientations of Ohio state legislators and in particular to better understand legislative decision-making through face-to-face personal interviews.

Many of the questions employed in both studies are based upon Wahlke et al's classic work on state legislatures and its members. A variety of topics and issues are included in the 1993 interview data that goes beyond the scope of the present research, thus, I have extracted key interview questions from the questionnaire that were central to the study.

### **Political Orientations, Recruitment and Background Items:**

1. How did you happen to get interested in going into politics?
2. When you first decided to run for the legislature, did you determine to do this on your own, or did someone else encourage you to run?

- 1 [ ] ON MY OWN
- 2 [ ] ENCOURAGED BY SOMEONE ELSE

- 2b. (IF "SOMEONE ELSE") Who encouraged you to run for the legislature?

### **District Characteristics**

3. Is your district mostly urban, mostly suburban, or mostly rural?

- 1 [ ] MOSTLY URBAN
- 2 [ ] MIXED URBAN AND RURAL
- 3 [ ] MOSTLY SUBURBAN
- 4 [ ] MOSTLY RURAL

4. How would you classify your district politically—safe Democratic, competitive or safe Republican?

1 [ ] SAFE DEMOCRATIC

2 [ ] MOSTLY DEMOCRATIC

3 [ ] COMPETITIVE

4 [ ] MOSTLY REPUBLICAN

5 [ ] SAFE REPUBLICAN

### **Role of Political Parties**

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role political parties should play in the legislature? Responses were based upon a likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

The leadership of my party in the legislature makes a concerted effort to hold the part together on roll-call votes.

If a bill is important for his or her party's record a member should vote with the party even if it costs some support in the district.

Legislative leaders of my party helped to get me elected to the legislature, so I have an obligation to vote with our party even if I disagree with its stand.

A legislator's first loyalty should be to the party leadership in the legislature rather than the governor if they disagree.

The best interests of the people would be better served if legislators were elected without party labels.

A legislator should support the plans and programs of a governor belonging to his own party whether or not the governor can impose rewards or punishments.

A legislator should vote with the majority of his or her own party in the legislature whenever the majority of one party opposes the majority of another, and he or she should do this as a matter of principle and not merely as a matter of self interest.

To get ahead in the legislature a member must support the stands taken by a majority of his or her own party.

The two parties should take clear-cut, opposing stands on the important state issues in order to encourage party responsibility.

### **Legislative Decision-making and Policy Priorities**

6. First of all, during this session what issues or problems have the highest priority for decision-making by the legislature? Which of these issues is most important, next most important, and so on? (RECORD 1-“most important,” 2-“second in importance,” etc., below)
7. Now, personally, how do you decide on your own legislative priorities for each session? I mean, of the issues on which you might like to work, how do you decide which issues to put considerable personal effort into versus those that will not receive much personal attention?

**APPENDIX B**

Interview Schedule  
Members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC)  
Interview: Linda M. Trautman

Name of Interviewee

Date of Interview

Interview No.

**Interview Schedule**  
**Members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC)**  
**Interviewer: Linda M. Trautman**

To begin, I would like to learn about your political attitudes and orientations:

**Political Socialization and Recruitment Processes**

1. How did you become interested in politics?

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2. When did you first decide to go into politics?

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3. When you first decided to run for the legislature, did you determine to do this on our own, or did someone else encourage you to run?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3a. (If "Someone Else") Who encouraged you to run for the legislature?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What groups, if any, were particularly supportive of your candidacy?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Before entering the legislature, did you have any prior political experience?

1 [ ] Yes

2 [ ] No

5a. If yes, what elective offices or party positions did you hold?

**Elective offices**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Party offices**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What level of government were these positions?

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**Personal Background Characteristics**

7. Are you a fulltime legislator? 1  Yes      2  No

8. Do you have another occupation besides that of legislator? 1  Yes      2  No

8a. If yes, what is it?

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8b. Which of these do you consider your principal job or occupation?

1  Legislator

2  Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Now, I would like to find out a few things about your perceptions of the district you represent and your representational role:**

**Constituency/Representational Roles**

9. In percentages, what are your perceptions of the racial composition of your district?

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10. Do you perceive your district to be mostly urban, mostly suburban, or mostly rural?

- 1 [ ] mostly urban
- 2 [ ] mixed urban and rural
- 3 [ ] mostly suburban
- 4 [ ] mostly rural

11. How do you perceive your district politically—safe Democratic, competitive, or safe Republican?

- 1 [ ] Safe Democratic
- 2 [ ] Mostly Democratic
- 3 [ ] Competitive
- 4 [ ] Mostly Republican
- 5 [ ] Safe Republican

12. Which of the following conceptualizations best characterize how you represent your constituents?

- 1 [ ] Delegate (that is, as legislator, you represent the demands and wishes of your constituents even if you disagree)
- 2 [ ] Trustee (as legislator, you use your own best judgment on policy issues even if your constituents disagree)
- 3 [ ] Politico (combination of delegate and trustee roles)

13. On what kinds of issues, do you perceive constituents' opinions to be the most important?

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14. On what kinds of issues, do you deem constituents' opinions to be the least important?

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**Now, I would like to find out specific information about the internal relationships within the Ohio General Assembly:**

**Respect/Influence:**

15. A famous study of Ohio legislators conducted 30 years ago showed that a few members were unusually well-respected by their colleagues—they were people that new members could look up to when they were just learning the ropes. Who do you consider to be the five to six *most respected* members in the legislature today?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

16. Do you think that the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) is well-respected as an informal group in the legislature?

1 [ ] Yes

2 [ ] No

Explain why you feel this way.

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17. We're told that some legislators have more influence on legislation than others do, and that sometimes the members holding official positions are not always the most influential. Who are the 4-5 most influential members of the legislature today?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you personally consider yourself influential as a member of the legislature? If so, in what ways do you exercise influence?

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19. Overall, how would you evaluate the influence of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) on policymaking?

- 1 [ ] Very Influential
- 2 [ ] Influential
- 3 [ ] Somewhat Influential
- 4 [ ] Not Influential at all

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Friendship Networks**

20. Legislatures often tell us they make some of their closest friends while in the legislature. Who do you consider your own 5-6 closest friends in the legislature?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do your friendship networks have any impact upon your legislative behavior (e.g., voting)?

- 1 [ ] Yes
- 2 [ ] No

(if yes, explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Policymaking**

22. Personally, what are the most important policy issues to you as a legislator?

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23. Are there any particular subjects or fields of legislation in which you think of yourself as particularly expert?

23a (if yes, Which areas?)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

24. Often times, it is assumed that black legislative caucuses are mechanisms by which black interests can be represented and articulated. Does this view hold true for OLBC?

1 [ ] Yes (explain, how so) \_\_\_\_\_

2 [ ] No

25. What are the primary policy priorities of black legislators in the current Assembly?

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26. How do the policy priorities of black legislators differ from white legislators?

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27. How successful has OLBC been in accomplishing/realizing its policy goals?

- 1 [ ] Very Successful
- 2 [ ] Successful
- 3 [ ] Somewhat Successful
- 4 [ ] Unsuccessful

28. What committees are important for the needs of the black community? Name them. Are black legislators adequately represented on them?

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**Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about race relations:**

**Race/Race Relations**

29. What are your perceptions of racial politics in Ohio?

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30. Now thinking in terms of the Ohio General Assembly, how does race influence your effectiveness as a legislator?

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31. How would you describe race relations in the Ohio legislature?

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32. Do you consider the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus to be a cohesive group?

1 [ ] Yes (how so?)

2 [ ] No (why not?)

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

33. What are some of the problems and constraints of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **External Relations**

34. We have witnessed a transfer of partisan control of the Ohio legislature, from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority, how has this changed the role of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

35. Describe the relationship between the OLBC leadership and other leaders of the Ohio legislature.

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(TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERVIEWER PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW)

**Demographics:**

36. Legislator's gender:            1 [ ] Male            2 [ ] Female

Legislator's age:            [\_\_\_\_\_]

37. Education Level:            1 [ ] High School or Less  
   2 [ ] Some College  
   3 [ ] College Degree  
   4 [ ] Postgraduate Degree  
   in \_\_\_\_\_  
   5 [ ] Law Degree

38. Legislator's political party    1 [ ] Republican    2 [ ] Democrat

39. Number of terms served  
in the legislature:            [\_\_\_\_\_]

40. Legislator's party leadership position:

1 \_\_\_\_\_                            3 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_                            4 \_\_\_\_\_

41. Legislator's committee assignments and chairmanships:

Committee	Subcommittee	Chairman?		Ranking Member?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
_____	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

42. Legislator's seat number in the chamber [\_\_\_\_\_]