ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS: THE IMPACT OF GENDER AND RACE ON LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE
	Wendy G. Smooth, Doctor of Philosophy, 2001
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The increasing diversity of state legislatures coupled with the transference of power back to the states through devolution necessitates a closer look at these governing institutions. This study focuses on influence in state legislatures, questioning the impact of this increased diversity on the allocation of institutional influence. In this study, I specifically focus on the experiences of African American women state legislators to discern the impact of both race and gender on legislative influence. To do this, I analyzed both African American women's self-perceived influence, and their colleagues' perceptions. By utilizing an institutional approach, this analysis moves beyond state legislators' attributes and addresses the institutional and contextual variables that play a role in determining legislative influence.

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address its major research questions. In addition to conducting the *National Survey of African American Women State Legislators*, I also conducted face-to-face interviews with a cross section of legislators in Georgia, Maryland and Mississippi; document

analysis; and participant observation. The resulting data show that both gender and race play a role in determining who is regarded as influential in state legislatures. Reflective of the deeply embedded gender and race divides existing in the state legislatures studied, influence is found to be both race and gender specific. African American women's influence was largely limited to other African Americans. Few white legislators considered any African American legislators as influential. Further, I find that while some African American women have acquired the attributes that traditionally confer influence in state legislatures, they have not acquired the institutional power and influence that are traditionally associated with these attributes. I also find that the legislative context matters significantly in the allocation of legislative influence. African American women were more likely to be perceived as influential in more professional legislatures that preference knowledge of policy issues and prior expertise as opposed to less professional legislatures that were more apt to operate according to norms reflecting gender and race-based preferences.

Overall, the findings of this dissertation confirm that preferences around gender and race have become institutionalized and manifest as norms governing legislative behavior. State legislatures, like other institutions do not escape the ills of their state's political culture; instead, they most often mirror it.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS: THE IMPACT

OF GENDER AND RACE ON LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Both graduate school and its crowing moment, the writing of the dissertation have been most aptly described as a journey. I indeed subscribe to this metaphorical expression, and along my personal journey, I have been blessed to have people who comforted, guided, and sustained me along the way. I am deeply grateful to all those who contributed to me reaching my desired destination. The completion of this project stands as testimony to all of your greatness!

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Along this journey, I was blessed to meet a cadre of tremendously talented intellectuals who contributed extensively to my success. Without our stimulating conversations, heated debates, and their overall personal investment in me, this

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I
Introduction: Gender and Race as Organizing Norms of State Legislatures

State legislatures are theorized as egalitarian institutions that operate with each

member elected to the body having an equal voice as embodied in the concept of one

vote. Their one vote represents an equal chance to impact the issues in which they are

interested. This theoretical assumption about state legislatures likens them to all

democratic institutions in which equality is thought to reign. However, any purview of

state legislatures leads one to quickly conclude that while each legislator is afforded one

vote, every legislator having one vote does not translate into every legislator having an

equal voice in the institution. Not every legislator is vested with the same power and

influence. Though we have come to expect that power and influence is indeed

concentrated in the hands of only a few members of the legislature, we do not expect

that some legislators, by virtue of certain characteristics, specifically their gender and

race, will be consistently excluded from having influence in the institution. In this

dissertation, I participate in the search for more democratic institutions by uncovering

the gender and race biases embedded in the institutional norms of state legislatures.

State legislatures are more diverse today than ever in the nation's history. More

women and people of color have been elected to state legislatures across the country

placing them among the most diverse governing institutions in the country. This

increased diversity provides a unique opportunity to revisit commonly held conclusions

regarding the norms, preferences, and patterns of behavior existing in these institutions.

In this dissertation, I focus on these norms, preferences, and patters of behavior in

relation to the distribution of influence in these institutions.

Placing Gender and Race into Context: The Distribution of Power in U.S. Society and Its Institutions

In this dissertation, I assume as fact the premise that gender and race are social constructions that play major roles in organizing U.S. society and its institutions. The distribution of power in the U.S. and throughout its institutions is predicated on gender and race hierarchies. As a result, gender and race determine the distribution of power in this country. As U.S. society is currently configured, white men hold a disproportionate amount of power. In most instances, the power afforded to white men is significantly more vast and differs from power afforded to others in society. While power is distributed according to gender and race in society at large, we do not expect such ascribed characteristics to prevail in democratic institutions such as state legislatures. Gender and race are not expected to hold the same power in state legislatures benefiting the legislative performance of white men, yet hampering the legislative performance of those who do not fit the white, male norm.

Instead, we assume that the characteristics and attributes that legislators acquire once they enter the institution will determine their institutional performance. However, in this dissertation I illustrate that gender and race remain significant in legislative institutions. Gender and race play a major role in determining legislators' influence among their colleagues, which ultimately impacts the policy outcomes of state legislatures. I find that state legislatures are not different from other institutions in that they do not escape the ills of the political culture in which they exist. Instead, state

2

legislatures most often mirror the political culture of the larger society. Given the predominance of gender and race as organizing features of U.S. society, it comes as no surprise that its institutions, including governing institutions such as state legislatures, are also ordered according to gender and race hierarchies.

Increased Diversity in State Legislatures

State legislatures have increasingly become more and more representative of the larger society. As a result of this diversity, it is necessary to examine these institutions' response to the increased diversity. The numbers of people of color and women serving in state legislative institutions have increased dramatically in recent years. Following the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the number of African American elected officials soared; in fact, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies cites that there were only 168 African American legislators nationwide in 1970. By 1997, over a thirty- year span, that number had increased to 567 African American legislators serving throughout the county (Bositis, 1997).

Likewise, in 1969, only 301 women served in state legislatures, comprising only four percent of the total number of state legislators serving nation-wide. Today, the number of women in state legislatures has more than quintupled. In 2000, according to the Center for American Women in Politics (CAWP) there were 1,672 women state legislators serving in state legislatures across the country comprising nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the 7,424 state legislators (CAWP, 2000). Of those, 265 were women of color. African American women comprise 11 percent of all women state legislators (181 African American women). There were 46 African American women serving in

upper houses and 135 serving in lower houses of 36 states (CAWP, 2000).[1] African

American women have most certainly made substantial gains considering that only 15

African American women served in state legislatures in 1970 (Bositis, 1992).

Indeed, African American women have contributed substantially to the growth

in state legislatures' diversity. Despite the fact that the rate of African American

women being elected to state legislatures has exceeded that of their African American

male counterparts, little is known about their experiences once in office and the

positions they hold within state legislatures. Even less is known about how their

colleagues regard them, and both have an impact on policy outcomes. This study

focuses on the experiences of African American women as they construct their

legislative identities in institutions dominated by white men. In this dissertation I

examine African American women's influence in state legislatures focusing not only on

their self-perceived influence, but also their colleagues' perceptions of their influence.

Challenging Existing Knowledge: The Major Questions of the Research

I challenge the traditional understandings of influence in state legislatures by

examining its complexities from the perspective of African American women state

legislators. Focusing on the legislative experiences of African American women state

legislators provides an opportunity to re-examine established conclusions about the

distribution of influence within state legislatures. I question whether gender and race

factor into explanations of the allocation of influence in a legislative institution.

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1. In 1999, when this study began there were 173 African American women, and after the 2000 elections, that number increased by 8, totaling 181 African American women according to CAWP.

Therefore, the focal point of this research is the relationship between influence, gender and race in state legislatures.

Legislator's perceptions of who is, and who is not influential is the crux of this inquiry. My analysis relies heavily on legislators' perceptions of who is influential, and I argue that these perceptions are the underlying structures that allow legislators to have power in the institution. Perceptions are one of the most important factors in determining legislators' influence and are the foundation of power relations. Also included in my analysis is an examination of the relationships between these perceptions and the formal institutional positions that are believed to confer power.[2]

In this dissertation I seek to answer a series of questions: Are African American women perceived as influential legislators within state legislatures? Do African American women hold the characteristics of those typically regarded as influential legislators? If so, does having these attributes result in the same benefits, namely being regarded as influential among their colleagues? Are all legislators afforded the same opportunity to become influential in the legislature? Under what circumstances are African American women most likely to be perceived as influential within the institutions in which they serve? Is their perceived influence restricted to specific policy areas?

These questions form the central inquiry of this dissertation, and these questions

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2. The literature on legislative behavior establishes a number of formal institutional factors that are said to confer power. Factors such as institutional leadership positions, committee assignments, seniority, issue expertise and others will be discussed throughout the dissertation.

5

give way to additional important questions. Particularly, questions addressing legislative institutions' responses to their increased diversity. For example: What does the election of African American women to state legislatures illuminate about these institutions? How do legislative institutions with all their established norms, roles and preferences respond when confronted with difference? How well do our theories of legislative behavior and legislative institutions hold when confronted with difference?

I pursue these questions by examining data from the *National Survey of African American Women State Legislators*, which focuses on African American women's views on their legislative experiences. In addition, I rely on data from case studies conducted in three state legislatures-- Georgia, Maryland, and Mississippi, each having a critical mass of African American women serving in the legislature. In these case studies, I focus not only on African American women's self-perception of their influence, but also their colleagues' perceptions of their influence.

Though my findings have implications for the specific policy outcomes that are a result of the increase in the number of African American women in the legislature, my findings are less concerned with measurable policy outcomes. Instead, the findings of this dissertation more confirm that preferences around gender and race have become institutionalized and manifest as norms governing legislative behavior. These norms are deeply ingrained in the legislature such that the entrance of significant numbers of people of color and women has had little impact on changing these norms or the extent to which the institution adheres to them. When legislatures were less diverse and more homogeneous, these norms and preferences were not as evident, but with the increased

diversity in state legislatures they have become significantly more apparent. These norms negatively impact legislators who differ from the construction of legislators as white men.

In my analysis, I not only argue the existence of institutional racism and sexism in state legislatures, I also convey the extent to which this racism and sexism have become embedded in the norms and operating procedures of state legislatures such that they are reflected in the organizational structure of these institutions. As further discussed in Chapter two, gender and race preferences are not typically made visible through extraordinary or blatant actions. To the contrary, they are exercised more subtly in the day-to-day interactions between legislators over the course of the daily operations of the institution, which is reflective of the extent to which these preferences have become transformed into institutionalized norms, and are organizing features of the legislative institution.

The adherence to gender and race based preferences manifests as norms that determine who will and will not become leaders in the institution as well as which legislators are regarded as influential by the members. According to my findings, gender and race norms are just as powerful in making determinations about legislators' impact as seniority, holding a formal institutional position, and being legislatively active. Much of the power of these gender and race based norms lies in the fact that they dictate the extent to which other attributes have meaning or can be evaluated as measures of influence. These norms also play a role in determining those who will are the most suitable for legislative friendships --which are the key to legislating. I also find

that the less professional a legislature, the more legislators adhere to these norms and the more evident the norms are. In more professional legislatures, I find that other norms prevail, making the gender and race-based norms less pronounced.

Further, I argue that to a great extent, institutional preferences around gender and race mediate or dictate if legislators move into institutional positions of power, and more importantly they often dictate whether these positions of power will have meaning at all. As a result, I find that just because an African American woman has the attributes that are typically valued by the institution such as seniority, a formal leadership position, a prestigious committee assignment, and she introduces and passes legislation does not mean that she will be perceived as influential among her colleagues as the literature on influence in legislatures suggests. Gender and race are all encompassing norms affecting every aspect of legislative life. Gender and race govern legislator's experiences and interactions, even when they are least aware of such. While I do place tremendous emphasis on the explanatory power of gender and race-based preferences as institutional norms, I do not suggest that others are not relevant to explaining the allocation of influence in state legislatures. Instead, I suggest that gender and race play a role in constituting and organizing most of the institution's norms.

Particularly, I find that in the absence of clearly articulated formal rules governing the institution, informal rules, which are essentially the institutional norms of the institution, take precedent. For example, in the absence of formal rules such as an adherence to a seniority system to govern promotions into party leadership positions and appointments as committee chairs, or even formal rules governing the number of

8

committee chair positions a legislator can hold during their tenure as a legislator, informal rules are more likely to take precedent.

African American Women and Institutional Power

The increase in the number of women and people of color in state legislatures poses new and interesting questions regarding their legislative performance. For so long, the emphasis has been on increasing the numbers of women and people of color to create more descriptively representative institutions. As their numbers have increased, however, the focus of inquiry has shifted to question their impact in the legislature. While the literature on women and politics has been long on advocating the importance of women being elected to office, a plethora of new questions are emerging evaluating the impact of women in elected office. As Schroedel and Mazumbar argue, the increased numbers of women, and I would add people of color, necessitates that the evaluation of progress shift from their election to office to evaluating the power they have within the institution. In their discussion of women in elective office, they further argue that it is essential for women to be participants in policy debates via their elected offices, but in order to have real influence, women must be "in power" rather than merely "around the halls of power"(Schroedel and Mazumbar, 1998). Getting elected is only the first step, given the significance of occupying key policy making positions within the institution, which they argue is the only way to wield power.[3]

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3. Jean Reith Schroedel and Nicola Mazumdar, "Into the Twenty-First Century. Will Women Break the Political Glass Ceiling?" in *Women and Elective Office, Past Present and Future* Eds. by Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. 1998:206. These authors along with Noelle Norton "Women, It's Not Enough to be Elected: Committee Positions Makes a Difference" in *Gender Power, Leadership and Governance* ed by Georgia

While Schroedel and Mazumdar and others argue that acquiring positions on committees that handle policies key to legislators' interest areas is the means by which power is garnered in institutions, I argue that being an influential legislator requires more than key committee assignments. There is a difference between being influential on a particular committee, and having institutional power that extends beyond the confines of a particular issue or a particular committee. Before African American women are able to participate in shaping the legislative agenda, rather than responding to others' agendas, they must first be regarded as significant figures throughout the legislative body. Further, to even bring the issues of importance to them to the legislative agenda and have them come to fruition, they must enjoy a modicum of influence in the institution.

Women and politics scholars have argued that in order for women lawmakers to advance their agendas, they must increase their institutional power. For example, Noelle Norton (1995) asserts that advancing women's legislative agendas requires not only that they be elected to office, but that they acquire institutional power. Institutional power has most often been determined by the formal positions held in the institution. While I agree that institutional positions of power are significant to gaining the type of power necessary for executing a legislative agenda, in the case of African American women

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Durest-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelley (1995) argue that committee assignments are the key sources of power for women in state legislators. Norton's study of women's reproductive rights policy development suggests that the inability of Congresswomen to impact these policies is tied directly to their not holding membership on the committees in Congress addressing these issues. Attempting to take action on these issues while on the floor had little to no impact on the development of reproductive rights policies.

legislators it appears that garnering institutional positions of power is only one aspect of gaining the power necessary for executing their legislative agendas.

In light of the value placed on garnering formal positions as an indicator of institutional power, I critically examine the institutional positions held by African American women. I also question whether holding these positions translates into the types of outcomes that are expected. In addition to gaining institutional positions of power, also being perceived by their fellow legislators as influential plays a significant role in determining their abilities to execute their legislative agendas, whether that includes introducing legislation or barring what they consider to be bad legislation. I determine that institutional power is evaluated according to more factors than holding formal institutional positions, while defining institutional power in these terms would undoubtedly fail in its assessments of who is influential in the institution. Instead, I define African American women's institutional power inclusive of their colleagues' perceptions of their influence rather than only their formal institutional position.

Whether or not African American women are able to increase their legislative capacity is dependent upon them being perceived as influential in the legislatures in which they serve. In order for African American women to affect the system acting specifically on the policy areas of interest to them, they must first establish their legitimacy within the institution. The findings of a 1991, study of women legislators found that it is particularly important for women politicians to secure a sense of power, effectiveness, and influence among their fellow male legislators in order to gain a modicum of the support needed to get legislation passed (Blair and Stanley, 1991). How

11

other legislators perceive African American women legislators has a direct impact on their ability to get things accomplished in the policy making process. This dissertation is an effort to discern whether African American women are regarded by their colleagues as viable actors in the legislature, which means being perceived as effective, influential, players in the institutions.

Outline of the Study

In the subsequent chapters, I set out to weave together a coherent presentation of African American women's influence in state legislatures by examining both their own perspective on their legislative experience as well as exploring how their colleagues perceive their influence. In Chapter Two, I focus on the existing literature on influence in state legislatures. I argue that existing studies of legislative influence, which have been used to evaluate legislators' impact in these institutions, were based on legislative institutions that were largely homogeneous institutions populated by white men. These institutions' homogeneity did not offer scholars opportunities to study the effects of institutional variables on influence under the conditions in which legislators were of differing races and genders. In chapter two, I conclude that scholarship in other fields, such as organizational analysis, provide useful tools for examining state legislatures in light of their increased diversity. Further, I conclude that it is necessary to move toward a more inclusive approach to legislative influence that broadens our conceptualizations of what constitutes influence.

After examining the existing literature in chapter two and discussing the methods used in the study, I then turn to African American women's perceptions of

12

their own legislative influence using data from the *National Survey of African American Women State Legislators*. African American women's self-perceived influence is a critical component of understanding their colleagues' perceptions of their influence. Further, their self-perceived notions of their own influence contribute to understanding how the legislative institution has responded to their efforts to assume their legislative roles. In Chapter three, I focus on three aspects of African American women's legislative experiences. First, I explore the extent to which they feel they have been accepted and incorporated into the legislature. Secondly I focus on their experiences interacting with their colleagues in their coalition building efforts. And, third, I focus on how they perceive their abilities to impact their colleagues' decision making on issues of importance to them. Given the literature on the importance of holding particular attributes in the legislature, I expected that African American women who have enjoyed success on measures valued by the institution particularly assuming formal leadership positions, securing prized committee assignments, and have seniority would report a different legislative experience than women who have not been as successful along this trajectory. However, I find that regardless of their institutional position, African American women state legislators feel that they are not fully incorporated in the legislature, and they feel that building coalitions with most of their colleagues is difficult at best. Further, African American women are less than optimistic about their abilities to impact the decisions of their colleagues, particularly white men.

Chapter four examines legislators' perceptions of influence in the context of the three case study states. In this chapter, I identify two types of influence. General

influence reflects influence across the legislature or being influential in the process of legislating. The second type of influence I identify is issue-specific influence, which refers to having influence in a particular policy area. I focus on the policy areas in which African American women consider themselves to be experts. After examining the distribution of influence in these three state legislatures, it becomes quite easy to understand the feelings of severe exclusion African American women state legislators across the nation report. Influence in all three states is consistently confined to the hands of only a few legislators.

Overwhelmingly, members of the formal legislative leadership, particularly the top party leaders are those who are considered to be generally influential in the legislature. However, African American women in these legislatures have not gained access to these positions; therefore they are not regarded as having this level of influence. And, in less professional legislatures, such as the Mississippi State Legislature, evidence suggests that even moving into these institutional positions does not guarantee that African American women will be regarded as generally influential in the legislature.

Influence in particular policy areas differs in that it is more widely disbursed among legislators. African American women are more likely to be regarded as influential in specific policy areas. They are also more likely to have influence in legislative institutions that place value on knowledge of a policy area and prior expertise. The preferences and institutional norms of the legislature significantly impact whether African American women are able to garner any influence in the institution.

14

Whether or not African American women are able to impact the issues that are of important to them is as much about their advancement into leadership positions as it is about the preferences and norms of the institution. Like women legislators in general, African American women legislators also fare better in more professional legislatures, and it is more likely that African American women will be able to bring their issues to the forefront and the less likely the other preferences and norms are to come into the picture as deciding factors.

The importance of building strong relationships emerges in Chapter four as legislators defined legislative influence and indicated sources of legislative influence. And in Chapter five, I further examine legislative friendships and their relationship to legislative influence. Building good relationships in the legislature is a critical component of legislative success. Garnering influence in state legislatures is very much dependent upon legislators' abilities to build and maintain legislative friendships. In Chapter five, I focus on these legislative friendships examining factors that contribute to legislator's abilities to build these critical relationships. Forging and maintaining these legislative friendships, more than any other feature of legislative life illuminates the impact of difference on the institution. Though considered by some a fledging norm of legislative life, I find that legislative friendships are still a significant norm governing legislative life and one that is tremendously segregated along gender and race lines, which makes them less productive for coalition building across the institution. In Chapter five, I find that building legislative friendships are paramount to acquiring legislative influence; however, African American women like other legislators are quite

restrictive in their friendship choices. Overall, legislators tend to coalesce with legislators whom they find they are most alike. More so than seeking those with leadership positions or those with the most seniority, legislators are most likely to choose as friends those legislators who are of their same race and to a lesser extent their same gender.

Chapter six concludes the dissertation and in this chapter I summarize the findings of the dissertation, address the implications of this research for citizens, legislators, and students of legislative institutions and I suggest a research agenda that follows from the findings of this study.

The chapters that follow are based on a snapshot in time of African American women's experiences in state legislatures and their colleagues' responses to their adaptation of the role of legislator. The findings of this dissertation reflect a particular moment in the political history of the African American women responding to the survey as well as the legislatures of the case studies. Therefore, I make limited claims that these findings would be the same at another moment in time or in other contexts. Despite these limitations, studying three state legislatures curtails the effects of these limitations. The three states I have chosen are similar in that they have elected a critical mass of African American women state legislators, but they vary in their institutional responses to African American women in the legislature. Each state legislature is different and unique in its own history and development, which makes it quite beneficial to focus on multiple states given that this approach increases the reliability of the findings.

Chapter II
Influence in State Legislatures: The Impact of Gender and Race

Some may question the significance of a study of legislative influence. Indeed this is a valid question given the fact that inquiries about influence, effectiveness and power in institutions were topics largely explored in a number of studies of the 1960s and 1970s, and one could argue that this is a debate on which the sun has set. This literature addressed several aspects of influence in legislatures, including the differences between members of the majority and minority parties (Hamm, Hamel and Thompson, 1983; Meyer, 1980; Frantzich, 1979; Matthews, 1960), differences between junior and senior members (Francis, 1962; Frantzich, 1979) and differences between conservative and liberal members (Frantzich, 1979; Olsen and Nonidez, 1972; Matthews, 1959). Remarkably, there is still much we do not know about influence in state legislatures. Particularly, given the changes and the modernization of the state legislature as an institution, there are substantial reasons to revisit the study of influence in state legislatures.

My interest in influence in state legislatures is prompted by the increased diversity of their members, and I question whether the things we have come to know about influence in the legislature operate in the same ways as they once did when state legislatures were homogeneously populated by white men. While there are few studies that address the impact of people of color and women there are still fewer studies that address the effects of both gender and race on legislative influence.

In many ways, this study is exploratory given that there are few theories that suggest how African American women gain and maintain influence. We are then left to extrapolate from what we know about influence generally, African Americans in politics and women in politics to build a framework for understanding those at the point of intersection-- African American women. In this chapter, I will review what is known about African American women as elected officials, and I will highlight the progression of the Black politics and women and politics literatures toward questions that get to the impact of underrepresented groups in legislative institutions. Finally, building on these literatures, I move toward a theory of African American women's perceived influence, which grows out of gendered institutional theory but incorporates an analysis of race.

Influence in the "Old" State Legislature: Existing Studies of Influence in Legislative Bodies

Literature of the 1960s and '70s devoted much attention to questions of influence in legislative bodies, seeking to identify those attributes held by the influential in the legislature. A number of measures were devised in this early literature to predict who was likely to hold these characteristics. While laying the groundwork for understanding how influence works in state legislatures, these studies by and large assume legislatures to be homogeneous institutions.

This literature can be classified according to three basic approaches - the reputational approach, decision-making approach, and the positional approach (Weissert, 1991). Each approach holds its own set of limitations and many studies have attempted to rectify the apparent weaknesses in these individual measurements by using these measures in combination (Meyer, 1980; Weissert, 1991).

18

The reputational approach, which is used in this study to asses legislative influence is most identified with the work of Francis (1962) and Best (1971). This approach relies on "knowledgeables" to identify the power elite. Both Francis and Best argue that reputations reflect the degree of influence attributed to others and are a confident measurement of influence. Francis based this conclusion on the high correlation between reputations of general and issue specific influence reported by the members of the Indiana State Senate and a combination of bill success and formal position. Francis then argues that because the senators were "members of a small face to face group where knowledge about other members is likely to be great" their close relationship was then likely to produce such an environment that their perceptions of influence were highly reliable (Francis, 1962,). Likewise, Best follows Francis' justification for focusing on perceived rather than actual influence. Best (1971) interviewed members of the Washington State House of Representatives asking members to report those members who hold reputations of being influential in general and on specific issues. He also found a relationship between those in leadership positions and those most likely to be perceived as influential.

The reputational approach in effect is a snowball sampling method that attempts to discern both the formal and informal structures of power, the perceptions of formal and informal power, and those that interact with one another both formally and informally as members of the power elite (Kadushin, 1968). Using "knowledgeables" to determine those who are most influential is often critiqued for its reliance on reputations rather than any measurements of "actual" legislative activity (Hamm, Harmel and

Thompson, 1983; Frantzich, 1979). While the reputational approach to measuring influence is often critiqued for its lack of focus on the "actual" legislative activities of legislators, in both Francis and Best's work, they acknowledge a connection between perceptions of influence and "actual" legislative activity.

Those who are most often critical of a reliance on political elites to identify the most influential among them use other indicators to measure influence. For example, the positional approach has been most popular among congressional scholars. According to this approach, lawmakers are classified as influential based on their formal position in the institution. Typically, those in leadership positions have been found to be more effective legislators--party leaders, committee chairs, and other formal leaders have been regarded as most influential (Best, 1971; Bell and Price, 1975; Hamm, Harmel and Thompson, 1983; Meyer, 1980). This assertion that formal leadership gives way to influence is overwhelmingly substantiated. Because leaders introduce more legislation, are often majority party members, hold seniority, and have often developed expertise in policy areas they are overwhelmingly regarded as the influentials in both studies of Congress and state legislatures alike.

In Matthews' (1959, 1960) study of the United States Senate, he finds that the ability to get bills and resolutions through the senate was largely dependent on whether a senator was a party leader or a committee chairman. The general rule for the senate according to his findings is either hold a strategic position in the majority party and committee structure, or accept not being regarded as powerful, prestigious, or effective. While Matthews' findings assert the importance of positional power, he concludes that

the institutional position alone does not determine influence. He regards ability, intelligence, energy, integrity, personality and conformity to the "folkways of the senate" as additional factors leading to influence in the absence of positional power (Matthews, 1960).

Another approach used to determine the influential has been the decision making approach, and Stephen Frantzich's (1979) study of Congress is an example of this approach. He defines influence as the ability to get legislation through the "decision making labyrinth" arguing that congressmen are not equal "in potential or actual power" and that their effectiveness and influence can be predicted on the basis of a number of factors. Many of the factors used to predict influence by those using the decision-making approach overlap with those of the positional approach, which further substantiates the importance of possessing particular attributes. Frantzich, for example, finds that those members who hold membership in the dominant political party, are a leader, a senior member, electorally secure, and ideologically moderate are over represented among the legislatively influential. In addition, students of the decision making approach acknowledge the various ways in which legislators can affect the progress of legislation. Legislators can effect legislation at various points in the process to either stymie progress or aid the positive progression of legislation (Frantzich, 1979; Stanley and Blair, 1991).

As the authors in the above discussion point out, alone these approaches do not fully explain influence in legislative institutions. In fact, Frantzich (1974) points this out in his critique of the positional approach as he finds that examining only a legislator's

21

institutional position is likely to miss many legislators who are influential in the institution and equally likely to include those who do not particularly yield substantial influence. While a legislator being regarded as influential is due in part to their formal position in the institution in alignment with the positional approach, perceptions of influence are informed by more than a legislator's formal institutional position. For example, despite a legislator's institutional position, their colleagues still may not regard the legislator as influential. Therefore, in order to paint a clear picture of the nature of influence in the institution, it is important to include multiple measures of influence[1]. Therefore, these approaches used in tandem provide a clearer understanding of this complex topic.

In this current study, I rely heavily on the reputational approach; however, I do not assume this approach to be the only effective means of studying the influential in the legislature. Instead, I use the positional and decision-making approaches as accompaniments, asserting that the various approaches are interrelated. Like Best (1971) and Francis (1962), I also argue that given the nature and culture of state legislatures, perceptions of influence and actual influence -- measured by legislative activity and institutional position -- are likely to correspond.

Being perceived as influential has payoffs for legislators, and scholars studying voting cues point to this. Those legislators regarded as influential are often able to

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1. According to Charles Kadushin (1968), good studies of power or influence must have multiple indicators of power or influence and some means to test the connections between the indicators. Implementing Kadushin's observations, I will use both reputational measures as well as a combination of variables used by those employing a positional or decision making approach. The question however is whether these variables will perform in the same ways for African American women.

shape the decisions of their colleagues in their favor. Reputations of influence have an effect on how legislators make their voting decisions. In that legislators often turn to trusted colleagues to provide short cuts in the voting process, it can be argued that the choice of who to trust is related to who is considered influential (Ray, 1982; Uslaner and Weber, 1977; Kingdon, 1973).

This need to make a multitude of decisions in constrained circumstances often necessitates the construction of legislative friendship networks among trusted colleagues. Calderia and Patterson (1987) assert the importance of friendships arguing that these friendship networks also function to distinguish the insiders from the outsiders, and in doing so they weigh heavily on the collective decision making process. In Stanley and Blair's (1991) study of gender differences in legislative effectiveness[2], they find that the ability to get things done -- in the Arkansas and Texas legislature hinges on the ability to formulate personal relationships with colleagues. These networks are found to be of especial importance in less professionalized legislatures.

Many of the rules and norms of U.S. legislatures rely on informal structures and personal relationships in the absence of a strong party system. Considine and Duetchman (1996) find that in weak party systems such as that existing in the U.S., power is gained through the use of informal networks and structures, while in stronger party systems, such as the Australian system, power is gained most heavily through

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2. According to Carol Weissert (1989) in legislative studies the terms influence and power have been used interchangeably (see Simon, 1953, Francis, 1962; Ripley, 1969; Best, 1971; Jewell and Patterson, 1973). Likewise, she states that power and effectiveness have also been used interchangeably (Frantzich, 1979). Weissert therefore concludes that in the legislative context, "effectiveness presumes influence -- the ability to influence other members' actions."

formal participation in the party structure. In order to advance in a system adhering to informal networks, it becomes imperative to master and excel in formulating and cultivating such relationships. This would be of especial importance to those not afforded membership in elite circles via formal institutional positions such as committee chairs and party leadership positions.

Scholars have recognized that state legislatures are extensively gendered institutions, catering most to the predominance of male legislators. Consequently, they have been described as "good ole boy networks", "male bastions of power" and "male locker rooms" in which women exist as outsiders on the inside. As Kirkpatrick's (1974) findings nearly three decades ago describe, state legislatures carry a similar macho culture as the male locker room and many women find that this is still somewhat the case in today's legislature. The experience of women and minority politicians in general has been categorized as outsiders on the inside. While the elite status of an elected official suggests that they are insiders their gender and/or race afford them the marginal status of outsider. This can also be the case in the composition of friendship networks. However, if African American women legislators are able to gain access to these groups, then they are likely to enhance their prospects of successfully moving legislation through the system.

By reviewing the extant literature on legislative influence in the "old" state legislature, its inadequacies are evident and substantiate the need to revisit the subject of influence given the more modern, diverse state legislature of today. Of course, seniority, committee assignment, formal leadership position, legislative activity, and

participation in legislative friendship networks are strong indicators of legislative influence, as the extant literature argues, but this literature does not speak to the impact of the gender and race of a legislator. What is the relationship between these factors and the gender and race of the legislator? The central question of this study considers whether being a member of the majority gender and racial group are also favorable attributes that contribute to a legislator's influence.

The Legislative Experiences of African American Women

Increased diversity in state legislatures and other political institutions has led to an increased interest in better understanding the entrance of people of color and women into the political world as elites. In these efforts to increase political understandings, much of the research claims to focus on either the political activities of people of color or women but few studies have directed their inquiries at the point of intersection for these two groups-- women of color.

Studies focusing on either African Americans or women have for the most part studied the experiences of African American men or white women, thereby overlooking the reality that not all African Americans are men and not all women are white. This subsuming of African American women in this framework has led to incomplete analyses that encourage researchers to make broad generalizations to which the data does not necessarily speak. While it is true that we know very little about either African Americans or women as political elites, much of the knowledge that has been acquired is grossly inaccurate in terms of its claims of analyzing or reporting the experiences of

25

African Americans as a whole or women as a whole, namely because of their failure to recognize that not all African Americans are men and not all women are white[3].

While many studies can be critiqued for failing to meet such standards, there are some notable exceptions that examine the political lives of African American women as elected officials.[4] From the earliest research on African American women state legislators --which focused largely on the attributes of these women-- they appeared different. For example, Jewell Prestage's findings from a 1971, study provided the first discussion of African American women state legislators and Prestage found these legislators to be highly educated, with over 90 percent having held jobs outside the home prior to being elected. In this sense, these women differed greatly from their white female colleagues (Prestage, 1971). When scholars have focused on the intersection of gender and race in politics, they have consistently found that African American women's political lives differ from others.

Researchers have also explored the quality of African American women's legislative experiences by asking whether or not African American women suffer a greater disadvantage because of their race and compounded by their gender and their findings have proven inconclusive. Darcy and Hadley (1988) and Moncrief, Thompson,

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3. This argument is thoroughly explored by Hull, Scott and Smith in their edited volume which takes this perspective in its title, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But some of Us are Brave.* In this volume, the authors discuss this tendency to render African American women as invisible even when discussions revolve around gender and race.

4. It cannot be overlooked that studying African American women is at best problematic given their small numbers in individual state legislatures, which makes quantitative analysis quite difficult. And, there have been studies, for example, Haynie

and Schumann (1991) explore the possibility of a "double disadvantage" which suggests that by virtue of the fact that African Americans are disadvantaged and women are as well, African American women will suffer by being doubly disadvantaged. Perhaps their inconclusive findings are a result of their failure to focus on the legislative experiences of African American women while in office. Instead, these scholars examined the personal attributes of these women to tests the existence of the double disadvantage hypothesis.

Though these studies do not look at the actual legislative experiences of African American women, they do set a stage for subsequent research that has pushed further in this direction. For example, Edith J. Barrett (1992) and Hedge, Button, and Spear (1996) both examine the legislative lives of African American women. Both studies interviewed African American legislators to discern their experiences in the legislature, and both studies find that African American women report legislative experiences that differ from their male counterparts. African American women report feeling that they must put forth more effort in the institution and in effect carry additional burdens not afforded to other legislators.

African American women in Hedge, Button and Spear's (1996) study described a lower quality of legislative life than their African American male counterparts. They were less optimistic about the efficacy of African Americans in the legislature and doubted the influence of African Americans on the overall legislative agenda. These misgivings are likely a product of their experiences with racism and sexism in the

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and Bratton, (1999; 2000) look at both African Americans and women, but make few conclusions regarding African American women were made in these studies.

institution given that they were also more likely to report encountering discrimination either first hand or witnessing such treatment of others in the legislature.

In addition to the differences in the quality of their legislative lives, African American women legislators differ from their counterparts in terms of their policy priorities. According to Barrett (1992), African American women, like other women in state legislatures, tend to have legislative priorities that differ from their colleagues. According to Barrett, African American women are most likely to identify education, health care, economic development, and employment as the policy areas of most importance to their legislative agendas. Barrett not only identifies these issues as most likely to appear on African American women legislators' agenda, she also finds that of all the groups studied, African American women legislators are most likely to consistently identify these issues as a part of their legislative agendas. Barrett suggests that African American women's homogeneous policy priorities are a result of their strategies to create and secure a niche in which they are assured of affecting the legislative process. She argues that their focus in these specific areas is a strategy to increase their public visibility and the likelihood that they will be successful in pushing bills through the legislature.

Barrett's argument is quite plausible, and if this has been a conscious strategy employed by African American women to carve a niche for themselves using these narrowly defined policy areas, in securing this niche they are likely to have sacrificed being generally influential across policy areas. Securing such a niche may have cost these legislators the opportunity to be regarded as significant players throughout the

28

institution. As more and more African American women are elected to the state legislature, out pacing their male counterparts, how they are able to gain and maintain influence becomes an increasingly interesting question.

Measuring Impact in the "New" State Legislature: Existing Literature on African Americans and Women

Given the number of changes legislatures have undergone in the last few decades, it is not the institution it once was. The shifts toward increased professionalization and the maturation of term limits in many states are just two of the many factors that are changing what we know as the norms of state legislatures. There exists a sense of puzzlement among scholars over the impact of these changes. However, the magnitude of such changes is evidenced by Rosenthal's alarm as he comments that such changes in the legislature are "unraveling the institutional fabric" of the legislature (Rosenthal, 1996, 108). These two factors alone warrant re-examination of how influence is conferred because of the changes they have prompted in the institutions' character and likewise their daily operations. (Rosenthal, 1996; Moncrief, Thompson and Kurtz, 1996; Sarbaugh-Thompson and Thompson, 1999).

Though these changes are significant, one of the most substantial changes state legislatures have undergone has been the increased diversity of its members. Some would argue that the impact of many of the recent changes in the institution has made serving in the state legislature more attractive to women and people of color. Along with other changes, the election of minorities and women to the legislature prompts one author to note that the state house simply, "ain't what she used to be". The legislatures of today are said to have members who are younger, better educated, and more diverse

29

(Thompson, Kurtz and Moncrief, 1996). According to veteran legislators, one of the most significant changes has been the type of issues brought before the legislature as a result of the diverse groups of elected members (Moncrief, Thompson and Kurtz, 1996). This increased diversity in membership provides many new avenues for research. Today's legislatures provide opportunities to revisit previous conclusions about the norms, procedures, preferences and patterns of behavior of these institutions.

There is no question that with this increased diversity has also come many changes in the daily operations of the institution; so, the question becomes *how much* have legislatures actually changed in light of their increased diversity. Several researchers have approached this question by exploring whether the increased representation of people of color and women in state legislatures results in legislators being able to act on the interests of their minority constituents providing substantive representation or whether the increased diversity translates into symbolic representation with legislatures more closely mirroring the demographics of the population it represents, but unlikely to act on behalf of underrepresented groups (Pitken, 1967). The most current literature in affect poses the question, "What difference do these legislators make in their respective institutions?"

The women and politics and the Black politics literatures have been quite vocal on substantive verses symbolic representation and both literatures focus on discerning the impact of underrepresented groups on the legislature. Overtime, these questions have increased in sophistication. In terms of the literature on African Americans in state legislatures, Orey (2000) argues that these types of questions have undergone a

natural progression corresponding to the maturation of underrepresented groups in elected political office. Davidson and Grofman (1994) categorize the literature into generations suggesting that the first and second generations chronicle the road to elected office for minorities from the disenfranchisement of minority voters to the absence of minority elected officials. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the subsequent increased political participation of African Americans, scholars began to focus on the experiences of African Americans once elected. And, this literature has progressed to analyze the impact of these elected officials on the institutions in which they serve.

Likewise, the study of women in politics has become more sophisticated in its questioning and it also can be organized into three categories (Jewell, 1997). The earliest literature addresses the characteristics of women legislators asking "Who are women in politics?" and answers to this question generally established a type of "political woman" (Darcy and Hadley, 1987; Kilpatrick, 1974; Mezey, 1978; Prestage, 1977). The literature that follows argues that women have distinct political values that are evidenced by their differing policy priorities (Barrett, 1995; Reingold, 1992; Welch, 1985; Werner, 1968). With the numbers of women serving in state legislatures increasing, more emphasis is placed on questions of the impact of women's legislative service (Dolan and Ford, 1998; Thomas, 1994).

While both the women and politics literature and the Black politics literature have reached a similar juncture, they are quite different in the amount of attention devoted to the theoretical foundations that explain the impact of these groups in the

31

legislature. Because political enfranchisement for African Americans has occurred at a slow pace, much of the Black politics literature remained focused on the complexities of acquiring and sustaining meaningful voting rights, which remains a trend in the literature through the early 1980s. Another prominent trend in the Black politics literature is chronicling the election of African Americans to office. With the increase in the election of African Americans starting in the late 1970s, the literature focused much of its attention to studying these officials who were by and large elected at the local level. It is not until recently do studies of African Americans in state legislatures emerge.[5] And, while studies addressing the impact of African American state legislators represent great contributions to the Black politics literature, with few exceptions the literature remains void of a crosscutting theoretical foundation that speaks to African Americans' impact in office.

Most of these studies on the impact of African American legislators focuses on the policy outcomes of legislatures, as a result of African Americans serving in the institution and most examine the behavior of African Americans in the legislature from the perspective of their organized caucus activities (Miller, 1990; Menifield, Shaffer, and Jones; 2000; Schaller and King-Meadows, 2000; Holmes, 2000; Orey, 2000). Those examining African American state legislators independent of their caucus participation find that African Americans do have difficulty in passing legislation

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5. Interestingly, studies focusing on African Americans in state legislatures represent an emerging literature. The Journal of Black Studies (March, 2000) devoted an entire volume to this discussion, highlighting the void in the literature prior to its publication. This volume's goal was to create comparable data across states on African American state legislators' nature, role and impact. A cross section of states, including

(Haynie and Bratton, 1999) and experience difficulties in making an impact on public policies that specifically affect the African American community (Deweever, 2000).

Within the women and politics literature, two theoretical approaches are used to explore the impact of women in state legislatures -- the "difference" approach and the institutional approach, and my work is most informed by the latter. Scholars of women and politics debate whether women have an impact on the policy outcomes (Norton, 1995) as well as the day-to-day function of the institution (Thomas, 1994; C.Rosenthal, 1998). The "difference" approach is often central to this literature arguing that women are different from men and assume a different style of legislating and leading (Reingold, 1996; Thomas, 1991). Others have focused on a more institutional approach in examining the difference it makes to have women as legislators. These authors focus on the institutional characteristics that affect women's legislative abilities arguing that how business is done in the legislature affects women legislators' ability to have an impact on the policy outcomes. The theoretical approach used in this study relies heavily on this analysis of institutions.

The Institutional Approach

Key to the focus on institutional characteristics has been the numbers of women serving in the legislature and the impact of increased numbers on both the policy outcomes and the process of legislating. For example, Thomas (1994) engages the numbers debate arguing that numbers affect the ways women assume their legislative identities. In her study of women in twelve state legislatures, she concludes that women

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Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia are studied focusing on a specific time period 1970-1988.

have clearly had an impact on legislative policy outcomes. She finds that in states where there are significant numbers of women, more bills supporting women's issues are brought to the agenda by men and women legislators alike. Thomas argues that the emphasis on legislative products is not enough and measurements of women's impact that examine the extent to which women have changed or altered the way politics is conducted are in fact more useful in determining the impact of women's presence on the institution. Women, she argues, are also more likely to have an impact on both the policy outcomes and the ways the institution operates if there are a certain percentage of women holding office in the legislature. Women serving in legislatures with a high percentage of women are less likely to be socialized to fit the male norm, rather they are able to feel free to be themselves and act on their own policy preferences, which are likely to benefit women (Thomas, 1994).

The women and politics literature has taken largely from sociological studies of organizations in which they apply a gendered analysis to their examinations of the workplace (Acker, 1990; Kanter, 1977; Yoder, 1991; Burrell and Hearn, 1989; Martin, 1992) Perhaps the cornerstone of this literature is the notion that numbers affect power in institutions. Thomas and others advancing the gendered institutional perspective are persuaded by the argument that numbers make a difference in institutions. From a study of gender in corporations, one of the central theses regarding numbers emerges; Rosabeth Moss Kanter argues that as women in corporations reach certain numerical percentages, they shed their marginalized status, which Kanter refers to as tokenism. She argues that with increased numbers women become more assertive and therefore

34

more likely to effectively make demands on the institution. Kanter's work established that in institutions the status of women whether they are tokens, minorities, or at a point of parity has an effect on their abilities to have an impact in the institution (Kanter, 1977). Numbers are also credited with changing the culture of the institution and determines how members of the dominant group view other groups, and how members of the minority group view themselves (Kenney, 1996).

Many who study women in political institutions have subscribed to Kanter's thesis that as the number of women in the institution increases, their status as tokens or outsiders will improve and they will become more fully integrated into the institution. And according to this thesis, the point at which women's situations are likely to improve is once they have reached 15% of the institution (Kanter, 1977) or as Thomas (1994) finds 30% of the legislature. Women in general are achieving these tipping points in some states, for example the state of Washington in which women comprise 40% of the legislature (CAWP, 2000), but in the case of African American women, they are tremendously less likely to reach these critical percentages at which groups are considered to become more desirable to the dominant group for interaction. In regards to the numbers debate and its application to African American women and other groups who are far from these critical percentages, questioning what ways these groups negotiate the legislative body to get their interests onto the legislative agenda in spite of the low numerical representation may provide more critical information and expand the scope of the problem beyond issues of numbers.

The literature assessing the impact of women legislators does support an analysis beyond the numbers debate. Scholars adopting the institutional perspective vary in their positions on the significance of numbers. While the numbers debate is built on the notion that the increase in the numbers of women elected will ultimately foster women having an impact not only on the policy products produced by legislative bodies but also on the way business is conducted, others have argued that an increase in the number of women elected into office is not enough to invoke these types of changes.

According to Lyn Kathlene (1995), should women attempt to change the process it will require more than numbers given the complexities of gender structures, rules, norms and behaviors in governing institutions. Kathlene's work on women in committees concludes that shear numbers and even leadership positions have not been enough to shift the balance of power in legislative institutions in women's favor. From her work on committee deliberations in the Colorado Statehouse, she argues that even women who have acquired institutional leadership positions do not escape the wrath of the male dominated power structures of legislative institutions. Similarly, Noelle Norton's (1995) examination of reproductive policy action in Congress prompts her to argue that simply getting elected to office is not enough for women to have an impact on the legislative system. For Norton, gaining appointment to committees deliberating over issues of concern to women is a sound means to influence policy outcomes more so than expending energies in other areas. Norton argues that "regardless of numerical representation, until women legislators obtain institutional power, their ability to make a difference will remain circumscribed" (Norton, 1995, 117). Despite the

inconclusiveness of the numbers debate, these authors have shifted the debate on the impact of underrepresented groups from a focus on the attributes of the individual legislator as the defining factor in determining influence to examining the characteristics of the institution that effect legislative behavior and policy outputs of underrepresented groups in the legislature.

This focus on institutional explanations is representative of the larger new institutionalism literature advanced by March and Olsen (1989). Political scientists have placed an increased emphasis on the nature of institutions, understanding that institutions have particular characteristics. While institutions are said to play a large role in determining the condition of our political democracy, at the same time they are embedded with values, norms, interests, identities and beliefs that are operationalized through the day-to-day operations and standard operating procedures of the institution.

Building on the new institutionalism, many argue that understanding women's experiences in institutions hinges on interrogating the ways in which gender informs the character of institutions. As previously noted, this focus shifts the analysis from the individual as the basic unit of analysis and in doing so, instead of identifying sexism and racism as the behavior of individual actors within an institution, these 'isms' are instead recognized as embedded in the institutional norms, rules, and operations of the institution.

Iva Ellen Deutchman's (1992) work on male legislator's attitudes toward their female counterparts and their status in the legislature is an example of this type of feminist inquiry. She questions whether American political institutions actually offer

37

equal treatment; and she argues that sexism has undergone a "transmutation" in institutions such that no longer is it the "good ole boys" and "ladies who know their place" that blatantly exists in institutions, but rather sexism has re-invented itself becoming more "refined and exotic".

Though men and some women legislators claim that they serve in legislatures in which the gender of the legislature is a non-issue; she finds these claims filled with inconsistencies. Women legislators' attitudes reflected that in order to be viewed as equal in the institution they have had to appear more like their male counterparts, resisting any association with feminism, for example, which would earn them the unfavorable characterization of "feminist complainers". Though men and women legislators expressed that the institution was gender neutral and free of sexism, masculine behavior was still preferred such that women attained equality in the institution only if they became more like their male colleagues and essentially 'ungendered'. The need for women legislators to succumb to the male norm in order to attain some semblance of equality substantiates the gendered nature of legislative institutions (Deutchman, 1992).

As Foust (1999) argues in her study of the impact of women lobbyists in the Georgia state legislature, the institutional or organizational centered approach makes the structural factors key in understanding women's status and behavior within institutions which is quite different from perspectives that focus on the individual characteristics of the actor. As Cindy Rosenthal notes, scholars have been slow to recognize that

legislative organizations are impacted by gender and I would add -race as "structural and behavioral" influences (C.Rosenthal, 1998, 5).

Joan Acker characterized gendered institutions as institutions in which gender is present in the "processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of political life" (Acker, 1992, 567). Similarly, Acker (1990, 146) concludes:

> To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of those processes, which cannot be properly understood without an analysis of gender.

As Sally J. Kenney (1996) writes in her description of the emerging gendered institutions literature, "recognizing an institution as gendered means recognizing that constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily culture of an institution rather than existing out in society or fixed within individuals which they then bring whole to the institution." Within gendered institutions gender has no universal context, it is produced and reproduced in daily interactions; it is constructed in a hierarchical fashion and with oppositional characteristics. According to the gender construct, masculinity is constructed, favored, and "fiercely defended" by those in power. This defense of masculinity is connected with the nature of institutions to contain change.

39

However, this is not to suggest that women and men of color cannot gain influence in legislatures, but recognizing the effects of gender and race increases understandings of the institution's norms and how the legislative institution is constructed. As Rosenthal describes in her analysis of gendered institutions,

> To say "gendered" does not mean that women and men cannot be fully effective legislators or leaders or that they are barred from full participation by overt discrimination or bias. Rather, a masculinist institution is simply embedded with vestiges of societal gender roles that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) assume that men, not women, hold institutional roles and power. Women encounter such institutions differently than do those who posses the "normal" characteristics of membership (C.Rosenthal, 1998, 14).

It is in the practices and everyday norms of the legislature that we learn the most about how these institutions are gendered and racialized (Kenney, 1996). Legislators learn the legislature's folkways through their day-to-day interactions (Little, 2000; Thompson, Kurtz, and Moncrief, 1996). What is most interesting is the level at which those who do not fit the norm, who are not white men learn to "play the game" and the extent to which they become keenly aware of the "rules of the game". In many cases, they become more invested in adhering to the norms and practices of legislature than would be expected. Some become masters at performing their role as legislator, as the role is traditionally constructed. This occurrence is in keeping with the power of institutions, and the fact that they have systems that reward and promote those who adopt its norms; indeed, institutions are said to control the behavior of its members through powerful written and unwritten norms (C.Rosenthal, 1998).

Hence, the fact that legislatures are embedded with these norms, and are neither gender nor race neutral does not mean that those outside of the dominant group are incapable of succeeding. However, it does indicate that based on knowing these rules of the game, legislators must decide whether they desire the rewards of the game. These rewards can come in the form being regarded as influential by other members. Some legislators take the position that being regarded by their peers as influential comes at too high a price. Therefore, it is also through the day-to-day interactions that we see how those who do not fit the norm expand the "rules of the game". Often those who have chosen to operate counter to the expected norms of the institution do so by refusing to participate and thereby not lending legitimacy to the rules, norms, and procedures that systematically work against them.

This type of institutional analysis highlighting the gendered and racialized characteristics of institutions helps us to better understand that there are differences in the way legislators experience the legislative institution. And, it also helps us to recognize that some legislators are systematically precluded from being considered an influential not based necessarily on their own attributes, but because of the institutional context of the legislature.

Therefore, in applying the gendered and racialized framework to this study I adopt an approach to studying influence in the legislature that is not about whether African American women are regarded differently by their colleagues, but rather this study of influence in the legislature is about how gender and race structure and affect every aspect of the legislative process including the decisions legislators make about

41

who to follow and who has power in the institution-- the influential. So, a legislator's decision that another is influential is more based on knowing the role of a legislator and evaluating fellow members based on the role of legislator, a role that is unfortunately constructed in such a way that white male norms are preferenced. In other words, what we know about being influential in a legislative institution is based on what it means to be a white male in a legislative institution.

As legislatures shift from homogeneous institutions to more diverse with the growth of minorities and women, there is the increased opportunity to re-examine the attributes that are ascribed to the influential. Most studies have used white, males to identify the characteristics required for a legislator to be perceived as influential. As the gendered institutional literature reveals, using white males to determine the attributes of influence is nothing less than problematic. And, in studying influence, we miss much of the explanatory value of our models of influence when we overlook that gender and race are two attributes that factor into these models, yet go unacknowledged by researchers. These variables are easily overlooked in our models of influence namely because these models were originally constructed based on the norms, preferences and operating procedures of legislatures that were not as diverse as the current legislative institution.

Towards an Explanation of African American Women's Influence

In addition to the institutional attributes discussed widely in the literature the gender and race of the legislator also has a direct impact on whether they are perceived by their counterparts as effective. Gender and race are significant even in institutions that are commonly considered egalitarian institutions. Due to the fact that the dominant

42

image of a politician in general and a state legislator is that of white male, African American women are seen as an exception to the norm of what is typically conceptualized as a politician in general or a legislator. Their not fitting the norm has an impact on their experiences once joining the legislature.

Button, et.al.(1996) find that racial divisions of the larger society are carried over into the state legislature and have an impact on the condition and quality of legislative life for African American legislators. In their study of African American state legislators, they report that those legislators, who perceived the racial climate of their state as more favorable, also described a more fulfilling legislative life than those who reported that the racial climate of their state was adversarial toward African Americans. In fact, they find that the state of race relations in the state is the most significant factor in determining the quality of African American legislative life. This suggests that a spill-over effect occurs in which the racism of the larger society permeates political institutions. Racism and likewise sexism becomes woven into the fabric of state legislatures to the disadvantage of African American women.

Building on the new theorizing on institutions which argues that institutions operate from a perspective that privileges masculinism, I contend that not only are these institutions built on the premise of masculinism, they also are also racially constructed privileging white norms. Because the norms and operating procedures of state legislatures reinforce white male privilege, they can best be described as gendered and racialized institutions. In essence, the institutional norms of the legislative institution have been crafted to the advantage of white men, and as a result of white men being the

43

norm of the institution, the more African American women are able to conform to this norm, the more likely they are to be regarded favorably by their colleagues.

As state legislatures are currently configured, more often than not African American women and the areas of interest to them fall victim to what Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) considered the second phase of power, and the legislative capacity of these women legislators is limited as a result of their lack of influence. Because African American women often represent issues and policy areas that differ from their legislative counterparts, these issues are being effectively kept off the policy agenda due to their lack of general influence in the institution (Barrett, 1995; Bratton and Haynie, 1999). According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962), those with power intentionally or unintentionally create or reinforce barriers that result in others' issues not entering the policy debate. While this is often the case with minority groups, it becomes problematic when the minority group is consistently in a position of limited power based on the constructs of the institution. If African American women are not perceived as influential in the legislature, then they are not fully engaged in the legislative process, not reaching their fullest legislative capacity.

This reading of Bachrach and Baratz compliments the theoretical arguments advanced by those who argue that institutions are embedded with gendered norms. Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (1995) explain that masculinism or male characteristics enjoy points of privilege in the larger society, as well as in political institutions. This privileged position affords men control over social and political institutions, which they have constructed to their own advantaged. This privilege operates whether the

44

participants, men or women are aware of its influence and operation or not. This societal construction results in women being consistently at a grave disadvantage even in institutions.

Based on this perspective of institutions, I suggest that in state legislatures gender and race act as mediating variables impacting the influence of African American women whether their influence is based on their legislative activity and institutional position or through their reputations among their colleagues. Given both the experiences of African American women in state legislatures and the gendered and racialized nature of these institutions, I contend that there is a relationship between the gender and race of the legislator and whether they are associated with being influential. Holding the attributes of those typically regarded as influential, increases the likelihood that African American women will be regarded as influential by their colleagues. However, given the prominence of the gender and race construct, we can expect that at best gender and race will perform as mediating variables affecting African American women's influence.

Gender and race have an impact on a legislator's influence defined by their institutional position, seniority, and legislative activity; the friendship networks that they are a part of and most importantly, gender and race impact how they are perceived by their fellow legislators. In order to be influential in the legislature, legislators must either hold institutional positions that confer influence or their fellow legislators must view them as influential. Not having influence in the institution leaves legislators limited in fulfilling their legislative capacity. The perceptions of their colleagues is

perhaps most important because these perceptions facilitate coalition building which is paramount in legislatures.

This study's potential contribution is not primarily an analysis of the legislative experiences of African American women, though it speaks volumes to that end. Instead, through its use of both gender and race as categories of analysis, its potential major contribution is the understandings it contributes to the study of the institutional power relationships existing in all institutions. Through looking at both gender and race, which are socially constructed categories that reflect power dynamics embedded in society we are able to investigate significant institutional power dynamics that previously have been given little attention.

Research Design and Methodological Issues

In order to examine these theoretical questions, I employed a mixed methodological approach including a national survey of African American women legislators and case studies of the Georgia, Maryland and Mississippi state legislatures during the 2000 legislative session. The case studies consisted of in-depth interviews of a cross section of nearly 100 legislators, document analyses, and participant observations. Research that applies a variety of methods is considered more appropriate for uncovering the complexities of gender dynamics in institutions. As Kenney concludes, "while survey methods can tell much about women in political institutions, a more ethnographic approach reveals the gendering of institutions" (Kenney, 1996, 451).

Case Studies in Three States

The case studies are used to uncover subtleties concerning the effects of gender and race that could not be easily understood or revealed using survey methodology. In the case studies, I approach African American women's influence from the perspective of their colleagues. While the focus of my analysis is African American women's influence, the data that I collected was essentially on perceptions of all members' influence. The case studies also provided an opportunity for me to connect with the legislators, which often resulted in them candidly speaking on issues that are often considered controversial. During the 2000 legislative session, I spent close to 10 days each in the Georgia and Mississippi legislatures. And, participation in an internship program afforded me the opportunity to spend the majority of the 2000 legislative session in Annapolis with the Maryland legislature.

During my visits in each state, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the members. I conducted a total of 94 face-to-face interviews, including interviews with most of the African American women serving.[6] In addition to the African American women legislators, I also interviewed a purposive sample of their colleagues based on gender, race and seniority rankings similar to the African American women. Interviews with the African American women lasted from 30 to 120 minutes and interviews with other legislators lasted from 15 minutes to one hour. All interviews focused on reputed influence and included the legislators' personal definition of influence. Interviews with African American women included additional questions that covered a range of topics including their relationships with the leadership, their participation in the Black and/or women's caucuses, and how they feel they are treated by their colleagues.

In the interviews, I asked legislators to provide personal information such as the actual names of their friends in the legislature and the names of those they considered the most influential. Interviewees were assured anonymity and I have taken great precaution to honor this. Though legislators were trusting that their names would not be included with the data, the level at which they disclosed prompted some legislators to ask that the interviews either not be recorded at all or they requested that I stop taping during portions of the interview. Others took the liberty to speak "off the record" and of course I honored all such requests.

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6. I conducted the largest number of interviews in Maryland (n=37) followed by Mississippi (n=29) and Georgia (n=28). In Maryland, I conducted interviews with 85% of the African American women (n = 13) and 90% of the African American women in Mississippi (n=10).

Their openness may be attributed to a number of factors. The amount of time I spent in the legislature during the session may have prompted them to feel more comfortable, this is particularly plausible in the case of the legislators in Maryland. It could have also been the result of my working with many of these legislators in other capacities aside from this research. The types of questions I asked African American women were designed to uncover their feelings about their legislative experiences taking into account their gender and race. There is no doubt that my also being an African American woman contributed to their willingness to grant the interview in the first place and secondly to speak on gender and race issues with such candor. The race, class, gender and other features of the interviewer's identity vis a vis the interviewee have long been a topic of discussion among social scientists conducting in-depth interviewing. As Anderson concludes, members of a subordinate group may have a heightened awareness of, "not only what they say, but how they say it" to someone who represents the interests of powerful groups in society (Anderson, forthcoming as cited in Williams and Heikes, 1993, 289). Scholars who advocate the necessity of distance between the researcher and the "subjects" would argue that this access and candor represent "interviewer effects" which are considered compromising to objectivity in social science research. Of course, I argue differently in that such "interviewer effects" are always present and rather than suggesting that they taint research, in some cases as in this case, my identity enhanced the richness of the data.

While I am convinced that my race, gender and other attributes helped in the research process, particularly the personal interviews, I am also aware that my identity

also negatively impacted some interviews, particularly when I asked male legislators to identify their colleagues who are most influential in regard to women's issues. Aside from this question, all precautions were taken in the questionnaire design to eliminate questions that would elicit "politically correct" responses.[7]

Given the small number of African American women serving in state legislatures across the country, it was important to conduct the study in states where there is a sizable number of African American women in the legislature. As a result, I chose the three states with the largest numbers of African American women serving during the 2000 legislative session. These states share some similarities, but are different enough to make interesting comparisons, particularly given the differences in their political cultures. In addition to having the largest groups of African American women in the legislature, all three states have part-time legislatures with relatively short sessions lasting 40, 90 and 120 legislative days respectively. Such short sessions set a rapid work pace in the legislature. In all three states, the top leaders in the lower and upper houses are responsible for assigning members to committees. The members are responsible for electing the Speaker, in each state's lower house, and the President of the Senate in Maryland.[8] In Georgia and Mississippi, however the Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate.

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7. The interview questionnaire was designed to gather data on "influence in the legislature" as opposed to "African American women's influence." The questionnaire is located in the appendix.

8. In Georgia, the Speaker of the House, Tom Murphy is the longest tenured speaker of any state. His long tenure increases the complexities associated with power and influence in the legislature. His tenure in his position carries along with it a significant amount of power that raises him to another level that is not easily compared

While these legislatures share some similarities, their diverse political cultures make them interesting cases for comparison. All that makes up the political culture of the state as a whole is embedded in the norms, folkways, and day-to-day operations of the legislative institution. According to Elazar's (1984) typology of the political culture of the states, Georgia and Mississippi's political cultures are considered traditionalistic while Maryland's political culture is considered individualistic.

Maryland's political culture is considered individualistic, and in an individualistic political culture, politics is approached like a business, with political parties playing brokerage roles organizing political favors. Politics is approached as the business of professionals packed with rewards for those who chose that career path. Features of the political culture are evident in the norms of these legislative institutions. For example, the Democratic Party carries a strong majority in the Maryland legislature and the party is highly organized. The party organization includes an elaborate leadership structure of party whips, deputy whips, floor leaders, and deputy floor leaders. This organizational structure is by and large used to broker and reward loyalties, and committed party loyalists are rewarded with positions in leadership. Typical of the individualistic political culture, a number of actors play brokerage roles in the legislature. In addition to the parties, county delegations play substantial roles in brokering leadership positions, committee assignments as well as goods and services to be delivered to legislators' districts. In the Maryland legislature, there are only six standing committees in the House and the Senate. Legislators serve on only one major

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to speakers in other states. For purposes of this study, the importance of the quality of African American women's relationships with the speaker in Georgia cannot be

51

committee, which promotes a great deal of specialization within the body. As a result of a limited number of committee assignments, issue specialization is rewarded and the legislature is slightly more professionalized. Office space and legislative staff is provided for every member, which are also elements that contribute to the professionalization of the Maryland legislature.

Mississippi's political culture is prototypical of a traditionalistic culture. The traditionalistic culture adheres to a substantial hierarchy as the natural order of society. According to Elazar, "...it [traditionalistic political culture] functions to confine real political power to a relatively small and self-perpetuating group drawn from an established elite who often inherit their "right" to govern through family ties or social position." Political power is confined to a small group of individuals who are deeply invested in maintaining the social hierarchy (Elazar, 1994, 235).

The Mississippi legislature is in many ways a stark contrast to the Maryland legislature. The Mississippi legislature strongly adheres to its traditionalistic political cultural groundings. While the Mississippi legislature also is democratically controlled, there is little party organization. The absence of strong party organization results in a more informal body with influence concentrated in the hands of only a few, select members. There are 38 standing Senate committees, and 34 standing House committees, but despite the large number of committees, in each chamber there are only few carry any prestige. Members typically serve on 6-10 committees and they also have subcommittee responsibilities. The lack of party organization and the configuration of the committee system increase the power of those in top leadership positions–the

underscored.

Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor. Mississippi's lack of professionalization is most evident in their staffing and office space. Office space is extremely limited; only the most senior members and committee chairs are afforded office space. Members without offices, typically do their legislative work in the chambers between sessions and in locations away from the capitol building. With the exception of those with leadership positions, members share legislative staff, and in some cases, one staff member is shared by as many as 20 legislators.

Georgia is more of a hybrid of the characteristics of the Maryland and Mississippi legislatures. Georgia legislators, like those in Mississippi are assigned to multiple committees. Typically, senators are assigned to four of the 23 standing committees while representatives are assigned to two or three of the 33 standing committees in the House. Like the Maryland legislature, Georgia legislators are provided with their own office space. In most cases, three members share one staff person.

While Georgia's political culture is considered traditionalistic, its subculture is more individualistic as a result of the migration patterns to the state's urban center. Therefore, while Georgia's political culture strongly resembles Mississippi's there are major differences. The rapid growth of Atlanta, the state capitol has impacted its traditionalistic values by placing a high value on economic development and commerce. The growth of Atlanta as one of the south's largest metropolitan areas has also caused a shift in the state's demographics, which subsequently increased the number of African Americans elected to the legislature. With more African Americans elected from the

53

urban center of the state, they have challenged much of the tendencies toward the traditionalistic political culture that is grounded in elitism. The election of more African Americans to the Georgia legislature has also been coupled with the growth of the Republican Party in the state, shifting the state away from its traditional one party dominance. Overall, Georgia is slowly moving away from its old ways and is transforming and struggling between its old ways steeped in traditionalistic values and its emerging individualistic values that are quickly evolving as the state overall and the legislature becomes more diverse.

In sum, the selection of these three cases provides an opportunity to examine the effects of gender and race in diverse legislative settings. In as much as context matters to the legislator's experiences, these cases provide an opportunity to examine their experiences in different contexts.

The National Survey

In addition to the three case studies, I also conducted the *National Survey of African American Women State Legislators*. The survey process took place from December of 1999 through April of 2000. In December of 1999, I began the survey process by distributing it to African American women state legislators attending the annual meeting of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL), which was held in Baltimore, Maryland. During the meeting, I was afforded the opportunity to introduce the study and distribute the survey to African American women attending a legislative breakfast sponsored by the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women), the national organization of African American

54

women state legislators. While less than a quarter (23 percent) of the total number of survey responses were collected during the conference, distributing the survey during the conference provided the study a level of legitimacy among the women. Also, as a result of African American women associating my identity with the research, they were more willing to participate in the survey. Beginning the survey process during the conference also proved to help in gaining access to legislators during the case study interview process as many associated the study with the conference.

Using a mailing list provided by NBCSL, I mailed the first survey to all African American women state legislators who did not complete the survey during the NBCSL conference. This mailing was sent in February of 2000, which coincided with the beginning of the legislative sessions for most states and as a result yielded few responses. A second mailing was sent three weeks later to non- respondents and a third and final mailing was sent three weeks later to non- respondents using the home mailing address of those legislators whose legislative sessions had ended.

The surveys were uniquely coded to prevent repeat mailings to respondents. A self-addressed stamped return envelope and a letter of introduction on university letterhead addressed personally to each legislator explaining the goals of the research were included with the survey. Survey respondents were ensured that they would not be identified in any way by their responses, and that only group level data would be disclosed. The seven-page survey consisted of 33 items including 16 open-ended responses. Respondents were also given the opportunity to indicate whether they

desired to receive the survey results. Given the distribution process, the survey is not a random sample of African American women state legislators.

As a result of this process, I achieved a 45 percent response rate, which is typical of surveys of state legislators. This response rate is in keeping with several recent surveys of state legislators. In a 1992, study of women state legislators, Dolan and Ford (1998) report a response rate of 46 percent, likewise Barrett (1995) reports a response rate of 44.5 percent in a study of state legislators including a 50 percent response rate for African American women, and Button and Hedge (1996) report a 40 percent response rate. This response rate also appears to be in keeping with most surveys of elites (Miller, 1991 as cited in Barrett, 1997, 134).

Respondents represent a cross section of African American women serving in state legislatures. Responses were received from 30 of the 35 states in which African American women were serving during the 2000 legislative session. Much like African American women legislators in the 1970s, today the largest numbers of African American women can be found in southern state legislatures. Table 2-1 compares the number of African American women in each state legislature to the number responding to the survey from each of these states.

The survey consisted of several groups of questions, designed to measure different dimensions of African American women's legislative experiences. Respondents were asked a series of questions related to their formal position within the legislature and their legislative activity, which included questions concerning their committee assignments, leadership roles, policy priorities, and bill sponsorship and

56

Table 2-1 Distribution of Survey Respondents by State

State	Number of African American women serving in the 1999-2000 legislative session	Number of African American women responding to the survey
Alabama	6	1
Alaska	0	0
Arkansas	0	0
Arizona	2	1
California	1	1
Colorado	1	1
Connecticut	4	3
Delaware	1	1
Florida	8	3
Georgia	18	6
Hawaii	0	0
Idaho	0	0
Illinois	10	4
Indiana	4	3
Iowa	0	0
Kansas	2	1
Kentucky	1	0
Louisiana	8	2
Maine	0	0
Maryland	13	6
Massachusetts	3	1
Michigan	7	4
Minnesota	0	0
Mississippi	10	7
Missouri	6	2
Montana	0	0
Nebraska	0	0
Nevada	1	0
New Hampshire	0	0
New Jersey	2	1
New Mexico	1	0
New York	9	7
North Carolina	5	1
North Dakota	0	0
Ohio	7	6
Oklahoma	2	1
Oregon	3	1

Pennsylvania	4	2
Rhode Island	6	0
South Carolina	4	2
South Dakota	0	0
Tennessee	8	2
Texas	6	3
Utah	0	0
Vermont	0	0
Virginia	5	2
Washington	1	1
West Virginia	1	0
Wisconsin	3	1
Wyoming	0	0
Total	**173**	**78**

Source: National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) and the Center for the American Woman in Politics (CAWP). For some states, the race and gender of the legislator were confirmed via the state legislature's web site.

passage during the 1999 legislative session. They were also asked a series of questions about their coalition building with other legislators, as well as the legislators who support their priority issues, the extent to which they socialize with their colleagues as well as direct questions that gauge their feelings of incorporation into the legislature. A number of demographic questions were also asked including their tenure in office, present or prior occupation, age, education and income. I also provided space at the end of the survey for their additional comments on their experiences in the legislature that were not captured in the survey questions.

Many took advantage of this opportunity to further discuss their experiences, which added a qualitative depth to the survey that was not anticipated at the onset of the project. This qualitative data was useful in helping to analyze their quantitative responses.

African American Women State Legislators: Progress and Diversity

Using the demographic data, I am able to create a demographic profile that in many ways patterns Prestage's 1977 study of African American women serving in state legislatures. Prestage interviewed the 35 African American women in the legislature between 1971 and 1973, and presented a profile of these women. Using her findings, I am able to discuss African American women's progress in the legislature over the last 30 years. African American women have changed in many ways and are products of the battles that continued to wage through the 1970s to expanded opportunities for both African Americans and women. The expanded opportunities available to African American women today, coupled with a changed political landscape make them

different is some ways from their predecessors. At the same time, however, these women still share many similarities to African American women who served in the legislature some 30 years ago.

African American women legislators are elites, and this fact is ever more clear in examining the demographic profile of the respondents. As Holmes (2000) aptly states, African American legislators as a whole are not a microcosm of society in educational achievement, occupation, or class, and of course, this is also the case for the African American women responding to the survey. In the 1970s, Jewel Prestage captured the demographic portrait of the African American women just entering the legislature as a result of the influx of African Americans following the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Her analysis revealed the political ambitions, policy priorities, educational levels and personal data on the 35 women elected to the legislature from 1970- 1974. In comparing today's African American women state legislators to their predecessors, the progress of women and African Americans is quite clear. Today, these legislators are a much more diverse group, which further warrants an in-depth discussion of the variances in their experiences based on how they are situated in the legislature.

The data in Table 2-2 show that the African American women responding to this survey are a well educated, politically adept group with prior occupations that provide them with skills highly valued in legislative settings. As is the case with most African Americans all the respondents with the exception of one are Democrats.

Table 2-2 Demographics of African American Women State Legislators

Age	
30 & Under	-
31- 40	7%
41-50	29%
51-60	45%
61-	19%
Educational Attainment	
Some High School	1%
High School Graduate	4%
Some College/ Associates Degree	15%
College Degree	25%
Graduate or Professional Degree	55%
Combined Family Income	
35,000 & under	7%
35,000-50,000	12%
50,000-65,000	16%
65,000-80,000	22%
80,000-95,000	7%
More than 95,000	36%
Occupation	
Law	10%
Banking & Business	23%
Education	18%
Government	14%
Health Care	8%
Legislator	12%
Public Affairs & Public Relations	5%
Other	10%
Policy Priorities	
Education	44%
Health Care/ Health Care Reform	49%
Economic Development/ Employment	41%
Issues of Expertise	
Education	66%
Health Care/ Health Care Reform	56%
Economic Development/ Employment	26%

Age

As is the case with other women legislators, African American women too have waited to start their legislative careers. The average age of the respondents is 53 years of age. The youngest among the respondents is 31 years of age and the most senior member is 72. The majority of respondents (39.7 percent) are between the ages of 51 and 60 followed by a quarter (25.6 percent) of respondents being between 41 and 50 years of age. It appears that African American women are maintaining their elected offices, as they grow older. In the 1970s only 15.6 percent of the legislators were between 51 and 60 (Prestage, 1977). However, young women are not being elected into the legislature; in the 1970s, 6.2 percent of legislators were under 30, while today there are no women serving under the age of 30 and only 6.4 percent are under the age of 40.

Income

While I do not include class as a part of my analysis of gender and race in the legislature, the income, education and income levels of African American women suggests that their middle class status may also have some impact on how they experience the legislature. In terms of income, more than a third (35.6 percent) of respondents have an annual household income of more than $95,000. In addition, only one if five (19 percent) report an annual household income less than $50,000.

Education

In the 1970s, the majority (34.3 percent) of African American women legislators had attended college, and less than a third (31.2 percent) had received a bachelor's degree. Today, African American women serving in the legislature are a very highly

educated group. The number of African American women serving in the legislature who have obtained a graduate or profession degree has more than doubled since the 1970s. More than half (55 percent) have graduate or professional degrees and a quarter (25 percent) have earned a college degree.

Occupation

African American women have a long history of labor force participation, and this is reflected in the range of occupations of African American women state legislators. African American women legislators responding to the survey report having prior experience in a number of fields with most having backgrounds in education. In a discussion of differences between African American and white lawmakers, Button and Hedge (1996) find that African American legislators are twice as likely to be educators as their white counterparts. Interestingly, a large number of African American women have come into the legislature from a prior career in government as public administrators. And, like their predecessors they too are self-employed business owners as most were in the 1970s. As is the case with all legislators, a smaller number of African American women are attorneys than would be expected.[9] The variances in African American women's occupations reflect the opening of doors for women in the workplace and minorities much of which can be attributed to affirmative action programs beginning in the 1970s.

9. Rosenthal (1998) suggests that the occupational backgrounds of state legislators have changed reflecting the changes in the legislature towards a more professional body. This move towards professionalism has attracted legislators with

<u>Region</u>

Southern states have acquired reputations for electing few women to public office. In 1981, twice as many women served in state legislatures outside the south as did in the south (Main, et. al., 1984). After twenty years, the south has retained such a reputation. Several southern states make up the 10 states with the lowest numbers of women serving in the state legislature (Center for the American Woman in Politics, 2000). While traditionally women do not do as well in their bids for election in southern states, African American women have enjoyed astounding success in the south. Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi are southern states in which African American women have enjoyed astounding success in securing election to the state legislature. African American women have also done quite well in the mid-western states of Michigan and Illinois. Table 2-1 shows the geographic distribution of African American women state legislators.

However in states where women have traditionally done well in terms of getting elected to the legislature, African American women have not enjoyed the same success, particularly in Washington and California. The state of Washington boasts the largest contingency of women legislators, but few African American women are serving in the state's legislature, which is largely due in part to the small population of African Americans residing in the state; therefore these small numbers are easily explained. But, it is more difficult to account for the fact that the state of California, also known for the number of women serving in the legislature, has only one African American woman,

career politician aspirations he argues. According to Rosenthal, fewer legislators are attorneys and farmers as they once were.

Theresa Hughes serving in its legislature. And, as a result of term limits, she is serving her last term as a state representative.

Policy Priorities

African American women remain as consistent in their policy priorities as Edith Barrett (1995) found them to be in her study of their legislative priorities. As in Barrett's study, African American women have kept education, healthcare and healthcare reform, economic development and employment as their three leading policy priorities. Half of African American women (49 percent) consider healthcare and reform of the healthcare system among their top legislative priorities followed by education (44 percent) and economic development an employment (41 percent).

Their policy priorities correspond with the issues in which they have developed expertise. Most African American women (66 percent) consider themselves experts on education issues. This is of no surprise considering that a number of them have come to the legislature with strong careers in education. Just as half of African American women consider health care as their top policy priority, more than half (56 percent) consider themselves experts in healthcare and healthcare reform issues.

African American women are not dissimilar from other women in politics in terms of their policy priorities or the issues in which they consider themselves experts; they like other women become involved in issues that have been traditionally considered women's issues. For example, most women legislators are interested in children's issues; and, a third of African American women consider this an issue area in which they have developed some expertise. However, African American women often

65

approach these issues differently. The circumstances of the communities that they represent require that they define these issues to encompass the needs of the community. Consequently, when African American women consider children's issues they include legislation designed to protect children from abuse as well as legislation that protects children who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. Therefore, it is not enough to say that all women share interests in children's issues without looking at the types of children's issues that women pursue as they represent the needs of their communities.

Women in today's legislatures, differ in many ways from their predecessors of the 1970s. Some thirty years later, African American women have made tremendous institutional gains. First and foremost, there are many more serving in the legislature, and these increased numbers are likely to impact their experiences in the legislature. They also have more seniority as a group than they did in the 1970s. While their novelty is somewhat dissipating, it has not completely disappeared. Today, many African American women have served multiple terms in the legislature acquiring some seniority. And, those who are new to the legislature have role models that provide examples of African American women in political life. These differences that separate today's legislator from their 1970s predecessors are expected to impact their experiences in legislative life.

While their personal attributes do affect their experiences once in the legislature, they are also affected by the positions they assume once they enter the legislature, which is the crux of my analysis in the subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to build a framework for understanding African American women's influence in state legislatures. I have also shared background information on the African American women serving in the legislature that show the diversity of talents they bring to the legislature. In the following chapters, I explore their positions within the legislature and how their positions affect their legislative experiences. In the following chapters I will also further explore how gender and race act as mediating variables affecting African American women's influence. Finally, I focus on the many other resources African American women utilize to reduce the effects of these mediating variables and provide representation for their communities.

Chapter III
Self-Perceived Influence Among African American Women Legislators

My approach to exploring African American women's influence relies most heavily on their colleagues' perceptions; however, to gain the most thorough understanding of how the interaction of gender and race affect perceptions of influence in state legislatures, it is useful to examine African American women's perceptions of their own influence. By also examining African American women's self- perceptions, we are able to see how they view their positions in the legislature and their attitudes toward their positions in the legislature. Those rejecting a more institutional approach would argue that the positions African American women occupy are a result of their own device. In my employment of an institutional approach to the study of influence, I do not dismiss this argument. However, I do caution a complete reliance on such an explanation to explain influence especially given the strong evidence that supports the notion that institutions are filled with norms and preferences that dictate how decisions are made within them. And, it is because of these norms dictating decision making in institutions that can lead to disadvantages for African American women serving in state legislatures.

In this chapter, I explore how African American women state legislators view their incorporation into the legislature, their abilities to build coalitions with their colleagues, and the influence they feel they exert among their colleagues. The data for this chapter is also drawn from the national survey of African American women serving in the legislature during the 1999-2000 legislative session.

As the numbers of minority men and women and white women have increased in state legislatures an emphasis has been placed on comparing these groups to their white male colleagues. As a result, little scholarly attention has been placed on the variances that exist within these groups. This tendency to treat groups as homogeneous reflects failures of the Black politics literature as well as the women and politics literature. Scholars of Black politics typically assume that the experiences of all Black elected officials are similar. However, in making such an assumption, these scholars overlook the impact of gender influences and likewise scholars of women and politics create a similar faux pas by failing to take into account the effects of race in shaping the experiences of women of color.

Though a few scholars have ventured to assume the challenge of examining the intersection of gender and race in their studies of political elites (Barrett, 1995, 1997; Bratton and Haynie, 1999 Button and Hedge, 1996; Button, Hedge and Spear, 1996), it is from Prestage's (1977) seminal work on the 35 African American women serving in state legislatures from 1971- 1973 that the most attention is specifically focused on the variances among African American women. With little attention being directed toward the differences among African American women legislators in recent literature there remains an underlying assumption that African American women legislators are without differences. Given this paucity of research reflecting the variances among African American women, this chapter provides a critical component of understanding African American women legislators by painting a picture of who they are and how they are situated in the legislature. This is pursued by:

1. Uncovering the similarities and differences among today's African

American women state legislators

2. Examining the differences between the types of institutions in which they serve
3. Exploring the impact of these differences on their experiences in the legislature

African American women are not a homogeneous group in society or in the legislature. As a result, their experiences in the legislature also vary. To further understand influence in the legislature-- the central objective of this research-- I explore which attributes impact their legislative experiences as well as how these variances impact their legislative experiences. The findings of this chapter ultimately provide a foundation for uncovering how these variances among legislators explain their colleagues' perceptions of their influence. I start with a number of hypotheses based on what we know about legislators in general.

Therefore, I examine the differences between women who have advanced into leadership positions, serve on the prized monetary committees, have been serving in the legislature longer and are legislatively active and those who do not hold these attributes. Based on extant literature on influence in the legislature, holding these attributes would favorably impact how African American women are viewed by their peers and further these attributes would contribute to a sense of full incorporation among African American women holding these attributes. As African American women advance in the institution according to its reward structure--moving into leadership, gaining seniority, and positions on monetary committees-- then they will report more favorable legislative experiences that reflect full incorporation according to what we know generally about state legislatures.

Just as holding these institutional attributes increases the likelihood that African American women will report a more favorable legislative experience, several contextual variables are also thought to impact their experiences. African American women serving with a small number of African American women, are term limited, and are serving in the south are expected to report less favorable legislative experiences. In essence, both institutional attributes and the legislative context are expected to play a role in shaping African American women's legislative experiences. While Button Hedge and Spear (1996) explored many of these variables in their study of the quality of African American legislative life, their findings only briefly touch on the experiences of African American women. Hedge Button and Spear began a compelling conversation on the influence of Black interests in the legislature and Black lawmakers in the legislature and in this chapter I continue this discussion focusing specifically on the experiences of African American women.

Contrary to my expectations, the institutional and contextual variables illuminate few differences in how African American women feel about their inclusion in the legislature. Instead, the findings suggest that gender and race play a profound role in African American women's legislative experiences. Different from the existing literature on minority groups in state legislatures, these findings suggests that African American women's experiences are a result of their membership in two alienated groups in state legislatures-- African Americans and women. The data shows that despite their legislative activity, seniority, tenure and committee assignments, African American women still feel that they must work harder, are less likely to be promoted into leadership positions, and have a particularly difficult time in the legislature as a

result of their gender and race. In addition to harboring these feelings, they also point out that their coalition building is most likely to be limited to other African Americans as is their influence.

The findings of this survey point to the fact that African American women are not feeling fully incorporated into their states' legislatures and are not receiving the full benefit of the elite status traditionally associated with their position which ultimately impacts the communities they represent. Most significant, African American women are not feeling that their colleagues value their legislative expertise and their colleagues are not seeking their input on legislative matters are that are germane to their legislative priorities and expressed agendas. Though today's African American women legislators are in positions more prestigious than African American women serving before them, they report experiences similar to those reported by the first groups of African American women serving in the late 1970s whose experiences were captured in Prestage's (1977) work.

Woven throughout this chapter is a discussion of African American women's legislative agendas by defining their legislative priorities and the issues in which they have developed expertise. From these findings, we also learn how these women go about seeking support for their issues and which legislators they consider their allies on their priority issues. I also examine their attitudes towards their success on these issues.

Institutional and Contextual Variables Influencing African American Women's Experiences

Institutional Variables

Legislators acquire attributes once they begin serving in the legislature and some attributes are more favored in the institution than others. The favorability of certain attributes reflects the norms, preferences and rewards of the institution. Since little analysis has been done on the roles of African American women in state legislatures, it is first necessary to explore whether African American women have acquired the more favorable of these attributes and if so, do they experience the benefits of these positions. I focus on a number of institutional variables committee assignment, formal leadership position, legislative activity, and seniority and expect that holding positions that are valued by the institution will have a favorable impact on African American women's perceptions of their legislative experience.

Committee Assignment

Committee assignments have long been regarded as a very important component in determining the quality of legislative life. Much of the literature on Congress and state legislatures alike is devoted to analyzing committee assignments and speculating on the ability of a legislator to have influence over a range of issues in light of their committee assignments. Whether or not a legislator is "where the action is" often determines the possibility of their being effective. There is an ongoing debate over the value legislators place on particular committee assignments whether legislators' objectives are to serve on the committees addressing the most basic concerns of their constituents or whether legislators assume the strategy of pursuing committee

assignments on those committees controlling their state's finances. Despite such controversies over legislator preference, from an institutional perspective, there are committees that convey power and prestige (Fenno, 1973; Smith and Deering, 1984).

According to Fenno's study of congressional committees, committees with jurisdiction over the distribution of funding were regarded as most prestigious and desirable and most importantly most likely to provide members with institutional power (Fenno, 1973). Fenno's assessment of congressional committees differs little from state legislatures. Though committee jurisdiction and structures vary across states and likewise the power distribution associated with committees, it is the case that across the states committees dealing with the distribution of funding are the most prestigious and powerful in the legislature.

African American women legislators who serve on their state's Appropriations, Ways and Means or Budget and Taxation committees are expected to have more favorable experiences in the legislature. The vast majority (73 percent) of African American women do not hold membership on these prestigious committees, but slightly more than a quarter (27 percent) of African American women legislators do hold these prestigious committee assignments. Less at issue for my purposes is the question of whether African American women are able to secure positions on these committees -- though it is a valid and critical point of inquiry examined by many scholars.[1] More so, I

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1. For a full discussion of African American legislators' committee assignments, see Friedman, 1993 & 1996; Orey, 2000; King-Meadows & Schaller, 2000. Several scholars of women and politics have used women's committee assignments as indicators of their progress in the legislature and the possibility of equal advancement in the legislature; for example, see Noelle Norton (1995), and most recently, Laura R.Winsky Mattei (1998).

am concerned with whether African American women experience the same pay offs described in the literature as a result of serving on these committees.

<u>Legislative Activity</u>

Legislators and the general public alike often define the role of a legislator in terms of introducing and passing legislation. Given the significance of performing this task to the definition of legislator, I explore African American women's legislative activity expecting that those African American women who are more legislatively active will report a more favorable legislative experience and feel more a part of the institution.

Introducing and passing legislation has often been the measure of legislative activity. The more active a legislator in the institution, the more likely the legislator is to be regarded as effective. Legislators view their colleagues who sponsor a significant number of bills and amendments, enjoy legislative success by having the bills signed into law, are active in floor debates as the most active in the process. Bill introduction contributes to high visibility in a chamber, in fact this tactic is used by many new legislators seeking to build a name for themselves and acquire "star" status. Weissert (1989) finds a direct relationship between the number of bills a legislator introduces and the popularity they enjoy among their peers. In her examination of legislative effectiveness in the North Carolina legislature, she finds that legislators' effectiveness rating increased for every additional bill they introduced.

Some African American women have enjoyed success in getting their legislation through the legislature, but such success eludes just as many. African American women

report in virtually equal percentages enjoying great success in getting legislation passed as well as not getting any legislation passed. More than a quarter (27 percent) of African American women report having more than 40 percent of their bills signed into law, and a quarter (26 percent) report not having any of their bills signed into law.

Bill introduction and passage has often been used as variables key in understanding legislative effectiveness and represents only one dimension of legislative activity. Those subscribing to such a decision making approach argue that the most influential legislators are ones who are able to negotiate legislation through the labyrinth of the legislatures (Frantzich, 1979; Weissert, 1989)). In defining legislative activity according to the amount of legislation a legislator successfully passes can be limiting. Defining legislative activity in this way does not take into account the many other activities legislators engage in to prevent legislation from passing. Legislators can effect legislation at various points in the process to either stymie or aid its progression (Frantzich, 1979, Stanley and Blair, 1991). Moving legislation through the institution as well as preventing legislation from passing requires that legislators make use of a number of institutional tools; therefore, considering more than just bill introduction and passage results in a more inclusive measure of legislative activity.

Employing this broadened definition of legislative activity, I use a number of measures as indicators of legislative activity. Thomas (1994) argues that women's educational advancement and more extensive work experiences impact the types of activities they will engage in as legislators. In a 1980s comparison of women and men on a number of legislative behaviors related to legislative activity, Thomas found that women were more like men in terms of their activities in the statehouse. These women

76

differed tremendously from women serving in the legislature in the 1970s who opted to exert more effort outside the institution than within it. In addition to the ratio of the number of bills introduced to the number of bills passed, I also offer some discussion of additional measures of legislative activity. I, therefore consider the extent to which legislators speak on the floor during debates, discuss issues in committee during a hearing, speak in a party caucus meeting, bargain with fellow legislators, interact with the leadership, and lobbyists about issues of importance to them-- as additional measures of legislative activity.[2]

Most African American women are engaging in these legislative behaviors, but they are more apt to participate in some activities than others. For example, while African American women do speak on the floor of the legislature several times during an average week, they are much more prone to discuss issues during committee hearings. African American women also participate in these activities at different levels. During committee hearings, half of African American women participate by engaging witnesses posing questions of the witness while others prefer not to engage in questioning witnesses with any frequency. And in other situations, such as lobbying members of the leadership about their leading policy issues or speaking with lobbyists about their policy priorities, most all African American women frequently engage in these activities. These variances in legislative activity among African American women are worthy of further exploration as explanations of the variances in the legislative experiences. I expect those legislators who are more legislatively active--from formally

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2. Survey questions asking the frequency legislators engaged in these activities is used as the measure.

introducing and passing bills to being outspoken in the legislature on issues of importance to them will report more favorable legislative experiences and feel more incorporated into the institution. They are also more likely to engage in coalition building with the colleagues.

Leadership

Effective, influential legislators are most often considered to be those who hold some formal institutional power as a leader in the institution. The positional approach to studying legislative effectiveness-- used most by congressional scholars-- bases its assumptions of which legislators are effective and influential solely on those who are a part of the formal leadership structure. Party leaders, committee chairs, and other formal leaders have been regarded as most influential in legislatures (Hamm, et.al.,1983; Meyer, 1980; Best 1971; Bell and Price, 1975). Fenno argues that holding a formal position is so important to gaining influence that few members of Congress garner influence without it (Fenno, 1973). Because leaders typically introduce more legislation, are often majority party members, hold seniority, and have developed expertise in policy areas, they are overwhelmingly regarded as the influentials in both studies of Congress and state legislatures alike (Hamm, et al, 1983; Matthews, 1960; Best, 1971; Francis, 1962).

For example, in Matthews' study of the United States Senate, he finds that the ability to get bills and resolutions through the senate (effectiveness) was largely dependent on whether one was a party leader or a committee chairman. The general rule for the Senate according to his findings is either hold a strategic position in the majority party and committee structure, or accept not being regarded as powerful,

78

prestigious, and effective (Matthews, 1960). Like Matthew's study of the Senate, Best's study of influence in the Washington House of Representatives found that being a party leader or a committee chair was the best indicator of general influence (Best, 1971).

African American women were asked whether they served in their legislature's leadership ranks. Included in the definition of leadership were all party leadership posts including speaker of the house, president pro-tempore of the senate, party caucus chair, party whip, and committee and subcommittee chair. Slightly more than half (53 percent) of the respondents report holding a leadership position. At first glance, given what is known about the benefits afforded to legislators who have advanced into leadership, it appears impressive that most African American women have achieved this status. However, a closer look is necessary to fully understand the leadership structure of the legislature and how African American women are situated within the structure of leadership.

In examining state legislatures across the country, it is clear that few African Americans hold the highest leadership posts in legislatures. In fact, according to their analysis of the status of African American legislators in twelve state legislatures, King-Meadows and Schaller (2000) further substantiate Rosenthal's (1995) argument that African Americans are continuously excluded from the most powerful leadership positions -- speaker or majority leader with few exceptions. Though the task of quantifying influence associated with institutional positions is arduous at best (King-Meadows and Schaller, 2000), formal institutional positions have consistently been upheld as one of the strongest indicators of influence. Therefore, despite the minimal

79

level of decision making authority associated with the types of positions held by the majority of African American women, holding a leadership title is still likely to afford access to critical leadership discussions. Such access is expected to impact their views of their own legislative experience. Likewise, ascending to the leadership ranks also suggests some level of institutional incorporation.

Tenure

Just as formal position is a widely held attribute of those considered effective, seniority and its counterpart experience are as well. Legislators who have been "in the game longer" are likely to have developed specialized techniques to accomplish their goals. They are also more likely to understand the legislative process and the norms of the institution. This level of experience would naturally dictate that they be effective legislators. Frantzich (1979) points to the value of seniority in the House finding that those who have served more terms extended more legislative effort. And, according to the decision making approach, which looks to the number of bills a legislator gets passed, these legislators tend to enjoy more success with bill passage. Legislators who have served a number of terms also tend to be more electorally secure thereby affording them more opportunity to be active, vocal participants in the legislature, increasing their influence (Frantzich, 1979; Weissert, 1991).

African American women are experiencing success in re-election bids, and are returning to the legislature for multiple terms. The mean number of years in office for the respondents is 7.8 years. Fully one third (33 percent) of the women have served from less than one year to five years and 45 percent have served between 6 and 10 years while one in five (21 percent) have been serving in the legislature more than ten years.

The legislator serving the longest term has served 28 years in the legislature and the minimum tenure was one year. Legislators who have served longer are expected to have learned and even mastered the legislative "rules of the game" which are likely to have pay-offs in terms of their legislative successes.

Contextual Variables

Just as legislative experiences are influenced by a number of institutional variables, certain aspects of the context in which legislators serve are likely to impact their experiences in the legislature. The region of the country, the number of African American women serving in the legislature, and whether the legislature is term limited are contextual variables that are broader than institutional attributes associated with individual legislators which are expected to have an impact on African American women's experiences in the institution.

<u>Region</u>

Though African American women have faired well in southern state elections, and have secured relatively high electoral strength, their experiences within the legislature are likely to be negatively influenced by the political culture of their states. The political culture of southern states has historically been characterized in terms of both its gender and race based discrimination. The image of the American south has long been depicted against a history of racial discrimination and bigotry. Likewise, the historical roots of southern chivalry toward women have traditionally subordinated women's public life. State legislatures are not exempt from these elements of the states' political cultures.

According to Elazar's (1984) typology of American political culture, the south is dominated by a traditionalistic political culture in which power is concentrated in the hands of a small elite group who are regarded as having inherited the "right" to govern mainly through family ties or social position. Examining the historical positions of African Americans and women, they were not included in the public elite political circles; consequently, they are regarded as political outsiders in the traditionalistic political culture of the south. Elazar asserts that the political culture of a state is likely to permeate its political systems; therefore, I expect the racism and sexism characteristic of the southern political culture historically to have an impact on today's state legislatures. These historical features of southern political culture are likely to foster more hostile environments for African American women in their state legislatures.

In Hedge, Button and Spear's (1996) study of African American legislative life, they find that the political culture in which African Americans serve has a significant impact on the quality of their legislative life. Particularly, African American legislators in the deep- south[3] chaired fewer committees and reported less influence than colleagues serving in other regions of the country. The racial climate of the deep southern states impacted the legislators' attitudes differently than those legislators serving in other parts of the country.

While the south has been defined in numerous ways, I classify southern states in terms of the old confederacy states including: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and

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3. Hedge, Button and Spear (1996) considered Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina as states of the deep south.

82

Virginia.[4] States of the deep south have the largest numbers of African American women serving in their legislatures. Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee have the largest numbers of African American women serving in the state legislature. Outside of the deep-south, Maryland and New York are the states with the largest number of African American women in the legislature. Nearly one in four (38 percent) African American women is serving in a southern state legislature while 62 percent are elected to state legislatures outside of the south.[5]

Number of African American Women Serving

As discussed in Chapter Two, the numbers debate in the women and politics literature suggests that an increase in the number of women serving in an institution is likely to have a favorable impact on the experiences of women legislators. The current debate among scholars of women and politics is the impact of the number of women on the institution. Some argue that as a result of increased numbers, women experience a more collegial atmosphere and are better able to articulate public policies on behalf of women (Thomas, 1994).

Given Kanter's (1977) thesis, we expect that in legislatures with larger numbers of African American women, they will be more incorporated into the legislative body. Likewise, with larger numbers of African American women serving in the legislature, the effects of tokenism are diminished and as a result women are expected to report a

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4. See Richard K. Scher (1992) *Politics in the New South Republicanism, Race and Leadership in the Twentieth Century* for a full discussion of classifications of the south. He also provides a discussion of the cultural, geographical, and cultural differences associated with the deep, border or rim southern states.

more positive legislative experience. While Kanter's thesis is quite compelling as an explanation of behavior within institutions, alternative theories suggest that new groups with growing numbers may actually experience a backlash in that the dominant group views their presence in the institution as intrusive. The dominant group responds with hostility and resentment towards the incoming group (Blau, 1977; Yoder, 1991). The question remains as to whether African American women serving in states with higher numbers report more positive legislative experiences than those who are not in institutions with other African American women.

The numbers of African American women serving in each state legislature is small, but it is still possible and useful to examine the number of African American women legislators as an explanatory factor in their legislative experiences. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of the respondents serve in states with 10 or fewer African American women serving in the legislature, including fully a third (34 percent) who serve in legislatures with five or fewer African American women. Far fewer African American women serve in legislatures with more than 10 African American women and only a quarter (26 percent) of women serve in legislatures with more than 10 African American women. Further, only 18 percent of them serve with more than 15 African American women. The numbers of African American women serving in the legislature are not approaching the levels at which Kanter argues they will move beyond tokenism. Nevertheless, it is instructive to examine the impact of the numbers on African

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5. See Table 2-1 Which provides a geographical distribution of the survey respondents as well as the actual numbers of women serving in each state legislature.

American women's feelings of incorporation, propensity to build coalitions, and influence among their colleagues.

Serving in Term Limited States

As the number of state legislatures adopting term limits increases, more questions arise concerning the impact of term limits on the legislative process. Embedded in this conversation are discussions concerning the fate of new comers to the legislature. Much of the term limits conversation has been concentrated on the effects of term limits on the advantages associated with incumbency. Some argue that term limits will further diversify the legislature by eradicating the effects of the incumbency advantage and have an overall positive affect for women and minorities (Petracca, 1991; Fund, 1992). With such a focus on the role of term limits in creating access for underrepresented groups, little attention has been placed on the effects of term limits on the institutional power of women and minorities. Bratton and Haynie (2000) address this topic in their analysis of the effects of term limits on the selection of women and minorities to leadership posts in state legislatures. They point out that proponents of term limits are encouraged by data suggesting that legislatures with high turnover rates promote women into leadership more swiftly.[6] However, Haynie and Bratton find that the collapse in the seniority system under term limits negatively impacts the likelihood of women making it into the leadership ranks (2000).

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6. For an example, Dean and Little (1999) argue that higher turnover promotes women's ascension into the leadership ranks, and they suggests that legislatures with high turnover rates simulate the patterns that will evolve as states continue to undergo term limit cycles.

As Haynie and Bratton suggest, under term limits, the norms of the legislature are transforming. With shorter time periods in which to act, many of the norms associated with the legislative process are changing requiring legislators are required to adapt quickly to the legislature's new norms. Long term relationships once a hallmark of state legislatures are less relevant, for example as are norms regarding apprenticeship (Little, 2000; Carey, Neimi and Powell, 2000). The uncertainties associated with these changes in legislative norms are likely to impact African American women's legislative experiences. African American women in term limited legislatures are likely to feel the same performance pressures that all legislators feel as a result of the limited amount of time they have to be legislatively successful. In that nearly a third (31 percent) of African American women report serving in term limited state legislatures, I examine the effects of term limits on their legislative experiences.

Benefiting from Institutionally Desirable Attributes

It is clear from the previous discussion that some African American women hold the attributes that are said to improve their legislative experiences. There are African American women who hold the types of institutional positions that typically confer influence. And, with influence, we expect that their legislative experiences differ from those who have not acquired such positions of influence. In this section, I now examine the impact of African American women holding these attributes that are considered to be desirable according to the institution's standards. I expect that holding the attributes discussed previously will positively impact African American women's feelings of incorporation in the legislature, their abilities and desires to build coalitions and the

86

influence they feel they have among their colleagues. Table 3-1 illustrates the expected relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Legislative Incorporation

In order for legislators to act on behalf of their constituents, it is important that they feel that they are a full part of the institution. We expect that once legislators are elected to the institution, they are afforded full membership in this elite group. Contrary to this belief, discrimination continues to be a major concern for African American legislators and African American women feel the brunt of this treatment more so than other legislators. Button and Hedge (1996) report that more than 60 percent of the African American legislators responding to their survey report observing or experiencing some form of discrimination in the legislative session prior to the survey as compared to a quarter of white legislators. African American legislators reported experiencing a range of discriminatory acts in their states including discrimination on the individual level such as name calling by their colleagues to more institutional discrimination such as selecting few people of color for leadership positions and the legislature passing bills detrimental to the African American community (Button and Hedge, 1996). When this data was disaggregated by gender, three quarters (76 percent) of African American women legislators reported encountering discrimination.

Compared to African American men's legislative experiences, African American women report having the more pessimistic outlook on African American's institutional power in state legislatures. Further, African American women reported an overall lower quality of legislative life for themselves and other African American lawmakers than African American men. Their lower quality of life could be linked to

87

Table 3-1 Expected Relationships Between Variables

	Building Coalitions	Legislative Incorporation	Influence Among Colleagues
Institutional Variables			
Leadership	+	+	+
Seniority	+	+	+
Legislative Activity			
Bills Introduced	+	+	+
Bills Passed	+	+	+
Bill Success Rate	+	+	+
Committee Assignment	+	+	+
Contextual Variables			
Region	-	-	-
Number of African American Women in the Legislature	+	+	+
Term Limited State	-	-	-

their increased likelihood to experience or witness episodes of discrimination within the legislature (Hedge, Button and Spear, 1996). While these authors determine that African American women report a lower quality of legislative life than their male counterparts, the question remains whether there are differences among African American women in terms of their experiences in the legislature.

In this analysis, I examine the differences among African American women to determine whether advancing in the institution has any bearing on how they experience the legislature. I question whether African American women who have advanced in the legislature feel that they are having favorable legislative experiences. In pursuit of this question, I control for the effects of individual and institutional variables that could impact African American women's attitudes toward their legislative incorporation into the legislature. I expect that differences will emerge between African American women who have excelled on a number of the attributes that are said to lead to success in the legislature and those African American women who have not moved into these positions. Those women holding party leadership positions and prestigious committee assignments, have seniority and are legislatively active are expected to experience a more favorable legislative experience and will feel more fully incorporated into the legislature. However, given the nature of term limits, I expect that African American women serving in term limited states will report a more negative legislative experience not feeling fully incorporated into the legislature. For those women serving in legislatures with more African American women, the effects of tokenism should be reduced providing them more favorable legislative experiences. African American women in southern states are expected to have experiences in the legislature that are in

89

keeping with their states' political cultures; therefore, I expect that their perceptions of African American women's legislative experiences will be less favorable than women in other parts of the country. Understanding how African American women experience the legislatures and how they feel about their positions in the legislature further advances our knowledge of minority incorporation in governing bodies.

African American women responded to a series of questions intended to capture their feelings of inclusion and incorporation in the legislature. They were asked whether they perceived difficulties in the legislature attributable to their gender and race, the likelihood of African American women holding positions of leadership, and their perceptions of African American women having to work harder to prove themselves. The results on legislative incorporation are shown in Tables 3-2 and 3-3.

Leadership

African American women serving in leadership positions do not seem to feel any more incorporated into the legislature than African American women not in leadership positions. Three quarters of women in leadership (74 percent) report that they experience a difficult time in the legislature and attribute their difficulties to their gender and race, as do 72 percent of women not in leadership. They also overwhelmingly feel that they are required to work harder than their colleagues in an effort to prove themselves (87 percent) as do 88 percent of women outside of leadership. And, looking at the scarcity of African American women joining them in the leadership ranks, they also admit the realities of the institution -- that African American women are less likely to hold leadership positions. Sixty four percent of

90

Table 3-2 African American Women and Legislative Incorporation

	Have a Difficult Time as a Result of Race and Gender	Less Likely to Serve in Leadership Positions	Must Work Harder to Prove Themselves
Leadership			
Yes	74%	60%	87%
No	72	64	73
Seniority			
0-5	68%	57%	83%
6-10	68	70	91
11-	80	50	81
Bill Success			
None	65%	41%	72%
Low	79	56	88
Medium	80	68	93
High	72	74	95
Money Committee	60%	60%	90%
Yes	76	61	85
No			
Region			
South	77%	70%	96%
Non-South	68	56	80
Term Limited			
Yes	60%	45%	81%
No	75	68	89
Number of Women Serving			
Low	52%	63%	83%
Medium	81	56	85
High	82	61	89

Table 3-3: African American Women's Legislative Activity and Legislative Incorporation

	Have a difficult time as a result of race and gender	Less likely to be in leadership positions	Must work harder to prove themselves
Speak on Floor			
Never	88%	50%	88%
Sometimes	65	64	87
Frequently	89	50	82
Discuss in Committee			
Never	61%	56%	84%
Sometimes	76	63	88
Frequently	71	61	87
Question Witnesses			
Never	-	-	-
Sometimes	67%	59%	81%
Frequently	73	65	91
Speak in Party Caucus			
Never	-	-	-
Sometimes	70%	50%	88%
Frequently	68	65	83
Bargain with others			
Never	-	-	-
Sometimes	69%	57%	83%
Frequently	71	61	88
Interact with Leadership			
Never	-	-	-
Sometimes	65%	56%	89%
Frequently	73	63	84
Speak with Lobbyist			
Never	-	-	-
Sometimes	72%	56%	83%
Frequently	71	62	89

women in leadership positions and 60 percent of those without a leadership position doubt the likelihood of African American women moving into leadership positions.

Seniority

Contrary to my expectations, African American women who have been in the legislature longer do not report a more favorable legislative experience; in fact, they report even stronger feelings of exclusion. As women remain in the legislature longer, their confidence in their abilities to move into the leadership ranks decreases. African American women who have advanced beyond junior legislator status, but are not yet the most senior members appear to be the most optimistic about the likelihood of African American women moving into leadership positions in their legislature. While more than half (57 percent) of African American women who are just entering the legislature serving in their first few years feel that African American women are less likely to be in leadership positions, those who have been in the institution long enough to become acquainted with its norms report in even higher percentages (70 percent) that African American women are less likely to be in leadership positions. Women with the most seniority in the legislature, however are split on their feelings about African American women's leadership, they are equally likely to feel that African American women are less likely to gain entry into the leadership (50 percent) as they are to believe that this is not an issue (50 percent).

Having been in the legislature longer, women with the most seniority have decided that the difficulties that African American women face in the legislature can be attributed to their gender and race. African American women, who have served in the

93

legislature the longest, report in the highest percentages (80 percent) that they have a difficult time as a result of their gender and race.

Women just entering the legislature and those who have been in the legislature the longest agree in similar percentages (83 and 81 percent respectively) that they must work harder in the legislature to prove themselves. Women who are at the height of establishing their legislative careers with tenures between six and ten years, having just mastered the legislative process, are most likely to report feeling the need to work harder as African American women to prove themselves, in fact, nine out of ten women report this feeling (91 percent). Indeed, a critical moment for African American women is the in between moment of no longer being a junior member and not quite being considered a senior member. These women, at the prime of the legislative careers, usually having served at least two terms are experiencing the most isolation and are not feeling a part of the institution. At this critical point, feelings of marginality could discourage women from seeking additional terms.

Legislative Activity

Despite African American women's legislative activity, they are still unlikely to feel a part of the institution. African American women's success in bill passage is correlated to two of the three aspects of legislative incorporation.[7] The more success women have enjoyed in terms of the amount of legislation they have passed, the less likely they are to feel that they are full members of the institution.

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7. Both feeling less likely to serve in leadership positions and feeling the need to work harder to prove themselves are correlated to bill success rate and are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Women without any success in passing legislation are more optimistic about their incorporation into the institution. Three quarters (72 percent) of women with no bill success feel that they must work harder to prove themselves and 41 percent feel that African American women are unlikely to be promoted to the ranks of leadership. Likewise, two thirds (65 percent) of these women indicate that the difficulties they face in the legislature are a result of both their gender and race. While these women report legislative experiences that suggest that they do not feel apart of the institution, their fellow African American women who have been more active in the institution report these feelings in even higher numbers (See Table 3-2).

Women who have had more success in passing legislation report these feelings in even higher percentages. They are nearly unanimous (95 percent) about feeling the need to work harder than their colleagues work in order to prove themselves. The more successful African American women become in negotiating legislation through the institution, the less likely they are to feel that they have the opportunity to move into leadership ranks. Three quarters (74 percent) of women who have enjoyed the passage of much of their legislation feel that despite their hard work, they are less likely to more into leadership positions. They are also most likely (72 percent) to site their gender and race as sources of the difficulties they have experienced in the institution.

As previously discussed, examining a legislator's bill success rate is only one indicator of legislative activity. Many skills are needed in negotiating bills through the legislature and these are the same skills legislators use to prevent legislation from passing. In that 61 percent of African American women legislators find it difficult to get their priority issues on the legislative agenda, bill success is not the only indicator of

legislative activity. Given the arduous task of getting legislation on the legislative agenda, most African American women (60 percent) strategize to prevent the passing of legislation harmful to their communities. Indeed this speaks to the legislative activity of African American women such that introducing and passing legislation may not be the only indicator of their legislative activeness. It is just as instructive to examine skills that may be used in preventing legislation from passing. Therefore, I examine whether women who are active throughout the institution -- from speaking on the floor, in committee, or caucus meetings during a debate to bargaining and interacting with members of the leadership and lobbyists about their policy priorities -- experience the legislature differently than African American women who do not engage in these activities.

Women who speak out on the floor often during debates differ little from African American women who seldom speak out on the floor in terms of their feelings of being incorporated into the legislature. There are more similarities between women who never speak out and those who report doing this quite often. Equal numbers of women who never speak out (50 percent) and those who speak out quite often (50 percent) during a legislative session feel that African American women are less likely to be in leadership positions. Likewise these groups of women also feel in virtually equal numbers that both gender and race play a role in the difficulties they face in the legislature and that they must work harder to prove themselves in the institution.

As African American women participate more often in the legislative process, they appear to solidify their feelings of exclusion. The more they participate in their committees by discussing issues and questioning witnesses and bargaining and

96

interacting with other legislators including members of the leadership and lobbyists the more they see the extent to which they are not fully incorporated into the institution. These lessons are even reinforced in their own party caucus meetings the more active African American women are in their own party's caucus meetings; the more likely they are to feel that they are not full participants in the institution (See Table 3-3).

There is clearly a sentiment among African American women that working harder does not necessarily lead to institutional promotion. They are getting the message that working harder, passing more legislation does not guarantee that they will rise in the institutional power structure. And, in all their activism throughout the institution, they come against feelings of exclusion. The more active they are, the more likely they are to express these feelings of exclusion. Therefore, following the norms of the institution or playing by the institution's rules may yield differing results.

Committee Assignment

There is some suggestion that serving on a money committee positively impacts African American's feelings of incorporation into the legislature. Though there are many similarities between African American women who sit on these prized committees and those who do not in terms of their feelings of inclusion, there are some indications that women on these committees are more optimistic about their status in the legislature. For example, 40 percent of African American women serving on one of the prized monetary committees do not feel that they experience difficulties as a result of their gender and race as compared to a quarter (25 percent) of women not serving on these committees.

While women serving on these committees are optimistic in some regards about their inclusion in the institution, they are more pessimistic about having to work harder than their colleagues in order to prove themselves. Similarly to women not holding these positions (85 percent), women serving on monetary committees (90 percent) feel that they do indeed have to work harder to prove themselves or gain acceptance among their colleagues. Regardless of their committee assignment, African American women's feelings about their prospects of moving into the leadership ranks are similar (See Table 3-2).

Region and Legislative incorporation

The political culture of the state appears to have an influence on whether African American women feel fully a part of their state's legislature. Women serving in southern legislatures appear to be faced with exclusion more severely than their colleagues serving in other parts of the country. On every measure of incorporation into the legislature, women serving in southern legislatures report in higher numbers feeling excluded from full access as a legislator.[8] Women serving in the south were much more likely than their colleagues serving in other parts of the country to doubt their prospects of moving into leadership. Nearly three quarters of women in southern states (70 percent) feel that African American women are less likely to be in leadership positions in their states' legislature as compared to slightly over half (56 percent) of women in other parts of the country. Overwhelmingly, African American women in the south (96

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8. The relationship between working harder to prove oneself and region is the strongest correlation for the incorporation variables; it is correlated in the expected direction and is statistically significant (r=-.223; p<.10).

percent) agree that African American women must work harder than their colleagues to prove themselves, and women in other parts of the country are slightly more varied in feeling the need to work harder to prove themselves. One in five women serving (20 percent) in other parts of the country report not feeling such pressures to prove themselves. Little difference appears between women serving in southern or non-southern state legislatures around their feelings about the difficulties presented being an African American woman serving in the state legislature. Though women in the south (77 percent) are slightly more likely to feel that both their gender and race impact their legislative experiences, their colleagues in other parts to the country (68 percent) are similarly impacted.

The Number of African American Women Serving

Where there are fewer African American women serving in the legislature, they are more likely to feel slightly more incorporated into the legislature. In legislatures with more African American women, they feel stronger about the impact of their gender and race in shaping their legislative experiences.[9] Nearly half (48 percent) of African American women serving in states with small numbers of African American women legislators feel that they do not have a difficult time as a result of their gender and race. However, as the number of women increases, they are more likely to feel that their gender and race impacts their legislative experiences.

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9. The number of women serving in the legislature is positively correlated with having a difficult time as a result of race and gender ($r = .266$; $p < .05$).

Eight out of ten (81 percent) women serving in legislatures with more than six African American women and 82 percent of women serving in legislatures with more than 10 African American women, feel that they have a difficult time in the legislature as a result of their gender and race. These results give credence to Yoder's thesis that with increased numbers, underrepresented groups become more visible and more at risk for backlash (Yoder, 1991). Racial proximity scholars suggest that the closer an underrepresented group becomes to the dominant group, the more likely that the dominant group will react in a hostile manner.

While all African American women feel that they must work harder (86 percent), the more African American women serving in the legislature, the more likely they are to feel that they must work harder. Eighty nine percent of those serving with more than 10 African American women feel that they must work harder compared to 83 percent of women serving in legislatures with the least numbers African American women serving.

African American women in states at the two extremes, with very few African American women serving (63 percent) and with many women in the legislature (61 percent) report that they doubt their prospects for leadership positions. However, 44 percent of women in states with a moderate number of African American women find that leadership positions are within their reach.

Serving in Term Limited States and Legislative incorporation

Prior to term limits, in most state legislatures leadership positions were reserved only for the most senior members. However, one of the effects of term limits is the reduction in the relevancy of the seniority as a system; therefore, the basis of leadership

100

selection is being renegotiated in term limited states (Moncrief and Hamm, 1999). This renegotiation process is leaving African American women in term limited states with a sense of optimism about their prospects of moving into leadership.[10] More than half (55 percent) of African American women serving in term limited feel that leadership positions are within their reach compared to only a third (32 percent) of women in non term limited states.

Interestingly, at the same time that African American women are appearing hopeful about the prospects of securing leadership positions, the available research on the effects of term limits suggests a different story. Under term limits, some suggests that the number of women and minorities in the legislature may increase, but leadership positions are likely to become more competitive given that many legislators will be considered "senior" members and eligible for these positions. Therefore, as these norms are in transition, other norms such as gender and racial preferences may increase in significance when leadership decisions are decided (Bratton and Haynie, 2000).

The majority (60 percent) of African American women in term limited states feel that the difficulties they face in the legislature are explained by both their gender and race. However, 40 percent do not feel that their gender and race play a role in the difficulties they experience in the legislature. This is much different from women in non-term limited states in that only a quarter (25 percent) of African American women not serving in term limited states feel that the difficulties they have experienced in the

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10. There is a negative correlation between term limits and African American women being less likely to serve in leadership and this relationship is statistically significant ($r = -.233$; $p < .10$).

legislature are not attributable to their gender and race. Women in term limited states (81 percent) are slightly less likely to feel the need work harder in order to prove themselves among their colleagues as compared to women in non term limited states (89 percent). From this data, it is difficult to discern just what the impact of term limits for African American women in that in many states only the first wave of term limits has taken effect. Because, African American women responding to the survey from term limited states may not have gone through a full cycle of term limits in their state's legislatures these findings can only be viewed as tentative conclusions.

African American Women's Inclusion

To more fully understand African American women's feelings of inclusion or exclusion from the legislature, I examined which of these attributes play a more pivotal role in African American women's feelings of inclusiveness in the legislature. For those women who do feel a sense of inclusion, I sought to determine which factors contribute most to their feelings of inclusiveness. In order to do this; I first created an index of legislative incorporation using the three questions related to legislative incorporation.[11] This variable was then re-coded into a dichotomous variable depicting low incorporation (coded as 0) and full incorporation (coded as 1). Table 3-4 describes the dependent variable, legislative incorporation, including the questions from the survey that constitute the index. The descriptions of the explanatory variables are shown in Table 3-5. To determine the effects of explanatory variables on the

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11. Combining these questions into an index of legislative incorporation resulted in a reliability score of alpha = 0.82, which indicates that these questions capture the same concept in this case full incorporation into the legislature.

102

Table 3-4 Descriptions of the Dependent Variables

Variable	Description
Legislative Incorporation	Questions used to create the index: -African American women are less likely to be in positions of leadership. -African American women must work harder to prove themselves. -African American women have a difficult time in the legislature as a result of their race and gender. A dichotomous variable coded 0 indicating low incorporation and 1 indicating full incorporation.
Coalition Building	The frequency in which African American women build coalitions with the following legislators: -African American Men - African American Women -White Men -White Women Responses were coded: Never =1; 1-5 times during the legislative session 2; 6 or more times 3.
Influence Among Colleagues	The frequency in which African American women are asked for assistance on their top priority policy issues by the following legislators: -African American men -African American women -White men -White women Responses were coded: Never =1; 1-5 times during the legislative session 2; 6 or more times 3.

Table 3-5 Descriptions of Independent Variables

Variable	Measurement
Institutional Variables Leadership	Dummy variable coded 1 if legislator serves in a leadership position. Leadership included are Speaker of the House, President Pro-Tem of the Senate, Committee Chair, Party Whip
Seniority	Continuous variable depicting the number of years a legislator has served
Bill Success Rate	Ratio of bills introduced to bills passed.
Committee Assignment	Dummy variable coded 1 if legislator serves on a money committee. Committees included are Appropriations, Budget & Taxation, Ways and Means
Contextual Variables Region	Dummy variable coded 1 if legislator serves in one of the 13 confederate states of the south
Number of African American Women in the Legislature	Number of additional African American women serving in the legislature. Coded 1 if 0-5; 2 if 6-10; 3 if 11 or more women serving in the legislature
Term Limited	Dummy variable coded 1 if legislator serves in a state in which term limits have been enacted on the state legislature.

probability that African American women will feel fully incorporated into their state legislature, I used logistic regression analysis.

The extent to which African American women feel excluded from the institution far surpasses the hypotheses. African American women, who hold the attributes that the literature suggests would improve their status in the legislature, and I expected their legislative experiences as well, did not result in improving their outlook on their legislative experience. As Table 3-6 shows, several attributes are in the expected direction, but they do not reach statistical significance. However, being legislatively active by introducing and passing legislation results in African American women reporting less favorable experiences in the legislature. For African American women, having higher bill success rates actually decreases the probability that they will feel fully incorporated into the legislature. Likewise, being a senior member, or being a member of the leadership and holding other favorable institutional characteristics will have less of an effect on their feelings of inclusion in the institution. Interestingly, the other institutional variables did not increase the probability that African American women will feel fully incorporated into the legislature. Of the contextual variables, there is some suggestion that serving in legislatures with term limits negatively impacts African American women's feelings of inclusion, though the relationship is not statistically significant.

At some point, African American women in state legislatures are getting the message that they must work harder to prove themselves. In some ways this need to work harder may be linked to the difficulties they encounter that they attribute to their gender and race. What is most striking is the fact that they feel that working harder will

Table 3-6 Variables Impacting African American Women's Legislative Incorporation

	B	Exp (B)
Institutional Variables		
Leader	.2204 (.8385)	1.247
Seniority	-.1260 (.1010)	.882
Bill Success Ratio	-.0612** (.0275)	.941
Money Committee Assignment	.7363 (.9151)	2.088
Contextual Variables		
Southern State Legislature	.2353 (.9573)	1.265
Number of African American Women serving	-.8926 (.6135)	.4096
Term Limited State Legislature	-1.2949 (1.1485)	.2739
Constant	2.606* (1.629)	

* p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01
Two-tailed test of significance

have limited pay offs, as exhibited by the fact that they feel they are less likely to move into positions of power as leaders --where one is able to exert more power and influence. The question then is how do these messages get communicated to African American women?

What institutional norms are they responding to? Their day-to-day experiences in the legislature provide the evidence. And the testimony of their experiences shows in the data. Those women who are making the efforts to be legislatively active and navigate legislation thru the system are noticing that it takes more effort on their part than their colleagues must exert. And, these women who are highly legislatively successful in getting bills through the legislature still feel that leadership positions are beyond their reach. And, perhaps they are correct given that few African American women serve in leadership positions and the most powerful positions (Speaker, Speaker Pro Tem, President of the Senate) remain the most elusive for African American women. It seems that African American women have indeed learned some of the rules of operation in the legislature, and since they are not being rewarded along the traditional reward system--gaining leadership positions and access to prestigious committees they have learned to not even expect such rewards. And, according to the African American women responding to the survey, these positions do very little in terms of improving the conditions of their life in the legislature.

Building Coalitions

Given that African American women as group feel that they are treated as less than full members of the legislature, it remains questionable as to whether this lack of full incorporation results in the curtailment of their coalition building activities with

their colleagues. Coalition building is an important and significant activity for legislators who seek to pass legislation and accomplish other legislative goals. I expect that African American women who have excelled in the institution by acquiring the most favorable institutional attributes will be most apt to participate in coalition building activities across racial and gender groups. Rather than only building coalitions with those of their same gender and race, I expect that these women will reach beyond these groups as they participate in coalitions around the issues that matter most to them. However, there is some suggestion that African American women will participate most often in coalitions with African American men. In that African American women feel in general, that white men are unsupportive (66 percent), it of no surprise that their coalition building with white men is sparse. African American women's feelings regarding the support of white women is mixed, slightly less than half feel supported by white women (47 percent) while half feel that they receive little support form white women (51 percent). Ten percent strongly agree that white women are supportive of their issues while seven percent feel strongly that they do not. African American women are most sure of receiving support from their fellow African Americans. Though African American women are most assured about receiving support from African American men (75 percent), still not all African American women feel they can count on support of African American men (25 percent). Nevertheless, sharing support for the same issues is likely to play an important role in coalition building for African American women.

My examination of African American women's coalition building relies on a series of questions asked of respondents regarding the frequency in which they engage

108

in coalition building with other African American men and women, Asian American men and women, Latinas, Latinos, and White men and women legislators. Very few African American women serve in legislatures with Asian Americans, Latinas or Latinos; therefore, those categories could not be included in the data analysis due to the large number of missing cases. Table 3-7 shows the results of their coalition building with other African American and white legislators.

Leadership

The experiences of African American women in leadership differ little from African American women who do not hold leadership positions. This is especially the case for their coalition building with white men; women in leadership as well as those not in leadership participate in coalition building with white men with the same frequency (42 percent). There is even some indication that being in leadership might actually decrease African American women's coalition building with white men given that eight percent of African American women in leadership report never building coalitions with white men.

Having a leadership position seems to matter most in building coalitions with African American men. Sixty eight percent of women in leadership report frequently building coalitions with their African American male colleagues as compared to 57 percent of women without leadership positions. And while African American women in leadership tend to build more coalitions with white women, the difference is meager (See Table 3-7).

109

Table 3-7 African American Women's Coalition Building

	African American Women			African American Men			White Women			White Men		
	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent
Leadership												
Yes	-	29%	72%	3%	29%	68%	5%	39%	56%	8%	50%	42%
No	-	22	78	3	40	57	3	44	53	3	55	42
Seniority												
0-5	-	42%	58%	5%	55%	41%	8%	38%	54%	13%	54%	33%
6-10	-	19	81	3	27	70	3	44	53	3	56	41
11-	-	8	92	-	7	93	-	29	71	-	25	75
Bill Success												
None	-	42%	58%	6%	44%	50%	5%	58%	37%	11%	63%	26%
Low	-	29	71	7	33	60	7	33	60	7	50	43
Medium	-	14	86	-	7	93	6	25	69	7	47	47
High	-	11	88	-	39	61	-	39	61	-	44	56
Money Committee												
Yes	-	24%	77%	5%	32%	63%	5%	42%	53%	5%	42%	53%
No	-	27	73	2	33	65	4%	39	57	6%	54	40
Region												
Non-South	-	27%	73%	5%	35%	61%	4%	38%	58%	7%	50%	43%
South	-	22	78	-	27	73	4	41	57	4	50	46
Term Limited												
Yes	-	20%	80%	5%	44%	55%	9%	48%	44%	13%	48%	39%
No	-	41	59	2	29	69	2	37	61	2	53	45
Number of Women Serving												
Low	-	33%	67%	10%	43%	48%	8%	58%	33%	9%	61%	30%
Medium	-	21	79	-	31	69	4	30	67	4	52	44
High	-	28	72	-	28	72	-	29	71	6	35	59

<u>Seniority</u>

As expected, seniority is important in coalition building. As African American women remain in the legislature longer, their coalition building with other African Americans and white men increases, while seniority has less of am impact on the relationship between African American women and white women.[12]

Early in their legislative service, African American women most often build coalitions with other women legislators. From the beginning of their service in the legislature, they appear to view white women as allies engaging quite often in coalition building. More than half (54 percent) of new comers to the legislature report that they frequently building coalitions with white women. Likewise, 58 percent of new legislators report building coalitions frequently with other African American women. The frequency in which women new to the legislature report building such coalitions among other women may be attributed to their participation in their state's women's caucus in their states upon entering the legislature. If this were in fact a result of the existence of a women's caucus and their subsequent participation in the caucus' activities, then I would expect black caucuses to have a similar effect on these women's coalition building with African American men.

African American women newly elected to the legislature are slightly less likely to frequently participate in coalition building with African American men (41 percent),

12. The relationship between African American women's seniority and their coalition building with African Americans, and white men is a statistically significant. The correlation between seniority and coalition building with other African American women is in the expected direction and is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level as is the relationship with white men, while the correlation between their seniority and

they do occasionally build such coalitions with these legislators. They are least likely to build coalitions with white men in fact 13 percent report never building coalitions with white men. However, this is not to suggest that they do not participate in coalitions with white men, half (54 percent) of African American women new to the legislature report that they do occasionally participate in coalitions with their white male colleagues.

Interestingly, the longer women stay in the legislature, the frequency in which they build coalitions with other groups changes. Coalition building not only increases, but race becomes even more important in their coalition activities. As newcomers to the legislature, African American women frequently build coalitions with other women-- African American women (58 percent) and white women (54 percent). However, those African American women who have been in the legislature slightly longer, most frequently build coalitions with other African Americans. Eighty one percent report building coalitions with other African American women and 70 percent report building coalitions with African American men as compared to only half reporting frequent building coalitions with white women (53 percent) and 41 percent with white men.

Nearly all the African American women who have been in the legislature more than 10 years frequently build coalitions with other African Americans including 93 percent who frequently build coalitions with African American men and 92 percent who do so with African American women. And, as indicated previously, their coalition building increases with all groups the longer they remain in the legislature and this is

building coalitions with African American men is also in the expected direction and is significant at the $p < .01$ level.

demonstrated by the growth in their coalition building with white men (75 percent) and white women (71 percent).

For African American women, seniority strongly impacts their coalition building activities. While learning the ropes in the legislature, African American women engage less in coalition building activities, but as they remain in the institution, their coalition building increases. In the beginning they build these coalitions more with other women, but the longer they remain in the legislature, and become more indoctrinated into the institution race becomes more significant in their coalition building as their gender-based coalition building wanes.

Legislative Activity and Coalition Building

African American women with the highest bill success rates seek out their colleagues for coalition building and these women most frequently build coalitions with other African American women (88 percent), followed by African American men, white men (61 percent) and white women (55 percent). By contrasts, women who have not enjoyed any bill success build fewer coalitions with their colleagues; for example, a quarter (26 percent) report frequently building coalitions with white men while 63 percent report building such relationships only occasionally. A similar pattern holds for their coalition building efforts with their other colleagues though they are more apt to build coalitions with other African American women and men.

African American women who are active by not only introducing legislation but also getting it passed make it a habit to reach out across both gender and racial groups

113

for coalition building.[13] African American women, who got more than 40 percent of their legislation passed, report building coalitions with white men and women in higher numbers than women with less success in build passage. In fact, they were more than twice as likely (56 percent) to report building coalitions with white men than African American women with no bill passage success (26 percent). This is similarly true for their coalition building with white women. Nearly two thirds (61 percent) of women with the highest rates of bill passage as compared to 37 percent of those who did not pass any bills report building coalitions with white women.

The frequency in which African American women build coalitions with their colleagues increases with every group as their bill passage rate increases, with the exception of their coalition building with African American men and white women. As shown in Table 3-7, African American women who introduce and pass the most legislation find themselves doing less coalition building with African American men (61 percent) and white women (61 percent) as compared to women with slightly less success in bill passage. The difference is quite large in the case of African American men. Nearly three quarters (61 percent) of women with the highest levels of bill passage report working in coalition with African American men, while 93 percent of their fellow African American women colleagues with slightly less success in bill passage report frequently working in coalitions with African American men.

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13. Correlations between legislators' bill success rate and coalition for each group are in the expected direction and is significant at the p< .05 level for coalition building with other African American women (r= .285) and white men (r= .248).

114

African American women who are more active in the institution and are more visible also report participating in coalition building more often with various groups of legislators. For example, African American women who are highly visible on the floor of the legislature speaking out on issues report in higher numbers that they are frequently included in coalitions with their African American male colleagues and their white women colleagues. Half of those who speak out on the floor occasionally (49 percent), as well as those who do so quite often (50 percent) do more coalition building with their white male colleagues as compared to African American women who report never speaking out on the floor of the legislature (13 percent). African American women who are not shying away from the debates in their committee meeting and those who will engage witnesses during committee meetings also find it easier to engage in coalition building with their colleagues. Likewise, those who are interacting with members of the leadership and those who are engaging lobbyists on their policy issues are having success in building coalitions (See Table 3-8). It appears that those African American women who have chosen to increase their visibility and become associated with behavior typical of legislators, the easier it becomes for them to engage in coalition building with a number of different legislators. The more they engage in these activities, the more likely they are to frequently build coalitions with an array of legislators.

Committee Assignment and Coalition Building

African American women's coalition building with other African Americans and white women is not significantly impacted by their membership on committees that make the important funding decisions for their states (See Table 3-7). However, being assigned to these committees does appear to provide opportunities for African

115

Table 3-8 African American Women's Legislative Activity and Coalition Building

	African American Women			African American Men			White Women			White Men		
	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent
Speak on Floor												
Never	-	63%	38%	-	75%	25%	-	75%	25%	-	88%	13%
Sometimes	-	21	79	4%	29	67	6%	38	57	8%	43	49
Frequently	-	27	73	-	22	78	-	20	80	-	50	50
Discuss in Committee												
Never	-	46%	55%	-	48%	48%	-	54%	42%	-	63%	29%
Sometimes	-	17	83	4%	24	73	4%	33	63	8%	45	51
Frequently	-			2			4			4		
Question Witnesses												
Never	-	35%	65%	-	43%	54%	-	46%	52%	-	60%	34%
Sometimes	-	16	84	3%	22	75	3%	34	60	6%	42	52
Frequently	-			3			6			6%		
Speak in Party Caucus												
Never	-	29%	71%	-	33%	64%	-	47%	47%	-	65%	29%
Sometimes	-	27	73	3%	38	59	6%	34	63	6%	39	55
Frequently	-			3			3			6		
Bargain with others												
Never	-	34%	65%	-	43%	54%	-	52%	41%	-	75%	18%
Sometimes	-	17	83	4%	23	75	7%	29	69	7%	34	63
Frequently	-			3			2			3		
Interact with Leadership												
Never	-	31%	69%	-	46%	54%	-	46%	50%	-	63%	33%
Sometimes	-	23	78	-	22	73	4%	36	60	4%	44	51
Frequently	-			5%			5			5		
Speak with Lobbyist												
Never	-	53%	47%	-	53%	41%	-	44%	50%	-	61%	28%
Sometimes	-	16	84	6%	24	74	6%	39	58	11%	48	48
Frequently	-			2			4			4%		

American women to build relationships with their white male colleagues. Compared to women not assigned to these important monetary committees (40 percent), women who serve on these committees (53 percent) are more likely to frequently engage in coalitions with their white male colleagues. Because the members of these committees "hold the purse strings", these committees are considered the source of legislative action and are often the most sought among members. Serving on these influential committees also appears to be beneficial to African American women's coalition building strategies across racial and gender lines. These committees offer an additional opportunity for African American women to interact with those that they may not be able to connect with on other levels.

Region and Coalition Building

While I expected coalition building across race in particular to be much more difficult for African American women serving in southern legislatures, this is not the case. African American women in the south report building coalitions across racial lines with the same regularity of women in other parts of the country. In fact, the data in Table 3-7 even suggests that African American women in the south engage more frequently in coalition building. Almost half of African American women in the south (46 percent) as well as in other parts of the country (43 percent) consider themselves frequently involved in coalitions with white men. Likewise, they report quite similar rates of coalition building with white women. Overall, African American women in the south find themselves involved in more coalition building with their white colleagues than women in other parts of the country.

117

Further, African American women in the south are more likely to form coalitions with African American men. Nearly three quarters (73 percent) of African American women in the south report frequently building coalitions with African American men while 61 percent of women in other parts of the country report such relationships. And, though the difference is not as pronounced, a similar pattern emerges in relation to their coalition building with other African American women. These findings suggest that African American women in the south do slightly more coalition building across the board especially given that they report similar levels of coalition building with their white colleagues as women in other parts of the country.

Number of African American Women and Coalition Building

The more African American women in the legislature, the more they engage in coalition building across gender and racial groups in the legislature.[14] In legislatures with few African American women in the legislature, these women are likely to form coalitions more frequently with other African Americans and are significantly less likely to form coalitions with their white colleagues. Two thirds (67 percent) of African American women who are serving in legislatures with less than five African American women report building coalitions with other African American women and nearly half (48 percent) report frequently building coalitions with African American men. In

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14. The relationship between the number of women serving in the legislature and coalition building is correlated and in the expected direction for African American men (r= .246; p< .05), white women (r= .204; p<.10), and white men (r=.316; p< .01). And, the relationship between the number of African American women and coalition building among African American women is in the expected direction but is not statistically significant.

118

contrasts, only a third (33 percent) report building coalitions with white women and 30 percent report frequently engaging in coalitions with white men.

In legislatures where there are more African American women, there is more variance in their coalition building. In states with more African American women, the propensity to frequently build coalitions with white women increases. In fact, nearly three quarters (71 percent) of African American women report building coalitions with white women (See Table 3-7). Though African American women are still least likely to form coalitions with their white male colleagues, there is more coalition building between African American women and white men in states where there are more African American women serving in the legislature.

Term Limits and Coalition Building

Term limits appear to have negatively impacted African American women's coalition building with their colleagues.[15] African American women serving in term limited states report building coalitions with less frequency than African American women serving in non term limited states. And though the percentages are small, women serving in term limited legislatures are more likely to report never building coalitions with white men (13 percent), white women (9 percent) and African American men (5 percent) whereas only 2 percent of women in non term limited states report not building coalitions with white men and women or African American men. In term limited states, African American women build coalitions with each other more

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15. Coalition building across racial/ethnic groups and among men and women alike in term limited states is negatively correlated with coalition building. For African American (r = -.226; p<.10;) women and white women (r=-.197; p<.10) this negative relationship is also statistically significant.

frequently than any other group; yet, they are still considerably less likely (59 percent) to build coalitions with each other as compared to women in non- term limited states (80 percent).

As Little (2000) suggests, term limits are destabilizing the norms associated with the legislature; namely, the ethic of cooperation is being rejected in place of working solo. Legislators serving in term limited states are more likely to work alone in an effort to quickly establish themselves in the institution and as a result the long term relationships that form through repeated coalition building is rejected for a more individualistic approach (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 2000: 62-63).

African American Women's Coalition Building

To further understand, the propensity of African American women to engage in coalition building I followed the steps used to examine legislative incorporation in the previous section. Here, I created a comprehensive index variable reflecting African American women's coalition building activities across gender and race groups.[16] This variable was then re-coded into a dichotomous variable depicting their coalition building activities-- occasional coalition building (coded as 0) and frequent coalition building activity (coded as 1). Table 3-4 describes the dependent variable, coalition building, and Table 3-5 describes the measures of the independent variables. Using logistic regression, I further analyze African American women's coalition building to estimate the effects of the explanatory variables on the probability that African

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16. In a test of reliability to discern whether each question comprising the index are measuring the same concept -- coalition building, the index had a reliability alpha score of 0.84 which is acceptable according to the preferred 0.8 correlation coefficient.

American women will engage in coalition building. Based on the results of this analysis, it is possible to discern which attributes increase the probability that African American women will engage in coalition building activities in the legislature (See Table 3-9).

In analyzing coalition building across gender and race groups, none of the institutional or contextual variables indicate that having the attribute increases the probability that African American women will build coalitions among their colleagues in that they do not reach statistical significance. Though not reaching any level of significance, there is some suggestion that serving in a southern legislature and a state with term limits decreases coalition building.

While none of these attributes appear to play a role in increasing African American women's coalition building overall, are there different attributes impacting African American women's coalition building with other African Americans or whites? To examine this question, I disaggregated the coalition building variable to analyze coalition building with African Americans and whites independently. Examining African American women's coalition building with white men and women, shows that bill success and the number of African American women serving increases the probability that African American women will frequently form coalitions with white men and women (See Table 3-10). Though not reaching statistical significance, the expectations in regards to southern legislatures are in the expected direction.

Much like the overall coalition building discussed previously, no variables contribute more to the explanation of African American women's propensity to build coalitions with other African Americans. Data was not collected on the presence of

121

TABLE 3-9 Variables Impacting African American Women's Coalition Building

	B	Exp (B)
Institutional Variables		
Leader	-.422 (.757)	.656
Seniority	.134 (.104)	1.144
Bill Success Ratio	.028 (.019)	1.028
Money Committee Assignment	-.676 (.932)	.509
Contextual Variables		
Southern State Legislature	-.290 (.849)	.748
Number of African American Women serving	.286 (.540)	1.331
Term Limited State Legislature	-.035 (.921)	.966
Constant	-.481 (1.428)	

* p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01
Two-tailed test of significance

Table 3-10 Variables Impacting African American Women's Coalition Building with African Americans and Whites

	African Americans		Whites	
	B	Exp (B)	B	Exp (B)
Institutional Variables				
Leader	-471 (.776)	.625	-.200 (.625)	.819
Seniority	.142 (.108)	1.153	.026 (.060)	1.026
Bill Success Ratio	.026 (.010)	1.026	.036** (.016)	1.037
Money Committee Assignment	-.550 (.944)	.577	.627 (.768)	1.872
Contextual Variables				
Southern State Legislature	.305 (.886)	1.356	-.650 (.750)	.522
Number of African American Women serving	.314 (.573)	1.370	1.142** (.495)	3.134
Term Limited State Legislature	-.522 (.920)	.593	-.381 (.717)	.683
Constant	-.504 (1.462)		-2.531** (1.210)	

* $p<.10$; **$p<.05$; ***$p<.01$
Two-tailed test of significance

women's caucuses or Black caucuses in the legislature or African American women's participation with these groups. Such data may add another dimension to understanding African American women's coalition building activities.

Overall, the institutional variables appear to explain more about how African American women build coalitions in the legislature than the context in which African American women are serving. According to the bi-variate analysis, there is a relationship between seniority and building coalitions with African American men and women and white men. The ability of African American women to build coalitions with white men hinges on their holding the traits upheld by the institution particularly legislative activity defined as getting bills passed and seniority in the institution. It appears that the only way African American women are able to increase the chances of building coalitions with white men is to gain seniority. Other groups seem less attached to this institutional norm.

Choosing not to participate in the day-to-day activities of the legislature decreases opportunities to engage in the important work of coalition building in the legislature for African American women. While much emphasis is placed on being a member of the leadership, having seniority, and acquiring membership on the most influential committees, equally important are the behaviors of the individual members in terms of their legislative activity. Increased legislative activity, which raises visibility, appears to be an important part of coalition building for African American women legislators. Those who do engage at this level also feel that they are able build coalitions of supporters on the issues they bring before the legislature.

Influence Among Colleagues

The major thrust of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of influence in state legislatures. In other chapters, I discuss African American women's colleagues' perceptions of their influence. And, while their colleagues' perceptions of their influence are significant, their self perceived influence is also key in gaining an understanding influence in these institutions. Therefore, here I examine what factors appear to contribute most to African American women feeling more influential among their colleagues. To do this, I analyze the frequency in which African American report that their colleagues seek their assistance.

African American women identify a number of issues as their top policy priorities. As previously discussed education, healthcare and healthcare reform, and economic development and employment issues are African American women's top policy priorities. Many women come to the legislature having had long careers working in these areas, so naturally they consider themselves masters of these issues. Their policy priorities also coincide with the areas in which they have cultivated significant expertise-- health care and health care reform, education, economic development and employment issues, and children's issues. Since African American women identify these areas as their most important policy priorities and the areas in which they have garnered the most expertise, the question becomes whether they are able to influence their colleagues on these issues? Do their colleagues routinely seek them out in recognition of their expertise on these issues?

In order to examine these questions, I asked a number of questions related to the frequency in which their colleagues ask for assistance on these issues. As much of the

literature suggests, legislators are inclined to look to others for voting cues and suggestions on legislative decision-making (Kingdon, 1973; Matthews and Stimson, 1970; Uslaner and Weber, 1977). And, legislators depend on a number of indicators to decide who to trust and depend on for information during the decision making process. Both institutional attributes and personal characteristics figure into legislator's decisions on who to look for information. Most often, the legislators they turn to are those who have established institutional respect because of their knowledge on the issues, abilities and achievements on the issues. Tables 3-11 and 3-12 provide the results of African American women's influence with their African American and white colleagues.

Leadership

It is clear that women in leadership feel slightly less sought after for their assistance. It appears that African American women in leadership do not feel that they are very influential among their colleagues, especially among other African Americans.[17]

More than half (57 percent) of African American women in leadership report African American men frequently seeking their assistance and 56 percent report receiving the same level of requests for their assistance from other African American women. Just less than half (47 percent) of their white women colleagues frequently ask for their assistance. Though they are indeed asked for their assistance, these requests do

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17. A negative relationship is maintained between being in leadership and being asked for assistance by all their colleagues and this negative relationship is statistically significant for African American women asking assistance(r=-.223;p<.10).

126

Table 3-11 African American Women's Influence Among Colleagues

	African American Women			African American Men			White Women			White Men		
	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent
Leadership												
Yes	3%	41%	56%	14%	30%	57%	8%	45%	47%	16%	32%	51%
No	-	24	76	7	32	61	-	42	58	7	48	45
Seniority												
0-5	-	36%	64%	14%	33%	52%	4%	48%	48%	18%	41%	41%
6-10	3%	29	68	9	38	53	3	42	55	9	47	44
11-	-	30	70	-	13	87	8	31	62	8	15	77
Bill Success												
None	-	28%	72%	12%	35%	53%	6%	56%	39%	18%	53%	29%
Low	-	67	33	23	39	39	7	71.	21	8	62	31
Medium	-	31	70	-	29	71	7	29	64	14	14	71
High	6%	6%	89	10	24	68	-	20	80	11	26	63
Money Committee												
Yes	6%	31%	63%	11%	11%	78%	5%	30%	65%	11%	21%	68%
No	-	33	67	10	37%	54	4	47	49	12	45	43
Region												
Non-South	3%	37%	61%	14%	33%	52%	5%	39%	57%	12%	36%	52%
South	-	23	77	4	22	74	4	46	50	8	44	50
Term Limited												
Yes	-	36%	64%	19%	29%	52%	9%	30%	61%	13%	35%	52%
No	2%	29	69	6	29	65	2	47	51	11	39	50%
Number of Women Serving												
Low	6%	39%	56%	14%	43%	43%	4%	44%	52%	18%	36%	46%
Medium	-	33	67	7	32	61	4	41	56	12	35	54
High	-	20	80	6	19	75	6	38	56	6	44	50

Table 3-12: African American Women's Legislative Activity and Influence Among Colleagues

	African American Women			African American Men			White Women			White Men		
	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent	Never	Sometimes	Frequent
Speak on Floor												
Never	-	50%	50%	-	25%	75%	13%	50%	38%	14%	57%	29%
Sometimes	2%	30	67	12%	33	55	4	40	56	12	35	53
Frequently	-	33	67	11	11	78	-	56	44	13	38	50
Discuss in Committee												
Never	4%	52%	44%	12%	56%	32%	4%	60%	36%	14%	59%	27%
Sometimes	-	21	79	9	16	76	4	33	63	11	28	61
Frequently												
Question Witnesses												
Never	3%	49%	49%	9%	49%	43%	3%	54%	43%	12%	49%	39%
Sometimes	-	14	86	9	13	78	6	30	64	12	30	58
Frequently												
Speak in Party Caucus												
Never	3%	37%	63%	16%	31%	53%	6%	42%	52%	13%	50%	37%
Sometimes	-	32	65	6%	29	65	3	41	56	12	27	62
Frequently												
Bargain with others												
Never	-	46%	54%	7%	52%	41%	10%	45%	45%	15%	48%	37%
Sometimes	3%	19	78	13	13	74	-	38	63	8	31	62
Frequently												
Interact with Leadership												
Never	4%	39%	58%	8%	46%	46%	8%	50%	42%	12%	44%	44%
Sometimes	-	29	72	10	20	71	2	38	60	10	38	33
Frequently												
Speak with Lobbyist												
Never	-	67%	33%	13%	47%	40%	13%	44%	44%	27%	33%	40%
Sometimes	-	19	79	8	23	69	2	40	58	8	39	53
Frequently												

128

not come to them as often as they do to African American women who do not hold leadership positions. In fact, fourteen percent of African American women in leadership positions report that African American men never seek their assistance. In contrasts, women who do not hold leadership positions report in higher percentages that they are frequently sought out for assistance by these colleagues. Three quarters of African American women (76 percent) not holding positions in leadership report other African American women frequently seeking their assistance, as do 61 percent of African American men, and 58 percent of white women.

In general, African American women in leadership are far more likely to be sought out for their assistance by white men. Half (51 percent) of African American women in leadership report that white men customarily look to them for assistance as compared to 45 percent of African American women outside of leadership. While this indicates that they hold more influence among white men in the legislature, they still might not hold as much influence as expected given that 16 percent of women in leadership have never been asked for such help by white men.

African women in leadership feel less valued by their colleagues, particularly by other African Americans and women. It is with these colleagues that they are most likely to share similar policy interests, yet they feel that their influence among these colleagues is limited. They report that their colleagues do not recognize their expertise on their priority issues, issues that they have proven their expertise. Women in leadership feel that they are devalued in the institution and they feel that their African American colleagues contribute most to devaluing process.

<u>Seniority</u>

Serving in the legislature over time positively impacts the influence African American women have among their colleagues. Being in the legislature longer appears to impact the influence African American women feel they have with their both African American and white men. Fully 87 percent of African American women serving in the legislature more than ten years feel that they have the ears of their African American male colleagues and are asked for their assistance often about issues in which they have carved their niche. More than three- quarters of these women (77 percent) also feel that they have this high level of influence with their white male colleagues.

While it is expected that women new to the legislature will feel that they have less influence among their colleagues, it is interesting to note that these women particularly feel their lack of influence with their male colleagues. Some women new to the legislature find that African American men (14 percent) and white men (18 percent) have never sought them out for assistance, but their influence among other women is more formidable even at this early stage of their legislative tenure. In fact, all of them feel that they have some influence among other women.

So, even the women who are newest to the legislature find that among other women their abilities are respected and sought after. African American women especially lean on each other for assistance regardless of tenure rankings. The most junior women report being asked for assistance on their priority issues by other African American women (64 percent) at similar rates as women who have been in the legislature significantly longer (70 percent).

<u>Legislative Activity</u>

Once African American women have proven themselves as legislatively successful in terms of the amount of legislation they are able to get through the institution, their colleagues appears to become attracted to their success and consequently they seek them out for their assistance. Not just being an outspoken advocate for these issues, but getting legislation passed appears to be the attraction for their colleagues. Indeed, 63 percent of African American women with the highest bill success rates report that white men frequently ask their assistance, as do 80 percent of white women.

African American women who have not been successful in getting legislation passed are still valued as influential colleagues among other African Americans. More than half (53 percent) of African American women who did not have any bill success report that African American men sought their assistance on the issues of importance to them, and 72 percent of African American women sought their advice. Women who have much lower bill success rates report a vastly different experience with their white colleagues; for example, less than a third (30 percent) of them report frequently being sought for advice by white men and 39 percent report that white women frequently seek their advice. Again, this suggests that African Americans lean on one another for advice regardless of the institutional roles they play. However, African American women feel that their influence among their white colleagues hinges on their performance on the traditional measures of legislative success. This also suggest that African American women may share issue priorities that differ from their white

colleagues which prompts them to work together more often disregarding institutional rules that usually govern legislator's interactions.

In addition to those who are successful in navigating legislation through the system, African American women feel that their colleagues also place a high value on their colleagues who they see taking an active part in the institution. Table 3-12 shows that African American women who are less active in the institution have far less interaction with their colleagues as compared to women who participate in traditional legislative behavior. Again, it appears that they feel that modeling traditional forms of political activity in the institution has the most impact on how they interact with their white colleagues. For example, 38 percent of African American women who report that they never speak out on the floor of their legislatures find that white women frequently seek them out for their assistance on their priority issues. Similarly, less than a third of white men (30 percent) look to them for needed assistance.

Committee Assignment

Serving on the committees that make important decisions regarding the state's budget is a position of influence in the legislature. Relationships between African American women and men appear to be most impacted by African American women serving on these committees that make decisions about their states' finances. African American women serving on these committees report that African American men (78 percent) are most likely to see them as reliable sources of information followed by white men (68 percent), white women (65 percent) and other African American women (63 percent).

Region and Influence

In southern states, African American women feel that they are most influential among other African Americans. In fact, a clear split appears in the data when looking at women serving in southern states. Women in these states feel that other African American women (77 percent) see them as sources of information allowing them to exert influence in these issues areas and the same is true for African American men (74 percent). Far fewer African American women in the south find that white women (50 percent) and men (48 percent) are likely to view them as knowledgeable legislators who are able to provide them with information during the decision making process. African American women in other parts of the country do not indicate such variances in influencing their colleagues (See Table 3-11).

Term Limited

In terms of their feelings about their own influence among their white male colleagues, African American women in states that have instituted term limits do not appear to feel very different from their African American women colleagues in non-term limited states. Roughly half of women in term limited states (52 percent) and non-term limited states (50 percent) feel that white male legislators frequently seek their advice. And, African American women in term limited states feel that they have more influence (61 percent) with white women as compared to African American women in other states (51 percent). In many regards, the effects of term limits have not been realized, in light of the many similarities that African American women in both term limited and non-term limited states share (See Table 3-11).

133

Number of African American Women and Influence

More African American women serving in the legislature appears to impact the type of relationship they have with other African Americans. State legislatures with many African American women are likely to have an organized Black Caucus. In that such a caucus would impact the interaction between African American men and women, it is of no surprise that the more African American women in the legislature the stronger the influence they report having among other African Americans. In legislatures with the highest numbers of African American women, these women find that they frequently exchange ideas with other African American women (80 percent) and men (75 percent) which of course, increases their influence in these legislators' decision making processes.

The number of women appears to have much less of an effect on their white colleagues. In legislatures with very few African American women, half (52 percent) of these African American women find that white women in their legislatures routinely seek them out for their assistance, as do 46 percent of their white male colleagues. This differs little from the interactions African American women serving in states where there are many of them serving in that 56 percent of them report influencing their white male colleagues and 50 percent report influence with white women.

African American Women's Self Perceived Influence

Again, an index variable was created to reflect the influence African American report among their colleagues according to the frequency in which they are asked for

134

assistance by legislators of each gender and race group.[18] Here, I also use regression analysis to discern which variables have the most explanatory value.

As Table 3-13 illustrates, gaining membership to the prestigious and powerful committees proves to be a strong indicator of who is influential. African American women serving on the powerful and prestigious money committees are many times more likely to feel that they are influential among their colleagues. Likewise, those who have enjoyed success in passing legislation are also likely to feel that they are asked by their colleagues for assistance giving the perception of having influence among them. Though the legislative context appears to matter least, African American women serving in legislatures with more African American women are also more likely to report feeling that they are influential among their colleagues.

In examining African American women's influence only among other African Americans, it appears that the number of African American women serving is the only factor that contributes to increasing their influence among other African Americans. While the relationships do not reach statistical significance, being in the leadership and serving in term limited states appears to be factors that could serve to decrease African American women's influence among other African Americans.

Having a high bill success rate is the only factor that increases African American women's influence with their white colleagues (See Table 3-14). African

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[18] Alpha score =0.70 which is slightly lower than the preferred 0.8. This is likely to be as a result of the vast differences in African American women's influence with other African American women as compared to the influence they feel they have with African American men, and white men and women.

135

Table 3-13 Variables Impacting African American Women's Influence Among Colleagues

	B	Exp (B)
Institutional Variables		
Leader	-.637 (.987)	.529
Seniority	.130 (.163)	1.139
Bill Success Ratio	.077** (.037)	1.080
Money Committee Assignment	2.533* (1.499)	12.586
Contextual Variables		
Southern State Legislature	-1.376 (1.175)	.253
Number of African American Women serving	3.011*** (1.110)	20.230
Term Limited State Legislature	.703 (1.437)	2.020
Constant	-6.523** (2.791)	

* p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01
Two-tailed test of significance

Table 3-14 Variables Impacting African American Women's Influence with African Americans and Whites

	African Americans		Whites	
	B	Exp (B)	B	Exp (B)
Institutional Variables				
Leader	-1.115 (.861)	.328	-946 (.659)	.388
Seniority	.112 (.127)	1.119	.116 (.076)	1.123
Bill Success Ratio	.023 (.019)	1.024	.039** (.017)	1.040
Money Committee Assignment	1.658 (1.150)	5.251	.280 (.739)	1.322
Contextual Variables				
Southern State Legislature	.784 (.925)	2.191	-538 (.753)	.584
Number of African American Women serving	1.867** (1.030)	6.469	.504 (.440)	1.655
Term Limited State Legislature	-1.049 (1.030)	.350	1.157 (.829)	3.181
Constant	-3.280* (1.747)		-2.234* (1.248)	

* $p<.10$; **$p<.05$; ***$p<.01$
Two-tailed test of significance

137

American women feel that the visibility that comes with introducing and passing legislation attracts the attention of their white colleagues. It appears that living in the south decreases the probability that African American women will feel influential among their white colleagues, though this factor does not reach statistical significance. The legislative context appears to matter least for African American women's influence among their white colleagues.

While it is difficult to discern a distinct pattern of influence across gender and racial groups, it appears that African Americans have the most confidence in African American women's expertise and are seeking them out for needed advice and assistance on these issues. Nevertheless, it appears that those women who have acquired the institutional attributes that are traditionally regarded as the attributes are those who feel that they are influential among their white colleagues. Interestingly, it appears that legislators use different criteria for deciding from whom to seek advice. Rather than seeking out the leaders or those with more seniority, some legislators are defining their own criteria that do not necessarily correspond with the institutional norms.

The legislative context matters most for African American women's influence among other African Americans. The number of African American women serving in the legislature, as well as, whether African American women are serving in a southern state legislature both have a significant impact on African American women feeling that they are influential among their African American male colleagues.

Conclusion

Though African American women have progressed on several measures of success in state legislatures, acquiring these attributes has not resulted in more inclusion

in the institution. The lack of inclusion expressed by African American women in today's legislature differs little from what we know about all women's experiences in state legislatures some 30 years ago in the 1970s. It is of concern that more recent studies of women in state legislatures suggests that women have shed their marginal status (C. Rosenthal, 1994); yet, according to my results, African American women still harbor quite strong feelings of marginality and exclusion. From examining African American women's feeling of incorporation into the legislature, it is even more clear that the "outsider on the inside" phenomena persists among African American women.

These feelings of exclusion impact African American women across the board, and those women who have been in the legislature longer and have been more legislatively active, participating in the workings of the institution are impacted more severely with these feelings of exclusion and marginality. The more African American women are engaged in the workings of the legislature, the more they appear to doubt their place in the institution. It could be that the issues African American women are pursuing are unpopular in their state legislatures, contributing an explanation for their marginality. But, legislatures are institutions of deliberation, so being an advocate for particular issues is not expected to result in marginalization. However, when legislators pursue issues not in keeping with the norm or take unpopular positions combined with having characteristics such as their gender and race that fall outside of the norm, then this coupling might naturally result in the type of marginality African American women are facing. Despite these feelings, African American women continue to engage in legislative work and they still seek to build coalitions and influence their colleagues on their signature legislative issues.

Most African American women assume a race first strategy in coalition building choosing to more actively engage in coalitions with other African Americans. Gender-based coalition building is less a consideration, though they are more likely to build alliances with other women than they are with white men. However, even these coalitions are beset with their own difficulties. In interviews with African American women office holders in the south, Marsha Darling (1998) found that the women interviewed considered their relationships with African American men and white women as two constraints on their legislative goals. They felt that African American men expected them to only be supporters of their political agenda without identifying an African American woman-centered agenda. And, because white women employed a white racist paternalistic attitude they too were considered an obstacle to African American women achieving their goals. For these reasons, African American women felt caught in the middle of conflicting loyalties-- African American men's loyalty to their own agenda, and white women's race based loyalty. These conflicting loyalties made coalition building difficult for African American women. The tensions that Darling captures are in keeping with my findings. Despite being caught between these groups' conflicting loyalties, African American women find engaging in coalitions with other African Americans and to a lesser degree white women to be the best alternatives. However, most do not do so to the exclusion of attempting to build coalitions with white men.

Likewise, when it comes to their signature issues they feel that they are able to exert some influence among their colleagues and they feel that they have more influence with other African Americans than they do with their white colleagues. Again,

mere interests in the same issues may explain this influence, but is also likely that it is also a function of shared legislative experiences.

Both institutional and contextual factors proved to impact their coalition building as well as the influence they have with their colleagues though not always in the expected directions. African American women feel that their formal position in the institution most impacts their interactions with the men in their legislatures. From African American women's perspective, their male colleagues are more fixated on their tenure. With more seniority, they are able to build more coalitions with their male colleagues and they are respected more as "knowledgeables", which increases the influence they have with these colleagues. African American women also feel that serving on prestigious committees impacts their coalition building and the influence they have with the men in their legislature as does being legislatively active. They also find that other women in the legislature are less bound by these prescribed indicators of influence, not looking to their seniority or other institutional characteristics to determine if they are credible sources of information. While having some institutional attributes works in their favor, African American women are adamant in their view that holding a leadership position does not necessarily result in more inclusion in the workings of the institution, nor does it mean that they are better able to form coalitions with their colleagues. In fact, African American women in leadership do not feel that they hold much influence with their colleagues, particularly other African American women.

The context in which African American women serve has a more varied impact on their coalition building and their influence among their colleagues. African American women in the south, for example, do more coalition building, but they feel

141

that they have considerably less influence among their white colleagues, feeling instead that only other African Americans recognize their knowledge and expertise. The number of African American women in the legislature has some interesting effects on their coalition building. For example, women serving in legislatures with fewer African American women reported less coalition building with their white colleagues than women in legislature with more African American women. Yet, their influence among their African American colleagues differs little from the influence they have in their white colleagues' decision making.

These findings give support for the argument that term limits are fostering a culture in which legislators tend to work in solitude as opposed to engaging their fellow legislators. African American women in term limited states report doing less coalition building than women in non-term limited states; in fact, they even report participating in fewer coalitions with other African American women than women in other states. Likewise, they are not presented with opportunities to influence their colleagues' decision making on their signature issues--even other African Americans-- in that they are sought out less often for their expertise when compared to women in non-term limited states.

African American women seem to continuously come up against the "rules of the game" for legislative institutions. In order to have influence across the board, they need to acquire the preferred institutional attributes particularly, seniority and prestigious committee assignments. While gaining seniority, acquiring the most prestigious committee assignments and heightening their visibility may result in the opportunity to participate in more coalitions and increase their influence among their

142

colleagues, they do not increase African American women's feelings of inclusion. In fact, acquiring these attributes exacerbates feelings of marginality, so these attributes come at a painstaking cost.

While this chapter focuses specifically on African American women's self perceived influence in the legislature, and whether certain institutional and contextual factors impact their legislative experiences, in the subsequent chapters, I focus on their colleagues' perceptions of their influence. The question remains whether their peers perceive them as marginal figures in the legislature or whether they are viewed as influential actors in the institution. And, while this chapter utilizes national survey data, the subsequent chapters rely on case studies of three state legislatures--Georgia, Maryland and Mississippi in order to focus more in-depth on the patterns of influence in the state legislature.

Chapter IV
Legislators' Perceptions of General and Issue Specific Influence

After examining African American women's self perceptions of influence, in this chapter, I focus on a different perspective of their legislative influence by exploring their reputations of influence among their colleagues. Using data from case studies of three state legislatures, I focus on how those who serve alongside African American women legislators perceive their influence. The findings substantiate much of what is commonly known about influence in institutions. In addition, the findings illustrate how gender and race norms impact the ways in which influence operates for some legislators.

As discussed in Chapter two, those who are influential in legislatures have commonly been identified according to the positions they hold within the institution (Bell and Price, 1975; Hamm, et.al., 1983; Meyer, 1980), their legislative activity (Matthews, 1959, 1960; Frantzich, 1979), and according to their reputations among their peers (Francis, 1962; Best, 1971; Haynie, 1994). In this chapter, I assess African American women's influence using a combination of these approaches. First, I determine whether African American women in the case study states hold the institutional attributes typically held by the influential. Secondly, I examine data from interviews with a cross section of legislators in the three legislatures to explore their perceptions of African American women's influence across the institution and in numerous policy areas that correspond with African American women's areas of expertise. Central to this analysis is an understanding of the explanatory power of gender and race, questioning to what extent a legislator's gender and race play a role in

determining their legislative influence. Key to this analysis is determining whether African American women who hold the attributes typically associated with influence also have reputations for being influential among their colleagues. In other words, do having these attributes, commonly considered as attributes of the influential, have the same benefits for African American women?

As discussed in Chapter two, I targeted all the African American women legislators for interviews and I identified a group of African American men, white women and white men with similar tenures as the African American women for interviews. The format of the semi-structured interviews followed the format of Francis (1962) and Best 's (1971) studies of legislative influence in which they asked respondents to identify the most influential in the institution. Further following their research design, I also asked legislators to identify the most influential legislators in particular policy areas. Legislators were asked to identify those who were influential in the policy areas in which African American women consider themselves experts-- education, healthcare and healthcare reform, economic development and employment, children's issues and women's issues. Legislators defined for themselves the legislation included in these policy areas. I did not instruct them to focus on specific pieces of legislation, but instead directed them to more generally consider their most influential colleagues in these policy areas, broadly defined. This process prompted legislators to look beyond the success or failures of one piece of legislation and encouraged them instead to consider a range of legislative initiatives that encompasses more than the actual introduction and passage of legislation. Most importantly, this research design enables me to explore not only whether African American women are influential or not,

but it also allows exploration of whether they are influential in areas that they have defined as significant to their legislative agendas.

Institutional Influence

In order to understand fully the reputations African American women have among their colleagues, it is useful to explore their institutional positions. Here, I first examine their institutional roles and attributes, focusing specifically on those that traditionally are likely to indicate a higher level of influence in the institution. As discussed in the previous chapter, several institutional variables are considered favorable attributes according to the preferences and norms of legislative institution. Just as these attributes were expected to impact African American women's perceptions of their legislative experiences in the previous chapter, I expect the same attributes to inform their colleagues' perceptions of their influence. Legislators who hold positions in the formal leadership, are assigned to prestigious committees, are senior members, and are legislatively active in regards to the number of bills they sponsor and pass are expected to have more influence among their colleagues.

Leadership

Holding a party leadership position not only indicates that African American women have ascended into positions of power in the institution, but also increases the likelihood that their colleagues regard them as influential members of the legislature. As discussed in previous chapters, because leaders typically introduce more legislation, are often majority party members, hold seniority and have developed expertise in policy areas, they are overwhelmingly regarded as influential legislators in studies of both

146

Congress and state legislatures (Matthews, 1960; Francis, 1962; Best, 1971; and Hamm, et.al., 1983).

Party leadership positions vary from one state legislature to another. In Georgia, there are 13 leadership positions in the Senate and 14 in the House. In addition to the Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, and the majority and minority leaders, which includes the caucus chairs, secretaries and whips, the leadership also includes the administrative floor leaders, who are responsible for handling the governor's legislation in the House and the Senate. The Maryland General Assembly also has an elaborate leadership structure, particularly in the House. In addition to the Speaker of the House, there are 26 leadership positions, including the majority and minority leaders and assistant leaders, the majority, minority and deputy whips of both parties. There are fewer leadership positions in the Senate-- a total of 11 leadership positions including: the President of the Senate and President Pro- Tempore, the majority and minority floor leaders, and the majority and minority whips are included as members of the leadership. The long-standing one party control of the Mississippi legislature has resulted in a less organized party structure (Feig, 1992). In both the House and the Senate, there are only two leaders. In the House, the Speaker and Speaker Pro-Tempore constitute the leadership, and in the Senate the lieutenant governor and president pro-tempore are the institution's only leaders. Table 4-1 illustrates the distribution of African American women legislators in these party leadership positions in each state compared to other legislators.

During the 2000 legislative session, African American women held positions in the party leadership structure in both Georgia and Maryland. However, they did not

Table 4-1 Distribution of Leadership Positions in the House and Senate

	Percentage of Leadership Positions in the House	Percentage of Leadership Positions in the Senate
Georgia		
African American Women	7% (1)	8% (1)
African American Men	7% (1)	8% (1)
White Women	7% (1)	- (0)
White Men	79% (11)	85% (11)
Total	100% (14)	100% (13)
Maryland		
African American Women	4% (1)	- (0)
African American Men	7% (2)	18% (2)
White Women	44% (12)	27% (3)
White Men	44% (12)	55% (6)
Total	100% (27)	100% (11)
Mississippi		
African American Women	- (0)	- (0)
African American Men	- (0)	- (0)
White Women	- (0)	- (0)
White Men	100% (2)	100% (2)
Total	100% (2)	100% (2)

148

Table 4-2 Distribution of Committee Chairs in the House and Senate

	Percentage of House Committee Chairs	Percentage of Senate Committee Chairs
Georgia		
African American Women	3% (1)	9% (2)
African American Men	12% (4)	9% (2)
White Women	6% (2)	4% (1)
White Men	76% (26)	78% (18)
Total	100% (33)	100% (23)
Maryland		
African American Women	- (0)	- (0)
African American Men	17% (1)	33% (2)
White Women	17% (1)	17% (1)
White Men	67% (4)	50% (3)
Total	100% (6)	100% (6)
Mississippi		
African American Women	3% (1)	6% (2)
African American Men	17% (6)	15% (5)
White Women	8% (3)	3% (1)
White Men	72% (26)	76% (26)
Total	100% (36)	100% (34)

serve in positions that are traditionally regarded as highly influential in either state. In Georgia, Connie Stokes served as the Assistant Administrative Floor Leader and carries the governor's legislation in the Senate. And, in the House, Lanett Stanley-Turner served as Secretary of the Majority Caucus.[1] African American women in Maryland also held leadership positions that were lower ranked positions in the party leadership structure. In the House, Joanne C. Benson served as the Deputy Majority Leader and African American women held no leadership positions in the Senate, which has a less elaborate party leadership structure.[2] African American women did not hold one of the few formal party leadership positions in the Mississippi legislature. In all three states, the leadership positions of African American women in these states are typical of the types of leadership positions held by African Americans in state legislatures across the country. The most powerful leadership positions such as the Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate or lieutenant governor elude African American lawmakers with few exceptions (King-Meadows and Schaller, 2000, 15). And, while African American lawmakers have experienced a difficult time in acquiring such positions, African

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1. In the Georgia House of Representatives, Henrietta Turnquest, an African American woman serves as an assistant administrative floor leader, however in the House, this position is not listed as a part of the leadership according to the House Public Information Office, and I have not included this position in the House as a leadership position in my analysis.

2. In the Maryland House of Delegates, an African American woman, Carolyn J.B. Howard serves as the Chair of the House Democratic Caucus, but this position is not included among the list of the body's officers therefore, I have not included this a leadership position.

American men hold the few senior party positions held by African Americans, with only a few exceptions[3].

Committee Chairs

Another source of power and influence is the position of committee chair. Legislators often regard committee leaders as influential in regard to not only the policy areas addressed by their committees, but their influence is transferable to other policy areas as well. They are as likely to be regarded by their colleagues as generally influential as they are to be perceived as influential in the areas addressed by their committees. The numbers of standing committees vary from state to state. During the 2000 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly, which is noted for its small number of standing committees, had a total of six committees in the House and the Senate, while Georgia with 33 committees in the House and 23 in the Senate and Mississippi with 34 standing committees in the House and 38 in the Senate both had substantially more standing committees. Table 4-2 illustrates the distribution of African American women committee chairs compared to their colleagues.

Though African American women's entry into the Mississippi legislature is more recent than African American women in Georgia and Maryland, African American women in Mississippi are making incredible strides in terms of moving into

3. The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) lists Lois Dewberry of Tennessee as holding the highest leadership posts of African American women legislators as the Speaker pro-tem in Tennessee's House of Representatives. Other African American women holding high level party leadership positions include Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter, the Minority Leader in the South Carolina House of Representatives, and Senator Rhine McLin of Ohio who holds the same position in

151

positions of power given the relatively short period of time in which they have been in office. African American women chaired committees in both the House and the Senate over the last ten years, but these have generally been second tier committees that lack the prestige and power associated with the top committees in either chamber.[4]

However, during the 2000 legislative session, significant changes occurred in regards to African American women's leadership in Mississippi. Alice Harden, the first African American woman elected to the Senate was selected to chair a major committee, the Education Committee. Her selection as chair marks the first time that an African American heads a major standing committee in the Senate, and her selection had a significant impact on the status of women's leadership in the Senate given the small numbers of women who have held positions as chairs in the Senate. Her selection is also significant for African American legislators in that it increased their overall legislative influence. After Lieutenant Governor, Amy Tuck announced the 2000, committee assignments, African American lawmaker, David Jordan commented on the significance of Harden's appointment, "It's a real coup. To chair the Education

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Ohio. A list of African American legislators in leadership positions is included in the 1999-2000 *Directory of State Legislators* published by NBCSL.

4. In Mississippi, committee chairs are appointed for a four-year legislative term, and it is commonplace for seasoned legislators to chair a number of powerful committees over their careers. However, in Georgia and Maryland, committee chairs serve in their positions until the presiding officer removes them from office or they are no longer elected to the body. This practice creates in Mississippi a cadre of legislators who have experience in a number of legislative policy areas, while in Maryland and Georgia those with specialization in a particular policy area are more limited, which results in the chairs of committees having more power over these policy areas. Committee chairs are selected in all three legislatures based on a combination of seniority and a host of other factors. Therefore, there is no institutional norm dictating that seniority guarantees a position as committee chair.

Committee is really, in my opinion, a fine start in the right direction. To choose an African American who has been a teacher, who's been on the committee for years, has been in the Senate for a dozen years, is a significant choice" (Elliott, J., January 13, 2000).

In the Mississippi House of Representatives, an African American woman, Frances Fredricks served as the vice-chair of one of the top committees-- Public Health and Welfare. Though Fredricks' position as vice-chair of a major committee is not a first for an African American woman, her appointment contributed to the 2000, legislative session being considered particularly good for African Americans and women. In addition to African American women, Speaker, Tim Ford chose six African American legislators to chair committees and seven as vice chairs, which represented a slight increase in the number of chairs held by African Americans. Likewise, women made some gains, increasing the number of committees chaired by women. Frances Fredricks reveled in the fact that these legislators would be in better institutional positions during the next four years. Remarking on their appointments, she points out, "He [the Speaker] didn't just give us committees that never meet" (Ammerman, Jan. 11, 2000).

African American women in Georgia have a longer history of holding committee leadership positions. In 1982, the first African American women were appointed as chairs of standing committees. Betty Clark became the chair of the Human Relations and Aging Committee followed by Grace Hamilton who was appointed to chair the House Congressional and Legislative Reapportionment Committee. Though Clark was the first African American woman to chair a standing committee, the Human

153

Relations and Aging Committee was known to handle very few bills and most of its bills were of little consequence to the overall legislative agenda (Holmes, 2000, 778). Therefore, the appointment of Georganna Sinkfield in 1992, as Chair of the Children and Youth Committee marked a significant milestone for African American women's leadership in Georgia. Sinkfield's leadership came as a result of Speaker Murphy's expansion of the House's committee structure. Murphy created this committee in response to the governor's creation of the Georgia Department of Children and Youth. At the time of this appointment, Sinkfield had served 10 years in the House and was serving as chair of the Black Caucus (Walston, December 19,1992). In 1995, another African American woman was appointed to chair a committee, this time in the Senate, Nadine Thomas was appointed chair of the State and Local Government Operation Committee that year. And, in 2000, Connie Stokes became the first African American woman to chair a major committee in the Senate, chairing the Health and Human Services Committee and Nadine Thomas was appointed as vice chair of that committee.

While there are several African American women with the seniority to be appointed to hold one of the prized committee chair positions in the Maryland General Assembly, none have yet ascended to one of these coveted positions. Some African American women in Maryland feel slighted, as the African American woman below describes, by the fact that white women with their same level of seniority are continuously promoted into leadership, while African American women have not been appointed to leadership positions.

> We don't move up the leadership chain as white women
> do. The priority is given to white women. When they

154

choose a woman for a leadership position-- be sure that
their "woman" is going to be a *white* woman.

Though such sentiments were expressed, an African American woman, Delegate Hattie

Harrison chairs the Rules Committee in the House. Though this is an instance of an

African American woman holding a committee chair position, this committee is not

commonly considered among one of Maryland's top standing committees and has

limited functions. In other states, this committee sets the legislative calendar, but it

does not serve that function in Maryland. The committee's limited function also limits

Harrison's prestige as its chair.

The major committees in Maryland are further divided into subcommittees,

which have proven to be a location of African American women's leadership. Joanne

Benson, chairs the State Government/Procurement Subcommittee under Commerce and

Government Matters Committee in the House and Carolyn J.B. Howard chairs the

Transportation Subcommittee in the House Ways and Means Committee. So, again

while African American women are included in the leadership positions under the

committee system, often they are not included in the leadership ranks of the top

committees or in the top leadership positions of their committees. Several African

American women recognized the lack of prestige associated with their positions in their

legislature. One African American woman describes her position as a committee chair

and the little power associated with the position concluding,

> You can tell where this committee falls in the larger
> scheme of things. You can look at this office space and
> know the level of my committee's prestige. And, the
> bottom line is we get no bills. There are seldom bills
> coming my way, and we do not meet. So, this position
> affords me very little influence.

155

Committee Assignment

Key committees such as those dealing with appropriations, rules, and judiciary issues are often considered the most prized among legislators and likewise bestow the most influence (Francis, 1962; Rosenthal, 1983; and Weissert, 1991). However, these committees' prestige varies by state. For example, the Rules Committee in Georgia is one of the most sought after committees in the House because of its control over the legislature's daily calendar (Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, 1997; Holmes, 2000). This committee determines a bill's life in that the committee sets the legislative calendar, deciding which bills will be called on the floor each day. In contrast, the Rules Committee in the Maryland legislature is far less influential meeting infrequently and handling few bills. In light of these differences, for this analysis, I focus specifically on the most prestigious committees as sources of influence, those committees associated with the states' finances, and I expect that legislators will regard those serving on these most prized committees as more influential in the institution. Unlike members of policy committees, their influence is most likely to extend across multiple policy areas. Table 4-3, shows that African American women are represented on these committees at very different levels in each state.

In Georgia, three of the five African American women in the Senate serve on the 31-member Senate Appropriations Committee. However, in the House, African American women's presence is much less pronounced in that only one African American woman serves on the 69-member Appropriations Committee and likewise only one African American woman serves on the 18- member Ways and Means Committee.

Table 4-3 Distribution of Prestigious Committee Assignments in the House and Senate

	Percentage of Members in the House	Percentage of Members in the Senate
Georgia		
African American Women	2% (2)	10% (3)
African American Men	8% (7)	13% (4)
White Women	13% (11)	7% (2)
White Men	76% (64)	71% (22)
Total	100% (84)	100% (31)
Maryland		
African American Women	8% (4)	8% (2)
African American Men	16% (8)	12% (3)
White Women	(29% (15)	12% (3)
White Men	47% (24)	68% (17)
Total	100% (51)	100% (25)
Mississippi		
African American Women	6% (4)	4% (2)
African American Men	23% (15)	13% (7)
White Women	5% (3)	8% (4)
White Men	67% (44)	73% (38)
Total	100% (66)	100% (52)

In contrast, African American women in Maryland are well represented on the committees holding the state's purse strings. One of the three African American women in the Senate holds membership on the 14-member Budget and Taxation Committee and one of the African American women also holds one of the institution's most coveted positions as a member of the Capital Budget Subcommittee, which is responsible for the final approval of the state's budget. In the House, two African American women serve on both the 28-member Appropriations Committee and the 23-member Ways and Means Committee. One of the two African American women, serving on the Appropriations also serves on the Capital Budget Subcommittee in the House. It is interesting to note that both women serving on the House Appropriations Committee are in their first terms, placing them in a position to acquire great influence as their seniority increases.

In the Mississippi Senate, both African American women serve on a money committee, one of the two serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the other serves on the Senate Finance Committee. In the House, half of the African American women legislators hold assignments on one of the two money committees-- one serving on Appropriations Committee and the remaining three hold positions on the Ways and Means Committee. Any representation by African Americans on these committees in Mississippi is the direct result of a contentious battle waged by the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus. For many years, African Americans charged that the Speaker of the House systematically excluded them from the most prestigious money committees in the House because he feared them and considered them intemperate tax and spend Democrats (Orey, 2000, 803). Their battle for inclusion on these important

committees led to a revolt against Speaker of the House, Buddie Newman in 1987, as African American legislators joined discontented white legislators to curtail the powers of the Speaker (Coleman, 1993, 89; Feig, 1992,123). As a result, committee assignments were made taking into account both legislators' preferences, and their seniority in their congressional district (Feig, 1992, 123).

<u>Seniority</u>

The longer a legislator's tenure, the more likely the legislator is to be revered by their colleagues for their experience. Legislators who have been in the institution longer are likely to have developed specialized strategies for accomplishing their legislative goals. They are also more likely to be electorally secure, thereby affording them more opportunities to be active in the institution, contributing to their influence (Frantzich, 1979; Weissert, 1991). Legislators in all three states suggest that in order to have a real presence in the legislature, one had to gain seniority or "do the time" as one legislator remarked. Legislators in all three states agreed that the threshold after which a legislator is thought to have, "put in ample time" was usually three or more terms which in these states translate into 12 or more years. Interestingly, some African American women with the most seniority, meeting or approaching this threshold did not feel that they would continue to run for office much longer, expressing that they would like to do things outside of the legislature.

African American women are relative new comers to the legislature when compared to their colleagues. Even with the influx of African Americans into the legislature in the early 1970s following the passage and implementation of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, African American women did not enter the legislature in

considerable numbers. In many ways, African American women's lack of seniority explains much of their institutional position, however they are gaining seniority.

African American women in Maryland have come into the legislature at very different points. African American women in Maryland often discuss themselves in terms of first, second and third generations of African American women, in reference to their tenure in the legislature. In 1974, Hattie Harrison was elected to the Maryland General Assembly and has the longest tenure of the African American women currently serving. African American women consider Harrison, along with Ruth Kirk, elected in 1982 as the first generation of African American women in the statehouse. During the 2000 session, more than half of Maryland's African American women were into at least their third term in office. The number of African American women elected to the General Assembly has steadily increased since the '70s, and in the 2000 legislative session, five women, who were elected in 1998, were midway through their first legislative term constituting the third generation.

In Georgia, 1992, was a banner year for African American women legislators. In that year, the number of African American women doubled in Georgia. Six African American women joined the five African American women already in the legislature. The political environment of that election year commonly referred to as the "Year of the Woman" in American politics because of the significant increase in women entering public office. Women are considered to have sought election as a response to the treatment of Anita Hill before the all male Senate Judiciary Committee during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, and this might also be partially responsible for the increase in the number of African American women who entered the Georgia

160

legislature in 1992. In addition to the political environment encouraging women to run for public office, reapportionment following the 1990 Census increased the number of districts in which African Americans could win, which is also likely to have contributed to the number of African American women entering the legislature in 1992 (Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, 1997, 174).

In Mississippi, reapportionment in the 1980s dramatically increased the number of African Americans elected to the state legislature. And under this reapportionment cycle, the legislature's doors opened to the first African American women in both the House and the Senate. The first African American woman elected to the Mississippi legislature, Alyce Clarke, was elected in 1986 to the House of Representatives. Two years later in 1988, the first African American woman, Alice Harden was elected to the State Senate. Both women remain members of the legislature. While these women have served numerous terms, they were elected to the legislature significantly later than their African American male colleagues were. The first African American man since reconstruction, Robert Clark, was first elected to the legislature in 1967, (Coleman, 1993) and the electoral gains made by African American politicians in subsequent elections were made by men until the election of Clarke nearly 20 years later.

Legislative Activity: Bill Introduction and Success Rate

Legislators who are legislatively active in terms of sponsoring bills and having their bills signed into law are more visible in their legislative chamber, which is likely to contribute to their legislative influence. The heightened visibility that comes with introducing bills is quite attractive to most legislators, particularly new legislators attempting to acquire notoriety (Weissert, 1991). Those who are able to negotiate

161

legislation through the labyrinth of the lawmaking process are expected to gain the respect of their fellow legislators and be regarded as legislatively influential. Given the disparities in seniority, between African American women and other legislators, in evaluating African American women's legislative activity, I focus on a comparative sample of legislators with tenures similar to African American women's tenure. Using the sample of legislators, with similar tenures as the African American women serving in the legislature, I compare their legislative activity to legislators with similar tenures. Table 4-4 compares the means of the number of bills introduced, the number of bills passed, and the bill success rate for African American women and the comparative sample of their colleagues in each state.

In Mississippi, African American women, on average, introduce more bills than their legislative counterparts. However, such is not the case for the number of their bills that become law or their overall success rate, which I compute by dividing the total number of bills a legislator introduced by the number of bills that passed. African American women rank below white men and women in terms of their legislative success rates. Though they extend the efforts to introduce legislation, which speaks to their belief in the process, they do not get the same results from their efforts when compared to white legislators in that their bills are not being enacted into law.

African American women in Georgia differ from women in Mississippi, in that they introduce far fewer bills than other legislators. And, unlike white legislators in Mississippi who introduce fewer bills, yet enjoy a higher rate of legislative success, African American women in Georgia have a lower legislative success rate than their white colleagues. In fact, on average white men pass more than twice as many bills as

162

Table 4-4 Distribution of Bills Introduced and Passed by Legislators in the Sample

	Number of Bills Introduced	Number of Bills Passed	Bill Success Ratio
Georgia			
African American Women	6.50	1.83	28.01
African American Men	7.38	2.38	28.39
White Women	10.36	3.57	32.88
White Men	12.06	4.89	37.84
Maryland			
African American Women	92.62	24.08	25.73
African American Men	78.33	19.39	24.25
White Women	74.50	21.68	28.12
White Men	58.40	16.65	28.54
Mississippi			
African American Women	53.78	9.1	17.23
African American Men	52.24	5.88	11.17
White Women	41.00	9.50	24.36
White Men	47.14	9.07	20.99

African American women, a difference that is statistically significant (p=. 010; p<. 01, two tailed test). Becoming discouraged by the prospective fate of their legislation, many African American women in Georgia opt not to engage in this legislative activity, which likely impacts their influence in the institution.

Legislators in Maryland across the board introduce considerably more bills than legislators in the two other states. And, on average African American women in Maryland introduce more legislation than their colleagues. The difference between the number of bills African American women introduce and the number that white women introduce is statistically significant (p=. 034; p<. 05, two tailed test) as is the case with white men (p=. 001; p<. 001, two tailed test). In terms of bill success rates, while African American women are slightly less likely to get their bills passed, the differences in bill success rates between African American women and other legislators, however is not statistically significant.

Because African American women are actively introducing legislation in Mississippi and Maryland such that they surpass their colleagues, I expect that their legislative activity has afforded them not only notoriety, but also some real influence, especially in the areas in which they consider themselves experts.

African American women do hold some of the characteristics that are commonly associated with influentials in state legislatures, and while their positions may differ across the states, they tend to hold the same types of positions in the legislature. For example, African American women in all three states have not moved into their legislatures' top leadership positions. African American women who hold party leadership positions tend to hold low ranking party leadership positions, and it is

164

unclear whether these positions are stepping-stones to higher leadership positions in the party structure. It could be argued that their ranking in the party leadership structure is a result of their shorter tenures in the legislature. Overall, African American women have been more successful in garnering committee leadership positions, but again, they have not been appointed to chair the more powerful committees, for the most part. And, while they are not chairing these powerful committees, they are assigned to serve on these committees. With the exception of the Appropriations Committee in the Georgia House of Representatives, which only has one African American women appointed to that committee, African American women are working on the committees that make the funding decisions for their states. Despite their limited formal institutional positions in the legislature, African American women in Maryland and Mississippi introduce more legislation than their counterparts. And though they introduce more legislation than their counterparts with similar tenures, they are not as successful in getting their legislation passed.

Each of these factors is expected to contribute to the prospects of African American women being regarded by their peers as influential legislators. Taken together, these factors are expected to enhance the prospects that their colleagues will consider them to be influential members of the legislature. For African American women holding the attributes discussed, it is a question of whether their gender and race mediate the influence that they are expected to have as a result of their position in the institution. In the following sections, I examine this prospect by examining both general influence and issue-specific influence in each legislature.

Legislators Define Influence

Before delving into whether African American women are regarded as influential, it is instructive to explore the criteria legislators use to evaluate their colleagues' influence in the legislature. Legislators define influence in much the same terms as legislative scholars. In all three states, legislators share similar descriptions of legislative influence. Therefore, it appears that the major tenants of legislative influence are not institution-specific though the interviews indicate that the amount of influence each tenant carries appears to vary according to the institution, and reflects the institutions' preferences. The legislators' definitions can be classified into three categories -- character traits, legislative activity, and institutional position based definitions. Many legislators' definitions cross these categories suggesting that there are multiple avenues to influence in the legislature, and that they are not easily captured in a typology.

Primarily, legislators look to their colleagues' character as a means of identifying those who are influential. Legislators' reputations matter and are a significant contributor to their influence in the legislature. While their reputations do not represent actual power, they represent the potential to persuade and influence others. In any group, there are individuals who are respected based on their "personal qualities that transcend any given issue and make their opinion more convincing"(Gamson, 1966) rather than any particular expertise they bring to the issue. In the interviews, legislators praised trustworthiness, honesty, respect, and most importantly being true to one's word as characteristics that would boast a legislator's influence. Time and again, legislators simply stated that "your word is your bond" or "without your word you are nothing".

166

Having the respect of one's colleagues became one of the most frequently mentioned attributes that denote a legislator as influential, and this attribute appears to form the basis for institutional advancement. One Mississippi legislator put it simple in saying, "When you go to that podium, if they don't trust you, you're going to have problems. But most of the time, if they trust you, your ability and your sincerity, your legislation won't have any problems." Another member of Maryland's leadership attests,

> Before you get that position of power, you have got to be respected. You have to be someone who is perceived as honest and fair. If you are not trusted by your colleagues, and have not established a reputation for keeping your word, then you are just not going to attain any position of power. If the Speaker appoints a committee chairman who does not have the respect or trust of that membership, then the Speaker puts his position in jeopardy with such an appointment, because the membership, of course, would be very upset about that appointment. Respect and trust, first and foremost is important to moving into influential positions.

In his assessment, influence is equated with having earned the respect of fellow legislators. Earning this respect and subsequently influence is a precursor to achieving other legislative goals as the following legislator explains,

> Influence is being respected. Some equate influence with power, and some may equate it with the ability to get bills through, but I equate influence with respect. As long as people respect you I think you can have a greater influence, not only on your own legislation but also on the way people make most of their decisions.

For some legislators, being very knowledgeable on an issue is the very cornerstone of being influential. Legislators discussed how they depend on the expertise of their colleagues on many of the issues before the legislature, especially in

light of the limited amount of staff they have available to do the research on the impact of bills before the legislature.

> There are people, who really know their subject matter and get along well with a lot of folks, so that when they talk, people pay attention to them. I think that becomes very important here in Annapolis, where you have limited staff.

Being knowledgeable on an issue even sets apart those who have acquired institutional positions of power in the institution. Legislators in all three states share the sentiment of this Maryland legislator who finds that he places more weight on the words of one committee chair who he sees as very knowledgeable on the issues that she brings before the legislature. As he concludes,

> Other committee chairmen are obviously influential people but one is highly influential because she knows her subject so well. She is well respected for her knowledge of some very difficult issues. She can get up there and she can discuss those issues. She can explain those issues in a way that people can understand them and generally support them.

While bringing expertise on an issue adds credibility to those already afforded a position in the formal leadership, knowledge of an issue is the only resource some legislators have access to in the legislature. A Georgia legislator makes the point that for those in the minority party, for example, knowing an issue thoroughly is the only way they can exert any influence over issues that come before the legislature. As he concludes, "Those who are working on issues and are outside of the leadership must rely on knowledge, hard work, and camaraderie."

In addition to these character traits, legislators consider those with institutional positions as having influence in the legislature. Legislators consider those who are in

leadership positions as having the influence necessary to accomplish things in the legislature. As one legislator in Georgia admits, "I guess we are just disciplined to follow the leadership," she remarked after realizing that she only considers those in top leadership as influential in the statehouse.

One legislator, who asserts that influence is derived from institutional positions, further describes influence as a manifestation of the flow of power ultimately controlled by the top leaders. He concludes that the flow of power is from the top down rather than the bottom up, in that the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, bestow power to other members of the leadership team. He surmises that, the influence of members of the leadership team is really the influence of the Speaker and President of the Senate because they have appointed the other members of the leadership, rather than their power evolving from another source, such as the general body. Therefore, the power of institutional position power is concentrated in the hands of only a very few legislators. He further explains,

> Power is derived from the presiding officers-the Speaker
> of the House and the President of the Senate, and they
> impart power to the standing committee chairmen. You
> work within the parameters that they set. So, the center of
> power is really the presiding officers and it spins off from
> there.

Aside from a formal leadership position, seniority was another institutional attribute that defined influence according to legislators. Most junior legislators serving in their first terms cited the significance of tenure in their assessments of influence. As one African American woman describes,

> The longer you are here the more it matters. Serving in
> the legislature is like baptism by fire, and if you have

longevity, people think, 'She must know something.'
Tenure, of all things matters most.

Finally, legislators define influence in terms of one's legislative activity. Those who are successful in obtaining their legislative goals are considered by their peers to be influential. Success in passing legislation, success in bargaining for votes, and the ability to effectively block legislation that is not deemed profitable to their communities are all a part of one being legislatively active. These definitions reflect Frantzich's argument that "power is not identifiable until it is manifested in situations where one congressman gets his colleagues to do something they would not otherwise do"(1979, 411). Many legislators simply define influence in terms of the ability to "get things done" or the ability to deliver goods and services to their constituents. And, most importantly those who consider influence in terms of impacting legislative decisions specifically consider those who were able to get money allocated to their communities as the most influential in the legislature. Legislators were clear that the way to achieve such goals was through a willingness to build coalitions and knowing when to bargain for votes. According to one legislator, "I think in this business, who can garner the most votes and put the most coalitions together on a particular issue determines who is influential." Further, legislators emphasized that just the ability to discern on which colleagues you could depend on for votes made them influential in the process. According to one Maryland legislator,

> It's all about being able to count votes. You have to have
> enough votes to get your stuff passed. I think those
> members who are influential are those who know how to
> count votes and are able to build coalitions across party
> lines in order to get their votes through. They are able to

170

bargain well for votes, which means they make laws, and
that makes them influential.

Having influence, according to some legislators, was a reflection of how well

they understand the exchange value of their votes and how well they could bargain for

votes. Many legislators, defining influence in terms of the ability to get legislation

passed, also understood that their votes on their colleagues' legislation was a

commodity that could be used to influence legislation that is important to them.

Therefore, influence was defined in terms of not only their willingness to bargain for or

trade votes, but also their abilities to get others to do the same. One African American

Democrat in the Maryland legislature relies heavily on this transactional style of

influence and shares his approach.

> Because I do not vote in a traditionally democratic way, I
> am kind of a wildcard, which is very good. I have even
> voted with the Republicans. When they come to me to try
> to get a particular vote, I can go for something that I need
> done whether it's an actual bill or whether its something
> for my district that would really help my constituents. I
> am always ready and in the position to bargain and that is
> what influence is all about.

Another legislator finds that, once she learned how to not only identify those

colleagues who would vote for her bills, but also how to persuade others to go along

with her legislation who would not have otherwise, she was successful in getting her

bills through the legislature. And, for her, this is what it means to be influential in the

legislature. As she describes,

> I learned how to count votes. You have to learn about
> people to know what you are likely to get out of them.
> How do they think? What are they going to act like, even
> if they do believe you? Or can you sway them a little bit?
> If you say I specialize in anything, it's knowing what

171

people would in fact vote for. That's what I would like to think that I specialize in.

While most subscribing to the decision-making approach offer sentiments similar to the Maryland legislator, others recognize the influence associated with the ability to block legislation as well. Another considers influence as being able to affect good legislation and block legislation that is not so good. In her words, "To me influence and effectiveness means being able to get through the bills that I think are good public policy and defeat the bills I think are bad public policy regardless of the sponsor."

African American women's definitions of influence showed few differences from their colleagues' definitions; however, there was more agreement among African American women on their definitions of influence. Most African American women considered delivering services to their constituents as a major part of wielding influence. For example, one African American woman who included constituency service in her definition of influence even questioned the importance of influence within the institution,

> What is the use of having influence just in this place? For me, influence is about being able to change things for the people back home. It is about using the clout that I have as a legislator to open doors that will not open for my constituents. Whether or not these people [other legislators] consider me to be influential matters very little, but if my constituents benefit from any influence that I carry, then that's important.

One African American woman in Mississippi grew frustrated over even the subject of influence in that she felt that a pre-occupation with gaining power within the legislature was a factor stifling Mississippi legislators and negatively impacting their policy decisions. She laments,

172

> Mississippi is at the bottom for a reason. The people
> leading this state are empty of ideas and void of any
> vision. That is the reason why we are fiftieth in every
> category imaginable that's worth counting. So, when you
> think about influence, influential in what respect? They
> [legislators] are influential within this body, but then to
> achieve what? We're not achieving anything for the
> citizens of this state. If we were, we would not be fiftieth
> on every indicator.

Beyond a general rejection of acquiring power within the legislature, African American women are also less likely to regard holding leadership positions as the epitome of influence, subscribing to alternative definitions of influence that included not only constituency service, but also stopping what they considered to be bad legislation. This attitude reflects their values about the roles of legislators. As is the case for many women legislators, constituency service often takes precedent over more institutional roles such as introducing legislation and advancing in the legislative leadership structure (Thomas, 1994).

Reputed Influence

Legislators' definitions of influence mirrored those of legislative scholars. However, do other factors come to bear on a legislator's influence that are not captured in these definitions of legislative influence? Legislative scholars, while differing in approach come to the conclusion that certain institutional attributes contribute more to a legislator's influence than others do. The legislators interviewed did not directly indicate that gender and race are factors that add to or subtract from one's influence in the institution, but are these indeed factors that they consider in their evaluations of one another's influence? While legislators did not indicate that being a member of a particular gender and racial group factors into their definitions of influence, according

173

to my findings they appear to impact legislators' considerations of who is and who is not influential in the legislature. In this section, I further examine the interviews to determine the extent to which gender and race play a role in legislators' considerations of the influential in the institution. I do this by examining two measures of influence-- general influence and policy specific influence.

While I suggest that gender and race are factors that impact legislative influence, I am not the first to consider an expansion of the commonly held conclusions regarding legislative influence. Scholars have identified other variances affecting legislative influence, for example, majority-minority party status. Meyer asserts that minority party members need to not only be experts in particular issue areas, but they also need to have positions in the formal leadership structure in order to be influential. In contrast, she asserts that members of the majority party are less in need of these attributes and can rely more on seniority and social background characteristics to positively impact their status in the institution (Meyer, 1980). These findings confirm that not all legislators are held to the same standards for garnering influence in the institution.

Kerry Haynie (1994) focuses specifically on African American legislators' perceived effectiveness in the North Carolina legislature during four legislative sessions, questioning whether race is a variable explaining legislative influence. Relying on legislators, lobbyists, and journalists' perceptions, he finds that they consistently ranked African Americans legislators lower than their legislative counterparts, regardless of their membership on prestigious committees, seniority, profession outside of the legislature, or leadership position. His findings are

compelling, and lead to the question I raise, which is "Does taking into consideration the legislator's gender and race further impact their legislative influence?"

Haynie's effectiveness rating is based on evaluating legislators' effectiveness along only one trajectory. He did not consider African American legislators' effectiveness in specific policy areas, which might have affected his conclusions. While he establishes that African American legislators have different policy priorities than their colleagues, he does not examine whether their colleagues perceive them as effective in the policy areas he termed "black interests" areas. Differing from Haynie's approach, I focus specifically on the areas in which African American women consider themselves to be experts, in addition to focusing on African American women's general influence in the institution. Therefore, I expect that African American women will have some influence and will not be completely excluded from holding reputations of influence among their colleagues, as the African American legislators in Haynie's study.

Francis (1962) and Best (1971) both resolve that there are multiple levels of influence in state legislatures. Legislators can essentially be either influential in a specific policy area or they can wield influence across the institution. While they reach very different conclusions, both scholars suggest that a relationship exists between general influence and issue specific influence. In fact, Best and Francis arrive at opposite conclusions as to the relationship between general influence and area influence. In Francis' study of the Indiana Senate, he finds that those who were regarded by their peers as generally influential were also considered influential in a number of policy areas. He concludes that area influence precedes general influence

175

(Francis, 1962). Yet, Best comes to an opposing conclusion, finding that those influential in specific policy areas were much less likely to be perceived also as generally influential. Instead, those who were generally influential were much more likely to be regarded as influential in specific policy areas. Hence, Best concludes that a legislator's influence goes in one direction from impacting the policy agenda across issue areas to impacting policy in specific areas (Best, 1971). His conclusions support the argument that general influence is a more favorable commodity because it can be transferred to specific policy areas, but influence in a specific policy area does not necessarily translate into influence across issue areas.

Being effective in a specific policy area is the equivalent of providing technical competence which is quite different from being generally effective across policy areas, which I argue, is more likely to result in genuine institutional power. African American women are more likely to be regarded as capable of providing technical expertise in policy areas in which they have had some prior experience. I expect that their technical competence does not translate into their being regarded as influential across policy areas, which is also more likely to translate into genuine institutional power.

Clearly, there is a distinction between being influential throughout the legislature and being influential only in specific policy areas. I expect that African American women are less likely to hold the type of power that will prompt their colleagues to regard them as influential in the process or across the breadth of the institution. Instead, I expect that they will exert some influence in policy areas that are of especial interests to them. Garnering the type of power that would make them revered throughout the institution is less likely for women in the legislature. A woman

176

legislator interviewed in a 1991, study by Blair and Stanley points to the difference between being generally influential and having influence in specific policy areas. In terms of her own legislative effectiveness, she asserts "It's a philosophy of issue versus process; being effective in the process as opposed to being effective on an issue. Now I consider myself effective on the issues, on my issues, but I don't consider myself totally effective in the process." In this study, observers of the Arizona and Texas legislatures also asserted that women legislators had not yet become influential to the extent that their influence had spread beyond narrowly defined issues. I expect that the same will be true for African American women in this study (Blair and Stanley, 1991).

General Influence

Just as Best concluded in the 1960s, general influence continues to be concentrated in the hands of only a few members of the legislature. It is also the case that those considered generally influential were also perceived as influential in specific policy areas, but not vice versa. Those legislators, who were perceived as influentials in specific policy areas were less likely to be considered generally influential, which also mirrors Best's conclusions.

The few legislators regarded as generally influential, with influence across policy areas, held formal leadership positions for the most part. A Maryland legislator offers a summation of those who are considered generally influence that applies to all three states' legislatures. He conveys,

> Of the 141 members in House of Delegates less than 10
> percent are truly influential. Those 10 percent consist
> primarily of leadership, standing committee chairs, the
> Speaker, the majority leader, the Speaker pro-tem, and

some committee chairs. Those are the only ones who
have the real influence over the macro agenda.

Whether legislators agreed or disagreed with the policy positions of certain members,

they nevertheless acknowledged their influence in the institution. One legislator finds

that the leadership's desires are fulfilled no matter what. He contends, "If leadership

decides that something is going to be done, one way or another it happens. That's the

way it normally works." What makes this highly problematic is that this concentration

of power and influence is not reflective of the legislatures' diversity. Though some

African American men have gained entry into these circles of influence, the absence of

women from these power circles is keenly visible.

The Upper Tier of Influence: Formal Institutional Leaders

Holding formal leadership positions are the key to being regarded as generally

influential in all three legislatures, though the positions conferring influence differ in

each state legislature. In Maryland, all the members considered the Speaker of the

House, President of the Senate and the majority leaders to be influential across policy

areas. Maryland legislators did not regard other party leaders as generally influential.

According to one Maryland legislator,

> Influence is not being a subcommittee chair or it's not
> being a whip, a deputy whip, or a deputy, deputy, whip,
> which we do a lot of down here. The reason I say that is
> not influence is because frequently, in getting an
> assignment like that, legislators make a commitment that -
> -at least on important calls-- they will go along with the
> Speaker and the president.

Maryland House Speaker Casper Taylor, during his sixth term in office,

expanded the party leadership structure to include more members in the organized

leadership and added subcommittees to the committee structure, which created even more coveted positions in the leadership hierarchy. Members perceived that Taylor's reason for including more members in the leadership structure was to decrease the likelihood that they would go against his leadership. According to Delegate Mike Busch, chairman of the Economic Matters Committee in the House, "More people are invested in the system, and as a result they respond" (Waldron, T. and Dresser, D. January 16, 2000). Though the Speaker has expanded the leadership structure to include more members, it appears that very little institutional prestige or influence is afforded the members who hold these positions. While Maryland's leadership structure offers the appearance of a more expanded distribution of power the opposite appears to be true according to the legislators. Maryland legislators contend that the extensive leadership structure serves to only solidify the influence of the Speaker. As one legislator concludes, "When they [the leadership] want something, they normally get what they want because they have created all these layers of leadership, so they can get the votes." As discussed previously, African American women hold positions at this lower level of legislative leadership in Maryland.

In Georgia, legislators included all the party leadership as influential across the institution. In fact, most legislators were content to divulge *only* the names of those in the party leadership position as the most influential. Again, according to one legislator in Georgia, "I guess we are just disciplined to follow the leadership," she remarked after realizing that she only considered those in top leadership as influential in the statehouse. Mississippi's absence of a strong party system or party competition allowed legislators to be more varied in terms of who they considered to be the most generally influential

179

members of the legislature. While Mississippi legislators were consistent in their feelings about the influence of the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor, there was more variation in the other members they also considered to be influential members.

The Second Tier of General Influence: Committee Chairs

Those legislators in the top party leadership positions are without question considered to be the most influential in the process across policy areas. Legislators were also likely to consider committee chairs as generally influential; however, the power of the committee chairs varied from one institution to the next. In Maryland, the small number of committees extends more power to all committee chairs, and as a result most legislators considered all committee chairs generally influential. As a result, committee chairs in Maryland are afforded more institutional prestige and are regarded as more influential than legislators holding party leadership positions. However, in Georgia and Mississippi, influence works quite differently, and not all committee chairs are afforded the same amount of influence. With so many committees and committee chairs, not all committee chairs are considered influential. Legislators most consistently considered those chairing the money committees as the ones having general influence. Those chairing the money committees carry extraordinary amounts of general influence, and as one Mississippi legislator concludes,

> If you're the Appropriations Chairman you control how much bond indebtedness the state incurs and for what projects. So, the money makes you the most powerful. Who controls the gold makes the rule. That's the golden rule down here.

Another Maryland legislator shares this similar point about those leading committees dealing with the state's finances. He explains that they are by far more influential simply by virtue of the power of the purse,

> There are two sides to influence, one in which the legislator is responsible for developing and designing major policies for the state, and on the other side, is that person who controls the purse strings. If you can control the money, you will have a tremendous amount of influence in Annapolis.

The Secret Powerhouse: The Informal Leadership Team

Aside from influence being bestowed upon legislators as a result of their formal leadership positions, in all three states, additional leadership structures exist that have become institutionalized and are major legislative norms. These leadership structures are more pronounced and have become more entrenched norms in Georgia and Mississippi than in Maryland. In Mississippi, the group of legislators who was considered influential across policy areas was also assumed to be members of the top leaders' leadership team. In Georgia, a similar situation emerges; however, the size of the formal leadership appeared to have an impact and prompted legislators to mostly consider members of the formal leadership as influential. Nevertheless, in Georgia, it was also evident that two tiers of leadership exist. Those in the formal leadership as well as a smaller group consisting of the top leaders' selected leadership team were included as the most influential members across policy areas.

In addition to the official leadership of the Georgia and Mississippi State legislatures, these additional groups operating within the legislature serve as a final decision making group within the legislature. The leadership teams surrounding the top

legislative leaders are another legislative power structure, and in Georgia and Mississippi these members have immense power. In Georgia, this group is referred to as the "Green Door" alluding to the fact that this group of legislators has the power to determine what legislation continues on the path to becoming law. Similarly, in Mississippi, the group holding this same function is referred to as the "Go Team" and holds the confidence of the House and Senate leadership. The formal leadership heads these groups and members are beholden unto those top party leaders. Most often, members are comprised of committee chairs; however, not every committee chair is included, only select committee chairs. In Mississippi for example, legislators identified members of the "Go Team" as the chairs of the money committees and several additional of the most senior members. These "Go Team" members also are known to have been supporters and backers of the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House's election bids.

The "Green Door" and the "Go Team" are not official groups in the legislature in that they are not acknowledged according to any of the official documents of the institution, but are nevertheless a key factor in the legislative process. What is most interesting about these groups is the extent to which they operate as not only an elite, but also clandestine group. In Georgia, the group has been described as "an elite and secretive cadre of about a dozen leading Democrats who do the real work of finalizing state budgets and setting the agenda" (Nurse, February 18, 1999). Their anonymity precludes them from being held accountable by other legislators. In 1999, in response to the Georgia House passing an open records and open meetings bill that applied only to local governments, Representative James Mills launched a campaign retaliating

against this institutional norm, by proposing that the Green Door's meetings be open to all members wanting to attend (Nurse, February 18, 1999).

Much like the infamous Board of Education, operating in Congress prior to the reforms of the 1970s, the "Green Door" and the "Go Team" are institutional entities that are afforded power through the traditional norms governing the institution as opposed to the institution's official rules. They operate to manage the flow of legislation in these legislatures. According to an article appearing in the *Atlanta Constitution*, the Green Door Committee is "probably one of the most powerful collection of politicians in the state" and "decides what millions go into the state budget and what millions get cut" (Powell, March 28, 2000). Members are included in these groups by invitation only, and those who are not members speculate as to who actually constitutes the group's membership. While it is speculative as to which legislators hold membership in these circles, it is unquestionable that they are an influential group that holds the fate of much legislation, and legislators are quite cognizant of their influence. As one Mississippi legislator describes,

> The way the process works, if you are one of the big boys--on the Go Team is what we call it-- you are going to have influence on just about anything. Basically, four legislators run this place because they have a lot of say.

And, when asked how these legislators got to have that type of influence, the legislator went on to say that they supported the lieutenant governor's campaign and that they fit a psychological and political profile even though their actual political party affiliation varied. The legislator felt that their status as "white southern gentlemen" aided them in securing such influence in the institution.

Some legislators in official leadership roles are members of the "Go Team" and the "Green Door"; however, legislators are not afforded membership in these groups by virtue of their leadership positions alone. Not every legislative leader and committee chair is included in these groups. Membership is not based on formal institutional position, but instead other characteristics afford them membership, which makes inclusion subjective in its mildest description.

In the case of Mississippi, influence is further complicated by the nature of committee chair positions. Legislators are able to become institutions unto themselves as a result of cycling through multiple committee assignments. In Georgia, once a committee chair is appointed to chair a committee, it is customary that they serve as the chair of that committee as long as they are continuously elected to the legislature (Fleischmann & Pierannunzi, 1997, 147). This allows legislators to cultivate a specialty area of expertise on the issues their committee typically addresses. However, committee chairs in Mississippi are appointed to serve only one four- year term as chair of a particular committee, and are not appointed for consecutive terms, though they often chair the same committees multiple times. For example, three senators appointed to chair major committees in the Senate during the 2000, session had chaired those committees in prior legislative sessions. These include: Jack Gordon, Chair of Appropriations who chaired that committee from 1988-1992 and Bill Minor, Finance Chair who chaired that committee from 1992-1996, and Robert "Bunky" Huggins chair of Public Health and Welfare who chaired the committee from 1988-1992 (Elliott, January 13, 2000). Further, the same legislators rotate through the major committee assignments allowing them to surmount legislative expertise on a number of issues

184

because they have chaired multiple major committees dealing with various policy areas. These two factors surrounding committee chair appointments greatly impacts which members were considered generally influential.

General Influence and African American Women Legislators: A Question of Access

Though some African American women have moved into leadership roles and are chairing committees, they still have not secured membership among the elite group of legislators who engage in the final legislative decision making. When asked about their relationship with those in the top leadership positions, African American women in Georgia and Mississippi cast their remarks in terms of their exclusion from the leaderships' inner circles, which they also considered to be synonymous with these groups. While nearly all of the African American women interviewed considered themselves to have a good relationship with those in the top leadership posts of their respective chambers, all acknowledged that despite good working relationships, they were not a part of these inner most groups where higher level decisions are made. As one African American woman remarked,

> I am included on some things, but I know that I'm not
> included on a lot. I'm not involved in the power
> meetings, not on every level. Though I chair a
> committee, I am not a member of the team that makes the
> final decisions on budget items.

Even in moving into the formal leadership, African American women describe that there are times in which they are excluded from some circles of decision making. As one African American woman details, there are often leadership meetings that are just a function of formality and it is evident that the meeting in which she is participating is not being held to make real decisions. She relates,

> I'm one of the individuals that the Speaker meets with on a weekly basis of my committee leadership. But, sometimes I really think that some meetings are held before the meeting. Some meetings are held the night before or the week before. We can tell that the meeting has already occurred because some decisions have already been made. So, it does make a difference when you're on that committee, you at least have an opportunity to voice your opinion about certain things, even if the decision seems final.

In Maryland, the leadership team under Senate President Mike Miller is a much larger, less select group than exists in either chamber of the other two states. Miller's reputation is that of consensus builder, and he is known to employ a large legislative leadership team and on many decisions, he is known to bring in additional members as a way of solidifying consensus (Rosenthal, 1998, 273). Likewise in the Maryland House, the leadership team is larger than those in the other two states are, which again avoids the cloud of secrecy associated with the leadership teams in Georgia and Mississippi. The inclusiveness in Maryland is exemplified by one African American woman's experience with the leadership,

> There was an education issue on the floor, and I was not on the education committee at that time, but I asked questions on that bill and was able to stop that bill on the floor. The Speaker told the chairman of the committee handling education 'Don't bring any other education issues before the floor unless you talk to Delegate X.' I was not in the leadership, but here was someone saying, 'She has some knowledge.' If she can stop what we're trying to do in the leadership, then we need to communicate with her.

It is evident that the concentration of power in the hands of only a very few legislators is a result of these institutional norms perpetuated by the top leaders in Georgia and Mississippi. Legislators did not mention an African American woman as a

member of one of the highly selective circles surrounding the top legislative leaders in Georgia or in Mississippi. Likewise, African American women pointed out that they were not a part of these circles. While it is very difficult to definitively conclude that their exclusion is a direct result of gender and race bias, it is however, unquestionable that their influence has been compromised as a result of not gaining this level of access to power.

Additional Factors Affording General Influence

Having a leadership position in the legislature-- formal or informal-- appears to be the most significant factor dictating who is considered influential in the legislative process across policy areas. However, the role of seniority and committee assignment cannot be discounted. It is however difficult, if not impossible to disaggrgate the effects of these factors from leadership in that there is a relationship between leadership and seniority. Likewise, those who serve in a leadership capacity-- formal or informal-- are afforded positions on the money committees, in most cases the Appropriations Committee.[5]

Legislators contend that being legislatively active by introducing and passing a high volume of legislation or even critical pieces of legislation is a strong indicator of legislative influence. However, legislators did not mention any of their colleagues as generally influential in association with their introducing and passing high volumes of legislation.

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5. In Maryland, committee chairs do not serve on the Appropriations Committee, but they do serve on the Joint Budget Committee, which is responsible for the final budget decisions.

Other means of gaining high visibility may afford legislators some influence. Some legislators were considered influential based on their knowledge of the subject matter. For example, Leon Billings in Maryland is one who is regarded by his peers as influential largely because of his in-depth knowledge of environmental issues. His reputation as highly knowledgeable was a leading factor in his bid for the speakership. Though not a member of leadership, he is still regarded by his peers as knowledgeable and that knowledge translates into influence. His challenge to Speaker Taylor's leadership is a factor in his being regarded as generally influential. As one legislator explains,

> There is leadership and then there is informal leadership. There are always going to be people who work outside of the system and influence public policy and persuade through the power of intimidation. Leon Billings from Montgomery County is a case in point. Here's a person who is a learned individual, who is an expert on environmental programs and environmental issues, and he is feared and is intimidating on the floor, because I don't know that anyone down here knows as much about that area as Leon Billings in the House. As a matter of fact, Billings worked as a congressional staffer helping to write the Clean Water Act and that speaks for its self.

Another Maryland legislator remarks that Billings uses his outsider status combined with his knowledge of the issues as a way of gaining influence among members. He adds that "Leon Billings is a guy who is kind of an outsider, who is not in leadership, but when he stands up on the floor, people listen to him."

Legislators in the minority party in all three legislatures also find that knowledge is a key resource. As one legislator concludes, "Some Republicans, because they do not have formal leadership positions, still can be very influential when they stand on the

floor and really discuss an issue." Despite such anecdotes, legislators still doubt the efficacy of knowledge alone in that many tempered the connection between influence and knowledge suggesting that knowledge is not enough for a legislator to carry influence in the institution.

Consistently, legislators determined that members of the formal leadership were the most influential in the institution. Few legislators ventured to name members outside of those in formal leadership positions. What is more, legislators in Georgia and Mississippi regard an even smaller, more selective group as the final decision-makers in the legislature. This adherence to the formal leadership structure is reflective not only of where these legislators feel decisions are made in the legislature, but ultimately reflects who they consider legitimate sources of information in their legislatures (Uslaner and Weber, 1977). Further, they identify those in formal leadership positions as the most successful guaranteed winners on the issues they work on. This indeed impacts the policy agenda of any legislator who is not afforded a position in the leadership, but it has severe implications for African American women legislators who have consistently been excluded from leadership positions in most legislatures. Their policy agendas are likely to suffer because they do not hold the leadership positions necessary to be regarded by their colleagues as influential they are consequently outside of the realm of legitimate information sources

Issue Specific Influence

During the interviews, legislators were also asked to identify their peers whom they consider influential in specific policy areas-- education, healthcare and healthcare reform, economic development and employment, women's issues, and children's

189

issues-- all of which correspond with African American women's areas of expertise. As expected, African American women have some influence in the policy areas in which they have developed expertise. However, the advantage associated with being a formal leader in these policy areas in question cannot be minimized. African American women who chaired committees dealing with the policy area were far more likely to be considered influential than those outside of leadership.

The distribution of influence is different in each state and reflects the legislatures' institutional values and norms. A number of different factors impact legislators' influence and they vary not only according to the legislature, but also according to the policy area under consideration. A factor that is valued in one legislature and as a result affords a legislator influence is not highly regarded in another. Holding a position as the committee chair with jurisdiction over the issue affords influence in all three state's legislatures.

Aside from being a committee chair, having knowledge and expertise of an issue and holding membership in an institutionalized group that addresses the issue area are other factors impacting the influence a legislator is able to garner in specific policy areas. The impact of these two factors varies from state to state. In Maryland, knowledge and expertise is preferenced, and in Georgia and Maryland having a women's caucus provides an important source of influence. Race also appears to be a deciding factor in determining who has influence in specific policy areas. African American women are much more likely to be regarded as influential on specific policies by other African Americans, which suggests that race is an institutional norm that is preferenced as well.

The Power and Influence of the Chair

Legislators who chair committees that address a specific policy area are predominantly considered as being influential in that policy area. However, those legislators who do not hold leadership positions, the rank and file members, are also likely to be regarded as influential in the various policy areas, which is quite different from general influence. The committee chairs in all three legislatures remain the most influential though they may share influence in a particular issue area with other legislators.

The pattern of only recognizing committee chairs, as influential in specific policy areas, does not bode well for African American women's influence. In that so few African American women hold committee chairs, few garnered mentions as influential. I expected that because African American women are legislatively active in these policy areas, they would be mentioned as influential by virtue of their work and attention to these policy issues. In Georgia and Mississippi, however, influence by and large only comes as a result of holding an institutional position of power. Making note of her own tendency to only denote committee chairs as having any influence on the policy areas in question one legislator remarked,

> You notice that I stay with the chairmen. The chairmen
> are so powerful that a lot of times if any other person is
> doing some thing on the issue they have to come through
> a chairman. Unless the person has a burning issue that
> they push, its very, very hard to know that they are
> working on the issue.

The majority of legislators consider only the committee chairs whose committee has jurisdiction in that policy area as influential. This is most consistently the case on

191

policy issues in which the committee handling the topic is easily identified, such as education, health care and health care reform and children's issues.[6] Influence on policy issues that fall under the jurisdiction of multiple committees, such as women's issues and economic development and employment, is more widely distributed among legislators, and includes members without leadership positions.

Because committee chairs in Mississippi have a history of serving as chairs of several major committees over their legislative careers, it comes as no surprise that legislators, often chairing other committees, retain influence in a policy area over which they once had jurisdiction. This has the effect of confining influence to an even smaller group of legislators than in other states. The concept of influence in a particular issue area is less salient in Mississippi, especially given the significance of its "Go Team." Legislators are seldom cited as having any influence in specific issue areas without being in the leadership.

Legislators shared different opinions about the influence committee chairs hold. Some legislators respect and have confidence in the committee chairs, acknowledging the chairs as the most qualified members to lead the committee. Further, they feel that by virtue of their qualifications they are influential. Others understand the influence of the committee chairs as simply a function of holding the institutional position, and the chair may or may not have knowledge and competence in the policy area. A Maryland legislator differentiated between a chair having influence because of the formal position, and a chair having influence because they know the issue and their committee

members respect them and are willing to follow their leadership as a result of that respect. According to this legislator,

> It's one thing to be a chairman of a committee and use that to try and swing votes. It's another thing to be a chairman of a major committee and also have the respect of the members so that they will take what you say seriously and they will look to you as an expert in the field or any other.

In Mississippi, some legislators lack confidence in the abilities and the expertise of some of the committee chairs. It is more customary for committee appointments to be based on the relationships between members and the leadership than based on members' prior expertise on the issues the committee predominantly decides. As one Mississippi legislator conveys,

> Certainly in my opinion in the Mississippi legislature, it [chairing a committee] doesn't have anything to do with ability. You can look at the people who have been elevated to chairmanships in the House and the Senate, its all favoritism and all good old boy cronyism. And that's just the way things are done here. Now, those in the majority who are benefiting from this procedure don't see it that way.

A number of factors figure into committee chair appointments that go far beyond expertise in the policy area. For example, in appointing committee chairs Lieutenant Governor, Amy Tuck contends that she aimed to "put the best qualified people in the right positions." However, it is also purported that her committee assignments were more heavily slanted toward members from her region of the state and toward those who were her campaign loyalists (Elliott, January 12, 2000). Despite whatever doubts

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6. This applies only to Georgia in that Georgia is the only state of the three with a committee designated to handle only children's issues.

legislators may have regarding the chairs of various committees, they nevertheless understand these members to be influential in accordance with the traditions of the legislature.

The evidence here suggests that the major barrier to influence for African American women when it comes to specific policy areas is acquiring positions as committee chairs of committees dealing with the issues that they would most like to impact. From this analysis, it appears that by and large, once the door has been opened-- its open. And, it follows that once African American women move into institutional positions of power, by virtue of their position, particularly as committee chairs, their colleagues will regard them as influential. Legislators' descriptions of who is influential in the legislature suggest that all legislators are afforded the same respect and high regard that comes with the positions they hold. For African American women, then it would just be a question of access to positions of power and, as it stands now, by and large their influence is simply a case of access denied.

Legislators are "disciplined", according to one legislator, to follow the leadership. As a result, it is persuasive to conclude that once African American women gain positions of power, they will have the influence conferred by their institutional position. While the data suggests that this is the case, in that their colleagues include them among those who are influential, there is also evidence to suggest that the battle for influence does not end with movement into the official leadership hierarchy. Failing to further analyze African American women's influence would be to paint an inaccurate picture of influence in state legislatures. African American women who have leadership positions describe that they are not members of the top leaders' inner circles,

and are therefore precluded from participating at all levels of decision making. This certainly impacts the extent to which they are generally influential across the institution, but are there institutional factors impacting their influence in specific policy areas once they have gained access to leadership positions?

A change to normal operating procedures in Mississippi provides evidence that women's entry into committee chair positions may not result in the influence traditionally associated with the position they hold. Actions leading to an abridgement of an African American woman's influence in Mississippi appear to confirm that those traditionally in power will go to great lengths to preserve that power. During the 2000, legislative session there was a break in tradition that coincided with Alice Harden's appointment as Chair of the Education Committee in the Senate, which resulted in preserving the power of those customarily in power in Mississippi. Harden's power as the chair was curtailed by a maneuver on the part of the Appropriations Chair who broke with the traditional norm of appointing committee chairs to also chair the subcommittee in Appropriations dealing with the same policy area. Under the old system, committee chairs held control over both policy setting and funding in Appropriations. However, with the Appropriation Chair's change, Harden now co-chairs the Appropriation's Subcommittee on Education with her Vice-Chair of the Education Committee. Some legislators indicate that the leadership orchestrated the change in normal legislative procedures as a result of their fear of placing that much power in her hands alone. As one Mississippi legislator explains, Harden's influence is curtailed under this new system,

> What makes you influential as a chair of a committee like
> Education is if you are also the Subcommittee Chair of
> Education in the Appropriations Committee. For the first
> time, I think it is basically because of Senator Harden, the
> Appropriations Committee Chairman decided he was
> going to go with a system of co-chairs of the
> subcommittees. Now, a white male shares co-
> chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Education in the
> Appropriations Committee with Harden. Her power has
> been diluted because she can't make a move without her
> co-chairman.

This legislator and others who mentioned the new system instituted by the chair of the

Appropriations Committee concerning subcommittee chairs indicated that this new

system was deliberately executed to weaken Harden's power. He suggests that

members of the leadership team were fearful of an African American woman

controlling such a major area of public policy. As he goes on to explain,

> Its been theorized by those of us watching the process,
> that because that setup is established where all of the
> Appropriations Committee's subcommittee chairs have
> co-chairs (except for two committees) it was done
> specifically because of people's fear of giving Harden too
> much power.

Another Mississippi legislator went further in analyzing the influence of the Education

Chair in light of the change in the Appropriation Committee's subcommittee system,

> When you talk about influence, there are some people that
> head the policy committee as well as the subcommittee on
> that particular area of appropriations, and that is what
> makes them influential. Senator Harden, she chairs the
> Education Committee, which deals with policy, but not
> necessarily the appropriations which means that the one
> who has got the money is the one that's got the control.
> That makes a difference in terms of influence. Some
> committees are like that and some are not. If you head
> the policy committee and the money committee, then you
> could just about get what you want through the
> legislature. If you head the policy committee and you

need the money to implement what your policy is, then
you don't have real influence over the issue.

Increasing the number African American women committee chairs is an

important means of garnering institutional positions that confer power and influence.

However, Harden's example suggests that selection, as a committee chair may not result

in the same institutional powers that are afforded to others holding the same position.

In this case, the unwritten rules or norms were changed to maintain the existing power

structure. It cannot be definitively concluded that the Appropriations Chair instituted

this rule as a means of specifically countering the power of the first African American

woman to chair a major committee in the Senate. Nevertheless, it is without question

that the new system weakened this major committee chair's power.

The Power of Prior Knowledge and Expertise

As expected, gaining expertise in a particular policy area can be an important

source of influence for legislators. As legislators become experts on specific policy

issues, their influence in this area also increases (Francis, 1962; Best, 1971; Keefe and

Ogul, 1989; Weissert, 1991). Because members who bring prior expertise on an issue

are considered influential among their colleagues, influence in specific policy areas is

more widely dispersed among members especially in Maryland. Knowledge and prior

expertise were much more valued in Maryland than in the other two states, and as a

result, influence in specific policy areas is more widely distributed among rank and file

members, those outside of the leadership. Legislative expertise may make a legislator

more valuable, as Weissert (1991) argues, " If the legislator has special expertise or

interest in an issue that is particularly important one session, he or she may be more

valuable to the legislature; more visible to its members, the press, and constituents."

Because state legislatures are handling more and more complex issues, legislators are

finding it increasingly more important to seek fellow members with strong knowledge

bases in particular issue areas. A Maryland legislator explains,

> It is impossible to be an expert on every issue. You just
> can't do it. Most legislators are only concerned with only
> about 10 percent of the bills that come in, and on those
> bills, they may have some knowledge. For the other 90
> percent, you are looking outside of yourself for that
> knowledge. For me, I find that I trust my fellow members
> the most, rather than the lobbyists who want what is good
> for their clients, not necessarily the state as a whole. The
> thing you have to do is find those members who you can
> look to for advice on an issue. Most of the times, the
> folks I seek out are those who have spent their careers
> working in the field. Those are the ones with the
> knowledge... and that is influence.

Education and healthcare are two issue areas in which several Maryland

legislators have prior expertise and legislators frequently look to these members to

weigh the merits of proposed legislation on these topics. In identifying a group of

legislators, including himself, who have years of experience as educators as

knowledgeable on both education and children's issues that came before the Maryland

legislature, a Maryland legislator typifies the appreciation of prior expertise in an area

as a precursor to influence in that policy area. He considers this group particularly

influential on issues affecting local education in the county they all represent,

> We worked for the school system. We were teachers and
> all three of us were principals. All of us have spent our
> professional careers as educators, so we automatically are
> in tune with the children's issues.

As is the case with education, those who come to the legislature with prior expertise in the healthcare field are able to translate their professional expertise into influence on health policy issues in the legislature. As one legislator describes the influence of a legislator who is a former nurse,

> Marilyn Goldwater from Montgomery County is a former nurse and I think she is influential, because she has a lot of credibility and she understands health care. She's not always on the winning end of the debate all the time, but she is getting us to talk about some issues in the legislature that we might not talk about if she weren't here to raise the issue.

Though rank and file members were acknowledged as having prior expertise and exerting some influence based on their knowledge of particular issues, even in Maryland, the stigma of not being an official member of the leadership is still a factor impeding their influence. A Maryland legislator described the dilemma of being very knowledgeable on an issue, yet not being a member of the leadership. She describes the situation of one African American woman, who is in such a situation,

> Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam is very knowledgeable, but I don't see her as influential. She's very knowledgeable, but she is not in a leadership role, so she cannot always get her agenda accepted. You know they say that, "A little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing, a lot of knowledge can get you a long way." So, whatever committee Shirley is on, they always look to her because she has worked for health on the national level.

Though this legislator acknowledges the in-depth knowledge Delegate Nathan-Pulliam has on health issues and her work on the national level, she is somewhat discredited because she does not hold a formal leadership position, and her agenda is stifled as a result.

Legislatures vary in the appreciation of knowledge as a basis for influence. Though legislators widely mentioned knowledge and expertise of the issues as a factor in defining legislative influence, it appears that appreciation of knowledge and prior expertise is more of a legislative norm that varies from one legislature to another. In Georgia and Mississippi, legislators adhered so closely to the leadership structure in their assessments of influence that it appears to be the strongest factor contributing to a legislator's influence. In that it is difficult to disaggregate the factors most impacting a legislator's influence, it is possible that committee chairs are the most knowledgeable members in the policy areas their committee addresses and the fact that they are committee chairs also attests to their knowledge of the issues. Therefore, this analysis does not suggest that knowledge and prior expertise are not at all factors contributing to legislators' influence in Georgia and Mississippi, but I argue that knowledge and prior expertise is not preferenced as highly as other factors in these states. An African American woman in Mississippi's explains,

> The issues do not matter. What matters is that you are a part of the leadership. The leadership makes the decisions. While there are many legislators who have spent their entire lives working on an issue, like education, they come to the legislature and that expertise is seldom taken under consideration. We have members who were teachers, principals, school superintendents-- and many of them are African American, African American women, and because they are not in the leadership [in the House] they are not influential. The issue doesn't matter-- leadership is the key!

Preferencing knowledge and expertise has a positive impact on African American women's influence. More African American women were included in assessments of issue specific influence in Maryland, based on their prior expertise than

200

in the other states. Selection as a committee chair is not within a legislator's control, given that so many factors come in to play in making that appointment that are beyond a legislator's control. Yet, cultivating expertise and in-depth knowledge of a subject matter are indeed factors that legislators do control. Therefore, when knowledge and prior expertise are valued in the legislature and is a part of the institutional norms, African American women stand to benefit in that it is a more objective evaluation as demonstrated in Maryland's case. Preferences for knowledge and expertise are associated with more professional legislatures. While Maryland is not considered among the more professionalized legislatures, as compared to Georgia and Mississippi, it is the most professional of the three.

Membership Has Its Privileges: The Influence of the Women's Caucus

With the entrance of more women and legislators of color, these legislators have formed caucuses and informal working groups to compound their influence as a group. The existence of women's caucuses in state legislatures greatly enhances the power of women legislators (Thomas, 1994; Jewel and Whicker; 1994). Likewise, since African American legislators in Georgia organized as a formal institutional entity, they have been positioned to make demands of the leadership of the legislature, as well as the executive branch (Holmes, 2000). Forming legislative caucuses has been an enormously successful strategy and these organizations have given voice to a number of issues in state legislatures across the country that might not have otherwise been raised without their activism. Caucuses and even informal work groups have particularly been instrumental in advocating policies on behalf of women and people of color, and

likewise have created "safe spaces" for its members-- where they find solitude with legislators who often share their policy outlook.

Georgia and Maryland have both a Women's Caucus and a Black Caucus, both of which are formally organized and institutionally vested. Mississippi, however, does not have an organized women's caucus or an informal work group for women legislators. Mississippi does have an organized Black Caucus that is institutionally vested. African American women participate in these caucuses to various degrees in each of the states, and their experiences in these caucuses are also quite varied. Using these caucuses as forums to articulate the unique concerns of African American women has proven to have varying outcomes. While African American women report both positive and negative experiences as members of these caucuses in their states, caucuses are nevertheless important resources for institutional power and influence under certain conditions. The women's caucuses in Georgia and Maryland are highly influential, particularly. In the interviews, legislators were asked the most influential member on women's issues, and in these states, nearly all the legislators interviewed cited the influence of the women's caucus. Though legislators in these two states may have also recognized individual members as influential, they all recognized the women's caucuses as influential.[7]

African American women in Georgia and Maryland stand in a unique position to gain influence through participation in both the Black Caucus and the Women's

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7. The interviews did not contain questions that specifically asked about influence on "African American issues"; therefore, legislators were not provided an opportunity to highlight the influence of the Black Caucus in the same fashion.

Caucus. In Georgia and Maryland these groups have become influential coalitions, which many African American women regard as sources for their legislative power. Generally, these coalitions create a space for African American women to build relationships that help to increase their visibility in the institution. Likewise, membership in both caucuses gives them bases from which to articulate the issues of significance to them.

African American women in Georgia have been able to successfully use the Women's Caucus as a platform for their issues. The Georgia Women's Legislative Caucus has instituted a system in which they are led by two to three co-chairs in an effort to be inclusive of women of both chambers, women of color and both political parties. African American women serving as co-chairs provides a level of legitimacy to the Caucus that it might not have otherwise had, particularly among women of color given the long history of race in the women's movement. For the most part, African American women in Georgia have been successful in striking a balance between their participation in the Black Caucus and the Women's Caucus. As one African American woman describes,

> We [African American women] have a lot of caucuses,
> where most people are in two caucuses we're in three
> caucuses. We work between the Democratic Caucus, the
> Black Caucus, and the Women's Caucus. I don't like to,
> but women have to have a separate caucus.

The Georgia Women's Caucus has successfully advocated on behalf of many women-centered issues and have waged and won several important battles on behalf of the women of Georgia. As a result of their strategies, they have gained a reputation for

preparedness and cohesiveness as a group, which in turn has made them a tremendously respected group in the legislature. In fact, the influence of the Caucus is such that when men in the legislature see a number of women lining up to speak on a bill, they, "sit up and pay attention, because the women don't play!" as one male legislator described.

In Maryland, while African American women are participants in the activities of the Women's Caucus, they have not widely been able to use the caucus as a platform for advancing issues that are important to them. In Maryland, African American women appear to feel more forced to choose between an allegiance to the Women's Caucus or the Black Caucus, as if the could only invest in one *or* the other. One African American woman exemplifies this split allegiance and her choices to participate more with the Black Caucus, "I have to go to both caucuses, neither of them fulfills everything, but the Black Caucus fulfills more than the Women's Caucus, so I am more active with the Black Caucus." Her approach is typical of African American women in Maryland, in that most are willing to invest more of their legislative energies working with the Black Caucus than with the Women's Caucus, which is an unfortunate situation, because their potential influence is decreased by such choices. One African American woman in Maryland rationalized her heavier participation in the Black Caucus over the Women's Caucus to be a consequence of partisan politics. She finds the Black Caucus to be consistent on Democratic Party issues, which were more in line with her priorities.

Several African American women find the Women's Caucus to be unreceptive to the issues they have brought before it. African American women in Maryland also appear to be embittered toward the Women's Caucus as a result of negotiations over the

percentage levels for women and minorities in the procurement of state contracts. During the 1995 legislative session, African American women attempted to work toward a compromise on the percentage of state contracts that would be awarded to women and people of color that could be supported by both the Black and Women's Caucuses. The procurement struggle inflicted many war wounds and African American women still wear the scars of the battle. In addition to such historical rifts, several African American women in Maryland expressed that they notice a difference between the types of bills white women bring before the legislature and the types of bills they introduced. They felt that the Women's Caucus was more inclined to take on the types of bills white women introduce. Some African American women's feelings reflected the historical struggles between women along racial lines. One African American woman in Maryland concluded that she notices a marked difference between the legislation introduced by African American women and white women. She contends,

> We're [African American women] here because the people elected us because we wanted to run and we do make a difference back in our neighborhood. Many times white women, although a lot of them do something, but their challenges seem to be a little more frivolous than ours [African American women] because they pick up anything as their cause. We think about ours, we think about what we're going to create and what we're going to do and how it's going to help people. Many times, white women will read an article or see a magazine or they have people to run out and look for things and they will put a bill in for anything. Many of the African American women tend to look at the bills that we put in and put them in because we are serious about them.

Despite such attitudes, there are African American women in Maryland who still feel that the Women's Caucus is an important place to raise their voices and they

understand it to be a useful organizational base. They are willing to expend the energies of participating in both caucuses. One African American woman shared that another African American woman dissuaded her from participating in the Women's Caucus. However she finds that without her voice at the table of the Women's Caucus, of our course the issues of importance to her will not be raised. As she shares,

> I remember when I first came here and I decided to go on the Women's Caucus' retreat. I was told by my African American colleagues that they deal with white women's issues and not ours [African Americans], and they're not going to take our issues on. I decided to go anyway, because that's the only way they can understand my issues is for me to be a part of it. I can't do it from the outside.

She had a positive experience on the retreat and the ideas that she raised became a key component of the Women's Caucus' agenda and remains a part of their agenda six years after she first raised the issue with the group.

In Mississippi, while the Black Caucus is an organized body and is viewed as a strong voting bloc in the legislature, the absence of an organized women's caucus diminishes the potential power base of African American women legislators in Mississippi. Without a women's caucus, women state legislators are not formally networking among themselves and have no organized voice to advocate on behalf of women's issues. As a result, a significant power base is going untapped.

Women's issues in the Mississippi Legislature do not have an institutional voice and as a result of not having an organized women's caucus or even an informal working group, issues have not been classified in terms of "women's issues" Further, men seldom mentioned women as influential legislators in any area. The absence of a

women's caucus was evident in that their male colleagues could not clearly identify legislation that had come through as legislation impacting women; a bill dealing with mammograms was the only legislation identified as a "women's issue". Women in Mississippi had an informal women's caucus years ago, but because it was such a loosely configured group, without institutionalization and formalization, that included office space and a staff person, the group eventually fell apart.

That women legislators have not bonded as a group on behalf of women's issues may be connected to their fears about associating with such a group and perhaps identifying themselves as marginalized. As one African American woman noted in Mississippi,

> Women's issues just don't get very far. We don't have a Women's Caucus and even when we did, there are certain women who would not join the Women's Caucus because they thought it would somehow lessen their power in the legislature. I guess they don't see women as being treated any differently.

Further, forming an organization that crosses party lines would be an intense challenge for women legislators in Mississippi and like many efforts to organize women leaders, the issue of abortion and women's reproductive rights are the most divisive.

Influence in Black and White

Of all the factors impacting legislative influence --both general and issue specific influence-- the most interesting and most alarming is the parallel structure of influence that exists for African American and white legislators. It appears that whether or not a legislator is recognized as influential has much to do with the race of the legislator doing the evaluating. In addition to mentioning those members in formal

leadership positions, African American legislators were more likely to recognize members who do not hold leadership positions as influential. Most often, the legislators that they mentioned aside from those in leadership were African American legislators. In all three states, African American women were most likely to be recognized as influential by other African American men and women legislators. This pattern was strongest in Mississippi, but also existed among Georgia and Maryland legislators, though in Maryland the pattern was weakest.

In nearly every interview in Mississippi, when asked to name the most influential members of the legislature legislators immediately responded first with the question, "Do you mean Black or White?" The more interviews I conducted, the more evident it became that race was an important factor in determining one's influence in Mississippi. The majority party, the Democratic Party in Mississippi is not a cohesive group. The party is divided along racial lines, resulting in two types of Democrats-- African American and white. While all African Americans legislators are members of the Democratic Party, African Americans function as a distinct group in the legislature, most often acting separately from white Democrats. Consequently, rather than having power divided along traditional lines-- majority and minority party lines-- in Mississippi, three groups contend for legislative power--white Democrats, African Americans and Republicans. As a result of this three-way contention for legislative power, a legislator can be influential among each group's members and under select conditions, a legislator can be influential across these divides.

White Democrats are the numeric majority and as a result they are in control of appointing the top leadership positions. Republicans, though the minority party, as a

group are quite influential. They have been successful in garnering committee chair positions and they have generally been able to maintain a strong presence in the legislature. Though Mississippi is undergoing changes in its electorate, which may eventually close the sizable gap between Democrats and Republicans, currently, Republicans lack the numeric representation to execute their own agenda or block that of the white Democrats. For the most part, Republican legislators' influence is limited to other Republicans. Much like Republican legislators, African Americans' influence is much more limited in scope as compared to the influence of white Democrats. By and large, African American's influence is limited to other African Americans. Under certain conditions, members of these groups can acquire influence among another group by acting as a broker, negotiating their group's support of the other group's initiatives.[8] While both Republicans and African Americans lack the numbers to block legislative efforts by white Democrats, on occasion, these two groups have joined forces to influence the decisions of white Democrats[9].

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8. A white legislator in Mississippi repeatedly referred to one African American legislator as working with him on the "Black plan" for the state's redistricting. According to this legislator, the African American legislator, "came to the table for the Blacks."

9. Though rare, African American legislators and Republicans have come together on policy issues. Menifield and Shaffer (2000), illustrate that African American legislators have been in winning coalitions with white Democrats and with Republicans. They also argue that the votes of the African Americans were the pivotal votes on several significant public policy issues. A legislator describing one of the rare instances in which African American legislators aligned themselves with the Republicans reveled, "...if we could find some more issues that we agreed on and team up and vote, this House would never be the same, because the Democrats take us for granted."

Across these groups in Mississippi, when asked which members are generally influential or influential in a particular policy area, all legislators recognize white Democrats as the most influential. Those who were white Democrats recognize only other white Democrats. However, Republican and African American legislators also include members of their groups as influential, in addition to recognizing white Democrats who serve in the formal leadership positions. This distinctive group-divide greatly impacts the distribution of influence. While we expect members of the minority party to lack institutional influence in comparison to the majority party, we do not expect such deep cleavages to exists within the majority party that preclude legislators largely from reaping the benefits of their majority party status. This is most certainly the case in Mississippi. African American legislators in Mississippi are significantly more familiar with the expertise African American legislators bring to the legislature, and as a result they recognize them as influential.

Race-based distinctions in influence are greater in Mississippi, and to an extent more severe. However, in all three states, African American legislators are more familiar with the legislative activities of other African Americans than white legislators are. Some of their familiarity can be attributed to their activities as members of the Black Caucus. In Maryland, African American legislators become familiar with the expertise of other African American legislators as a result of their committee work within the Black Caucus. Black Caucus members with expertise in particular legislative areas often chair committees within the Black Caucus that addresses their areas of expertise. Therefore, African American legislators, in addition, to naming the formal committee chairs as influential in particular policy areas, they also consider the

legislators who chair the Black Caucuses' committees on those policy issues. Chairing these committees affords African Americans a great deal of influence among other African Americans.

However, while African Americans are respected and are held as knowledgeable in these policy areas, their influence is limited in scope to only caucus members and this is particularly the case for African American women. An African American woman in Maryland was consistently mentioned as one of the most influential members of the legislature on healthcare issues. An analysis of which legislators considered her influential reveals that only other African Americans held her in this regard. Her knowledge, expertise and work on health issues appear to have little impact on other members of the legislature. The Black Caucus, then, is a significant base of influence for legislators, and participation within this group increases one's influence among the group's members. While African American legislators--men and women-- recognize African American women as influential based on their knowledge and expertise, this system of race-based influence negatively impacts them, because if they do not hold a formal leadership position, this is the only method by which they gain influence. Unlike African American men, they are less likely to play the brokering roles that can extend their influence beyond African American legislators.

Recognition by caucus members also adds meaning to positions African American women have achieved in the legislature that would otherwise be of little consequence. Though not recognized by other members of the legislature as influential, African American women, who have achieved low level leadership positions, such as vice chairs of committees are recognized by their fellow African Americans as

211

influential in the policy areas in which they hold the position of vice chair. In Georgia, for example, Marietta Taylor, an African American woman, serves as the Vice Chair of the Education Committee in the House. This long time educator was consistently mentioned as influential on education issues; however, like the African American woman in Maryland, her influence is also limited to other African American legislators, and white legislators did not include her as influential in education issues. It appears that leadership positions at this level are much more significant to African American legislators than to white legislators.

While African Americans appear to have more influence among each other than they do with their white colleagues, some legislators also have the potential to use their caucus influence to gain influence beyond caucus members. For a select group of African American legislators, predominately men, influence among Black Caucus members can translate into their becoming the one who interacts with the leadership on behalf of the Black Caucus as a group. This is particularly the case in Georgia and Mississippi.

As Holmes (2000) suggests, the influence of the Georgia legislative Black Caucus is compromised by the tendency of individual members to self-promote rather than promoting the Caucus' agenda. According to Holmes, "A continuing problem area was the "cowboy" instinct of some Black legislators-- namely, the tendency to promote themselves rather than the Caucus agenda. And some Caucus members believed that colleagues who were insiders attempted to secure their positions and maximize the influence of only a few Black lawmakers with the governor in his board appointments and legislative decisions" (Holmes, 2000, 787).

Beyond the confines of other African American legislators, being able to "deliver the Black vote" to the leadership is the definition of influence for African American legislators in Mississippi. The formal leadership of the Black caucus, which is vested in its chair, is not necessarily the vessel for Black institutional leadership. The chair of the caucus functions more as an administrative leader, rather than the power broker to the Black Caucus. Omeria Scott, an African American woman currently chairs the 46-member caucus in Mississippi, and despite her formal leadership of the Caucus, she does not wield much influence beyond Caucus members. She does not serve the brokering role. African American women have not gained this level of influence where they are seen as the leader who is to be negotiated with by members of the leadership. African American women do not play the role of the "broker of the Black vote." An African American woman in Georgia rejected this practice by refusing the assistance of Black Caucus members who attempted to act as a broker between she and the leadership to ensure that she would receive her desired committee assignments.

> They asked us the committees that we wanted, and they suggested that we give them a list of the committees we wanted to serve on, and they would go to the Speaker and they would talk on our behalf. And, I said no, because if I can't go to the Speaker and if the Speaker cannot make himself available to me then I knew that I would have a problem immediately. I didn't need an emissary. I went to the Speaker and I got every committee that I wanted, except one. I don't depend on anybody going to the Speaker for me. I don't depend on a group going to speak because a group cannot speak for me.

Ultimately, for African American women, there are limited paths to influence. If they do not chair a top committee, they have little chance of gaining influence beyond their fellow African American legislators. Among African American legislators, they

are recognized as influential on the basis of their expertise as well as, the leadership position they hold, regardless of the position's rank in the overall leadership structure. However, the fact that African American women are not regarded as leading other African American legislators, even in instances when an African American woman holds the formal position as caucus leader, speaks to not only intra-racial gender dynamics, but also highlights the gender dynamics pervasive throughout these legislatures. To a certain extent, these race-based and gender-based distinctions in influence are institutional in that they are ingrained into the framework and daily operations of the legislature.

Alternative Approaches to Influence for African American Women

In that institutional influence is difficult for African American women to acquire, they diligently pursue alternative approaches to influence. They optimistically use these approaches in effort to garner some modicum of institutional influence at least in the policy areas of interests to them or to simply ensure that they are positioned to deliver on behalf of those who elected them to office. Some of these approaches are more progressive than others are and some approaches are more profitable in terms of yielding institutional influence. Regardless, African American women's use of these alternative approaches is illustrative of their efforts to meet their legislative goals despite their limited access to formal institutional power. Rather than become despondent in response to their institutional predicament, they instead have sought these alternative measures to remain effective.

Developing relationships with the executive branch is an important strategy for African American women, particularly those in Georgia and Maryland. Some more

214

savvy African American women have capitalized on their relationships with those in the executive branch. In choosing to extend the scope of their possible resources, two African American women in Georgia have acquired positions as the governor's floor leaders. In these positions, they are responsible for carrying the governor's legislation in the House and the Senate. They argue that they are able to use their positions as a means of advancing their policy priorities by ensuring that they are included as a part of the governor's legislative package. In these positions, they are poised to benefit from Governor Barnes' recent increase in gubernatorial power.[10] As one shares,

> Fortunately at this point, I'm really with the governor as
> one of his administrative floor leaders, and that gives us
> an opportunity to meet with the governor on a daily basis,
> and have input on his legislation. As an administrative
> floor leader, I have much more access to the governor
> than do other members of the legislature, and I think
> that's a very powerful influence piece.

In Maryland, befriending the governor can also prove to be a most profitable strategy, given the budgetary powers of the executive branch in relation to the legislature. Under the state's constitution, the legislative branch can cut the budget submitted by the governor, but it cannot be expanded, which affords the governor enormous control over the allocation of the state's funds. This also makes the governor an additional funding source for projects that are unlikely to survive the legislature. Several African American women describe instances in which they have been able to

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10. During the 2000 legislative session, the *Atlanta Constitution* nicknamed Governor Roy Barnes "King Roy" because by creating offices and agencies that report to the governor that have authority over education, transportation and public financing, he effectively expanded the powers of the executive branch. Some contended that the power afforded to these newly created entities should be vested in places other than the governor's office (Pruitt, March 26, 2000).

rely on the governor to include their legislation in his package, which alleviated them from working their legislation through the often-contentious appropriations process.

African American women who incessantly work toward increasing their influence in the legislature learn that the traditional roads to influence may not be as accessible to them as they are to their colleagues. For some African American women, the positions they take on as their signature issues can put them at odds with members of the leadership, which can negatively impact their abilities to move into the formal leadership.

> Down here, in order for you to move along, you can't
> disagree with the leadership. There are some of us who
> disagree. There are some bills that the leadership will say
> 'I want you to support it.' African American women will
> look at the heart of the issues and assess if it hurts the
> homeless, the hopeless, and the helpless, and the down
> trodden, then we have a tendency not to support it. So,
> our agenda down here is a little different from other
> people's agenda.

Further, African American women often do not hold the same values as the institution. Their behavior is often not in keeping with the norms governing traditional behavior in the institution. As one woman in Maryland reflects on her approach she concludes,

> I learned the hard way--knocking heads with certain
> people, asking all kind of dumb questions and raising my
> hand when I never should have been raising my hand,
> walking into the room when I never should have been
> there. I did everything I could do.

African American women discussed their decisions in many instances to disregard the "rules of the game" particularly the notion of "going along" with the leadership to "get along." Most African American women warned that losing their voices was the worst

216

thing that could happen, so they most often reject the notion of "going along to get along." Instead, they choose to speak out not only on policy issues, but on the process of legislating as well, especially when they feel they have been left out of the process. Below, an African American describes not looking the other way, when leadership calls were made, and she was not privy to the discussion as a member of leadership,

> Most times I do feel that I am involved in leadership discussions. Sometimes things come up and you may not have all the information that you think you should have had. But, I'm the kind of person if something comes up that I don't know about I'm going to ask about it. If I feel like I've been left out of something, then I'll go in there and tell them, 'Look, you didn't tell me you were going to do this or that.' Oft times what we do is we sit back and we pout because nobody told us or we hadn't been included. I'm not going to do that. The minute I find out about it, I'm going to go and find out what I missed. I start asking questions like, "Why didn't you call me?"

Following the norms that govern legislative behavior often does not guarantee reward, so African American women expressed that they are willing to take a gamble and follow their own course. Maintaining a general aggressiveness that shows no vulnerability is a survival skill many African American women share, which they consider key to maintaining respect. Many offered sentiments similar to this African American woman,

> They will tend not to want to give you the kind of respect that they will give the African American male. The old boys club is old boys--Black and white. Sometimes I just let it go over my head, but many times I assert myself just for that reason.

With the traditional avenues to influence often blocked or effectively closed to African American women, some are thrusts into roles that afford them an increase in

217

influence, but are reflective of the oppressive racial and sexual stereotypes that plague much of African American women's history. According to Kanter, in her study of women breaking into traditionally sex-segregated work places, she finds that women can become entrapped by roles that their male co-workers find easier to "respond to and understand." She further states, "Stereotypical assumptions and mistaken attributions made about tokens tend to force them into playing limited and caricatured roles in the system" (Kanter, 1977; 980). African American women legislators unfortunately are thrust into stereotypical roles reminiscent of "the mammy," the "Black matriarch," and "the Jezebel" as they continuously seek ways to garner some influence in the legislature.

Respect, which has been closely associated with influence, comes in different packages for some African American women. One African American woman described her relationship with the Speaker as a mothering relationship; "I have an excellent relationship with the Speaker. I think sometimes, he thinks I'm his mother." While she considered herself to have an excellent relationship with the top leadership figure, the relationship was not one of mutual respect as legislators, but drew on racist and sexist historical constructions of African American women. The speaker's view of her as a mother alleviates him from respecting her as a colleague, as an equal. When this role is enacted upon African American women legislators, it is reminiscent of the "mammy" or the "wet nurse" who cares for her white master or employer's family. As Patricia Hill Collins writes, "By loving, nurturing, and caring for her White children and "family" better than her own, the mammy symbolizes the dominant group's perceptions of the ideal Black female relationship to elite White male power. Even though she may be

218

well loved and may wield considerable authority in her White "family," the mammy still knows her "place" as the obedient servant. She has accepted her subordination" (Collins, 2000, 73).

In addition to the "mammy" role, another role projected upon African American women legislators is that of the "Black matriarch," and it, like the "mammy" role is misconstrued as influential. Much like the "mammy," the Black matriarch is a caricature of African American women as mothers. Instead of playing on African American women's history of servitude to white families and mothering other's children, it beckons the stereotypes of African American women, particularly mothers as strong to the point of fault. The image of the "Black matriarch" is an enduring hallmark of the Moynihan Report, which described African American families as suffering from a perversion of traditional family gender roles. According to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, African American families suffered from an "abnormal dominance of women" that resulted in them being unsuitable mates and African American women's dominance discouraged African American men from natural family formation (Giddings, 1984, 325). The image of the "Black matriarch" is another role put upon African American women, which they have manipulated to extract power in spite of its negativity. One African American woman described the influence she holds in the legislature in terms that play on the stereotypical image of the "Black matriarch." Describing her source of influence she asserts,

> Yes, they see me as influential. I happen to be the oldest member of my delegation. A lot of them won't admit it, but a lot of them call me "Mommy-X" they say I think I am still in the classroom and I can boss them around. I take advantage of that, I really do. I take advantage of it.

219

Again, in this role, she is not viewed as a fellow legislator to be dealt with as an equal; instead, she is projected into an image that has historically been associated with emasculation of African American men in particular. She however, is able to manipulate the stereotype to her advantage and as a result, meets some of the needs of the community she represents.

Being viewed only as a sexual being often plagues women in male-dominated institutions, and as a result they are faced with warding off unwanted sexual advances. Women legislators are no exception. Legislatures, like other male-dominated environments in which women enter, are often filled with sexual harassment. Given this sexualized culture, some women are typecast into roles that reduce them to sexual beings, abating their roles as legislators. For African American women, it conjures up the image of Jezebel--the sexual seductress-- another unfavorable image historically associated with African American women, which paints the image of African American women as having insatiable sexual desires. This role construction not only creates unfavorable circumstances for the African American women cast as "the Jezebel," but also creates tensions for other women by further denigrating women's roles as legislators. As one African American woman in Georgia describes,

> Some of them [African American women] around here
> seem to get the most of their bills passed or positive
> interaction with other legislators by being the cute little
> defenseless women. [They] let them touch them
> inappropriately. I would break their arm if they put their
> hands on my waist or touched me inappropriately. Those
> are things I would not stand for, and it kind of perturbs
> me to see them do it, but I have to say, 'that's their style.'
> They don't understand what they are doing, for women in
> general, and, they seem to think that when they get a

220

> chairmanship or another position, that they have power. I
> don't equate that with power.

Though these women may appear to be rewarded for playing these roles in the legislature, they compromise the respect of their colleagues, and such behavior also has an impact on the perceptions their colleagues hold of other African American women in the institution. These perceptions cause African American women to work "on guard" being suspicious of relationships with their male colleagues, which detracts from their work of legislating.

When access to institutional leadership and other traditional avenues to institutional influence are not open to African American women, they are forced to pursue institutional influence through other means. The alternative approaches may or may not be profitable to increasing their individual influence or women's advancement in the legislature or in other institutions.

Conclusion

It is evident that being reputed as influential by one's colleagues is a direct reflection of who holds formal positions that confer institutional power. Those who were considered generally influential possessed procedural influence and were able to impact the decision making process across issue areas as well as impact the operating rules of the legislature. Therefore, general influence reflects more institutional influence. Legislators with this type of influence were almost always members of the institution's formal leadership. In rare instances, a legislator not in a formal leadership position was recognized as having some influence as a result of their ability to challenge the leadership. The conditions for a legislator to garner influence in this manner seldom

arose. Aside from those in leadership positions the characteristics that are important vary according to the legislature and its institutional preferences and norms governing interaction among members. However, without exception, African American women in these three states are not regarded as influential at this level. Without gaining such positions of power, African American women in state legislature's situation will be quite similar to women in Congress who as Noelle Norton assesses "are simply not politically powerful enough in Congress to gain the institutional advantages that will allow them to make a difference..." (Norton, 1995, 126).

In examining African American women's influence, it is clear that they have not yet become the power brokers in the big leagues. As African Americans in general increase their seniority, in Georgia and Maryland there is some possibility that they will move into the party leadership positions that confer general influence. In Mississippi, however, it is much more the case that African American women's relationships with those who move into leadership positions will become more crucial to their advancement in the institution. Given the propensity of legislative influence to be connected to personal relationships with members of the leadership, African American women in Mississippi are even less assured that remaining in the legislature and gaining seniority will result in institutional advancement. Rather than seniority, their ascension into formal positions of institutional power will have a great deal to do with their relationships with those already in these positions.

Influence in particular policy issue areas is different. While those in formal leadership hold the lion's share of influence in different policy areas, particularly committee chairs, legislators recognized more of their colleagues as having influence

beyond those in formal institutional positions. The impact of African American women and their desire to impact particular policy areas has been both positive and negative. African American women are indeed more likely to provide the equivalent of technical competence in that they are influential only in particular policy issues, while holding little influence on the legislative process, or across issue areas. African American women are more likely to find themselves afforded some influence in legislatures like the Maryland General Assembly where knowledge or prior expertise in a policy area is preferenced. Such norms are far less subjective. African American women and others seeking to influence their colleagues can acquire knowledge on a particular policy area more easily than they can appeal to and appease their colleagues' various notions of quality character traits, that would otherwise prompt them to be revered as influential.

African American women's influence is also positively impacted by the existence of a women's caucus in which they feel they can articulate their issues and have a real voice in the planning and articulation of the caucus' agenda, as is the case in Georgia. In regards to their influence on women's issues, women's caucuses have carved out an area in which women can and do have an impact. In this area, and in states with a women's caucus a sense of group-based influence was identified that translates into influence for individual members of the women's caucuses. Women legislators have been successful at creating an institutional group identity through their women's caucuses. They have been able to benefit by increasing their influence individually, as well as, collectively. Such benefits also exist for African Americans participating in Black caucuses. However, race-based influence functions differently in that it transfers across issue areas.

Race based influence emerged as an important factor in determining influence in specific policy areas. Though legislators did not include a legislator's gender and race as determinants of legislative influence, when defining the concept, they clearly use these factors in their determinations of who is and who is not influential in the institution. In defining legislative influence, legislators indicate a number of characteristics that contribute to one's influence. They do not include gender and race; however, it is clear that these attributes play a role in determining who is and who is not influential. This becomes problematic when who is influential is less a product of their work and expertise on an issue or even their seniority and becomes more a factor of their gender and race. And, while most are not as direct as those in Mississippi who repeatedly asked "Do you mean Black or white?" in response to my questions regarding influence, legislators are nevertheless indirectly influenced by both legislator's gender and race in evaluating their influence. White legislators have not availed themselves to the knowledge and expertise of African American legislators; therefore, African American legislators' influence is limited.

The possibilities of African American women being perceived as influential are very much dependent upon the context in which they are serving. African American women who did not hold leadership positions were more likely to be considered influential in Maryland than in the other states. In Maryland, more value is placed on knowledge and expertise, and African American women benefited as a result. Maryland typifies the more professional legislature, in that its members placed a high value on having those attributes. It appears that in more professional legislatures, which the Maryland General Assembly represents in this study, are more conducive to African

American women becoming influential. Just as professionalization adds to the prospects of African American women being seen as influential, the state's political culture also impacts their influence. As discussed in Chapter three, the state's political culture impacts its institutions. The strong traditionalistic political culture of Mississippi has a significant impact on African American women's prospects of being regarded as influential by their peers. While this is also the case in Georgia, its individualistic subculture offsets the severity of the effects of its traditional political culture base.

The effects of gender and race on legislative influence are many. Effects of gender and race mediate avenues that would otherwise lead to influence for African American women. With the women's caucuses, racial dynamics arise which make these caucuses problematic for African American women, where they would otherwise be a useful institutional base from which African American women could increase their influence. Likewise, African American women are stifled by gender dynamics when working with the Black caucuses that mediate their abilities to increase their influence. This leaves African American women constantly in search of non-traditional or alternative means to garner institutional power.

Chapter V
Friendship Networks: An Important Link to Influence

The previous chapter illustrated that African American women were indeed far less likely to be included as those who were perceived to be generally influential or influential on the issues they consider to be their priority issues. Only African American women who served as committee chairs were most often the exception in that they were considered among their colleagues as influential on the issues that appeared before their committees. Leaders in state legislatures are considered the most influential by the standards of most legislators.

Given the fact that few African American women are a part of the formal leadership in their state's legislature, the question remains as to whether or not they are able to influence their colleagues' decision making. In light of their limited institutional position power, building relationships that can offset the effects of their limited institutional power would be beneficial to African American women and the issues of importance to them. Is it possible for a legislator to be perceived as influential and not hold a leadership position? And, if this is indeed the case, what is the source of their influence? In this chapter, I question the viability of legislators *indirectly* garnering influence among their colleagues and increasing their impact on their colleagues' decision making when it comes to the issues of importance to them.

According to those studying power and elites, actors who are not a part of the formal institutional leadership often still play an influential role in decision making as a result of their linkages to those in formal positions (Kadushin, 1968). In many instances, legislators' abilities to systematically influence the decision-making process

may stem from the relationships that they have cultivated with those in leadership positions.

In this chapter, I examine the legislative friendships of the interviewed legislators to further understand the dynamics of legislative influence, questioning whether the increased diversity of state legislatures alters the impact of legislative friendships. Through examining African American women's peer-to-peer relationships, I further uncover factors impacting their legislative influence. In this chapter, I continue to draw on the interviews of legislators in the three case study states, focusing on a number of institutional and contextual factors impacting African American women's friendship building activities in the legislature. In analyzing these factors, I show not only the patterns of friendship development in these state legislatures, but I also further illustrate the mediating effects of gender and race on African American women's influence in the legislature. Centrally, I argue that while legislative friendships are a resource for indirect influence, gender and race can again act as mediating factors. Ultimately, I conclude that deeply seeded segregation exists in state legislatures along gender and race lines and is manifested in the make up of legislative friendship groups. This segregation further dilutes African American women's legislative capacity and compromises the effectiveness and integrity of state legislatures as democratic institutions.

Gender and race governing the basis of friendship networks, I conclude, is as much a result of racist and sexist individuals, as it is a result of the institutional and contextual factors that facilitate the formation of these friendship groups. Ultimately,

inclusion of African American women in particular friendship networks appears to be a major factor critical to explaining their limited institutional influence.

Following Patterson's approach in the late 1950s, I posed two questions to legislators. First, legislators were asked to "Name those in the legislator you consider to be among your friends." Secondly, legislators were asked to, "Name those legislators with whom you spend social time with during the session and/ or during the interim." Follow up probes were used such as "those with whom you might share a dinner or a sport outing such as a round of golf or a tennis match." Legislators were instructed to relay as many names as they wished. On average, legislators responded with the names of three colleagues who they considered friends.[1] Legislators were also asked their

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1. The 29 interviews in Mississippi uncovered a total of 95 legislative friendships. The number of friendships reported by Mississippi state legislators ranged from 0 by a very senior member to the largest number 8, being reported by a first term legislator. The 9 African American women interviewed reported a total of 34 friendships while the 8 African American men interviewed reported 29 friendships, 9 white men interviewed reported 26 friendships and 3 white women reported 9 friendships. Men received the most mentions as friends with African American men being mentioned as friends 31 times and white men receiving 30 mentions as friends. African American women received 26 mentions while white women received the fewest mentions as friends--two.

Of the 28 interviews conducted in the Georgia legislature 88 friendships were identified. The number of friendships in the Georgia legislature also ranged from 0 to 8. The interviews with 13 African American women yielded mentions of 43 friendships. African American women received 22 mentions as friends and African American men received 24 mentions as friends as did white men. White women received a total of 13 mentions as friends.

Of the 37 interviews conducted in the Maryland legislature including interviews of 12 African American women yielded, 131 friendship mentions. African American women reported 39 friendships while African American men reported 24 friendships. White women reported 27 friendships while white men reported 40 friendships. African American women received the fewest mentions as friends 21, while African American men received 28 friendship mentions. White women received 26 mentions while white men received nearly twice the number of mentions as other legislators 49.

228

opinions on the importance of legislative friendships to the process of legislating. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from their responses.

The Role of Friendship in Perceptions of Influence

The reputational approach to studying elites relies on informants to identify those in the institution who they perceive as influential (Kadushin, 1968; Weissert, 1991). As discussed in Chapter two, this approach is often criticized for its reliance on the subjective nature of perceptions (Hamm, et al., 1983; Frantzich, 1979). Because of the nature and culture of state legislatures, perceptions measured by the reputational approach are likely to correspond with measures of influence that use formal institutional position as an indicator of influence or the decision making approach using the amount of legislation as the indicator of influence (Best, 1971). Those who study influence focusing on reputations gather data on the reputation of elites using a number of sources. Informants are most often used to identify the influential, but this method is considered limiting in that it usually only results in the identification of those who are in formal positions of power without uncovering those who are influential and outside of the formal power structure. Studying the relationships of those in a group or institution is used as a means of uncovering those who are influential but are not a part of the formal leadership structure. These relationships identify a more broad group of individuals with influence (Kadushin, 1968). In seeking to define the sources of institutional influence, it is necessary to explore a number of avenues, and examining interpersonal relationships is an additional method of unraveling the complexities of institutional influence.

Success in building the appropriate interpersonal relationships is likely to enhance a legislator's reputation among his or her colleagues, while failure to do so can have a profound effect on one's legislative capacity. Legislative friendships place legislators in positions to shape the decisions of their colleagues often affording them the ability to sway the decisions of their colleagues in their favor. During interviews with longtime legislators, Thompson, Kurtz and Moncrief (1996) found that legislators identified several substantial changes in the institution over the last decade including-- the high priority of reelection, the increased significance of campaign fund raising, and increased concerns with district wide issues. However, in the midst of these critical changes, they found that the behaviors governing interpersonal relationships and interaction between individuals in their day-to-day activities have retained their significance.

These relationships serve a number of purposes in the legislature. And the benefits of these relationships to legislators cannot be overstated. As is the case with congressmen, faced with limited time and ability to master all issues before Congress, they often turn informally to their colleagues for the information necessary to make decisions (Kingdon, 1989). As devolution continues to be the name of the game for state legislatures, the realities of legislative life are that state legislators are required to process much more complex information, often over very short periods of time. More so than ever before, legislators are likely to rely heavily on their informal friendship networks as a means to process and sort the increased amount of information. As these friendship networks increase in significance, they play a greater role in determining a

legislator's influence. This increased significance dictates a closer examination of the formation of such friendships.

Research suggests that the legislative context impacts the significance of legislative friendships. In Blair and Stanley's study of the Arkansas and Texas legislatures, being able to get things done or be effective legislatively hinged on the ability to formulate personal relationships with colleagues. They found this to especially be the case in the less professional Texas legislature, which did not rely on more formal rules in making appointments, for example, the Texas legislature did not use the seniority system to assign leadership positions and committee assignments (Blair and Stanley, 1991). Likewise, many of the rules and norms of U.S. legislatures are influenced by informal structures and personal relationships in the absence of a strong party system. In a comparative analysis of Australian and American legislatures, Considine and Deutchman (1996) advance the argument that in weak party systems, such as the U.S., power is gained through informal networks and structures. However, in strong party systems, power and influence is gained through participation in the formal party structure. Similarly, Uslaner and Weber (1977) found that state legislators were more likely to take cues from their personal friends than the party leadership in the legislature.

How legislators are perceived by their colleagues is heavily influenced by their ability to attract and retain legislative friendships. This is best illustrated in French and Raven's concept of "referent power". They discuss referent power as being "used as a basis for identification and is critical to enhancing one's ability to lead because it shapes how others refer to a person whether or not they want to defer or to follow along

because others like the person." (French and Raven as cited by Durest-Lahti and Kelly, 1995, 60). With referent power, a legislator's influence is dependent upon the widening of the circle of those colleagues who are willing to follow their leadership. Increasing one's influence in the legislature is often dependent on the having an established circle of colleagues who are already willing to follow. Their willingness to follow the lead of another sends a message of credibility. Being recognized as a friend conveys a level of influence. Belonging to legislative friendship networks increases the likelihood that other legislators will be willing to defer to another's leadership on policy issues. Whether or not a legislator is willing to defer to another is dependent on whether or not they identify with their colleague, and whether or not the legislator has established a reputation for being effective and influential.

My exploration seeks to determine whether the gender and race of the legislator play a role in constructing and defining the parameters of these crucial legislative friendships. These attributes are likely to play a role in the development of legislative friendships given the intimacy associated with friendship. As Calderia, et al. (1993,8) conclude, "friendship, even in a legislature, is a relatively intimate connection, so the sharing of values and social characteristics will loom large; homogeneity constitutes one important source of friendship."

Theories on the relationship between leaders and followers also suggest that factors such as gender and race do play a role in the decisions people make regarding who to follow. For example, Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (1995) suggest that the extent to which one sex will listen to a member of the other sex's efforts at rational persuasion and the extent to which they will be able to identify personally with a leader is impacted

by gender. The willingness of a group to select a person as a leader is strongly associated with the norms and biases of the institution. Characteristics such as being male, having a particular occupation, and a certain position or rank impacts the amount of influence one has in a group, even when these characteristics do not enable the completion of the group's tasks (Verba, 1961,129 as cited by Calderia, et al., 1993, 9)

These particulars concerning leadership are quite applicable to the legislative context given the descriptions that women and legislators of color have offered of the legislature. Women legislators have described legislative institutions as "good ole' boy networks", "male bastions of power" and "male locker rooms" in which women exist as outsiders on the inside (Kirkpatrick, 1977). State legislatures have also been characterized as extensively gendered institutions, catering most to the predominance of male legislators (Durest-Lahti and Kelley, 1995; Kenney, 1996). Despite the fact that their elite status as elected officials suggest that they are insiders, their gender and/or race afford them the marginal status of outsider. Because legislative friendships are also a demarcation of who is included and excluded, they function similar to gender and race. In doing so, they, too, weigh heavily on the collective decision making process (Calderia and Patterson, 1987). The question however is whether the race and sex bias norms of state legislatures influence the formation and maintenance of these friendships.

One model of legislative friendship networks, the attribute model, suggests that legislators sharing similar characteristics such as their party identification or their leadership status are likely to form friendships. According to this model, those who hold the characteristics that adhere most to the norms of the group are the most desirable, and

there is a tendency to select as friends those who hold such characteristics (Calderia and Patterson, 1987). If the premises of the attribute model hold, then all legislators will be more likely to engage in friendships with legislators who reflect their own attributes, and African American women are unlikely to report members of the leadership as their friends. This model is likely to exasperate the norms of the institution reflecting it's racial and gender biases.

Given the significance of legislative friendships, it is necessary to understand the circumstances under which a legislator will trust another enough to build such relationships. Are legislators more inclined to build friendships with those whom the institution has deemed influential? In other words, are they more likely to seek those in leadership positions as friends? Or, do legislators simply build friendships with the legislators with whom they share common interests or those who have attributes they find attractive? Perhaps, it is a question of political party, or simple proximity as earlier studies suggest.

Regardless of the basis for the friendship's formation, being trusted as a friend in the legislature is a potential source of institutional influence, and in order to advance in state legislatures, it becomes imperative to master and excel in formulating and cultivating such relationships and effectively navigating these informal structures. This is of especial importance to those not afforded membership in elite circles via formal institutional positions of power. The biases of legislative institutions are likely to be inherent in the composition of friendship groups, but if African American women legislators are able to become a part of these groups, then it is likely to have a profound impact on their legislative influence that counters their lack of institutional power.

In the following discussion, I begin by first discussing the importance of legislative friendships from the legislators' perspective. I then analyze the friendships identified through the interview process by looking at the gender and race of both the legislator interviewed and those mentioned as friends. Following the gender and race based analysis, I use logit regression analysis to explore the impact of additional factors-- political party, committee assignment, chamber, tenure, and leadership-- that might provide alternative explanations for the basis of the friendships in the three state legislatures studied.

Building Good Relationships

Some scholars contend that both legislative friendships and the legislative trust that stem from them are declining as a definitive norm of the modern state legislature (Rosenthal, 1998; Bernick and Wiggins, 1983). Legislators in the three states interviewed were asked to discuss the role of personal friendships in the legislature and an overwhelming majority discussed these relationships as a fundamental element of the legislative process. According to my findings, legislative friendships remain a cornerstone of legislative life and legislators' dependence on close personal friends does not appear to have decreased. In fact, legislators described personal relationships as being more significant to the legislative process than knowledge of the issues.

Legislators consider respect, being honest, and keeping your word to be the bonds of friendships. One Mississippi legislator describes a formula for building these relationships that includes, "building relationships with fellow members on both sides of the aisle", "being credible", "being a team player," and "being honest." Legislators all emphasized honesty as a critical element for building strong relationships in the

legislature. Despite disagreements over legislation, with good personal relationships built on honesty, trust and mutual respect legislators feel that they can continue to work well together despite disagreements and in spite of differences in ideology. Like most legislators interviewed, a Georgia legislator described a "code of conduct" to which he expects his colleagues to adhere. His "code" was based primarily on his colleagues keeping their word, "Tell people what you can do; tell them what you can't do. Be willing to say it, have that integrity."

Building the types of relationships these legislators describe is not any easy task. According to most legislators, legislative friendships are established over time, which of course gives the advantage to more senior legislators. The more senior a legislator, the more opportunities they have had to build these legislative friendships. This, however, disadvantages African American women and other new comers to the legislature.

> No. I don't think they [friendships] are easily made. I think they are made overtime. They're made over struggles. They're made over fights. And sometimes it could be different issues, different sides on an issue. And that's where the bonds are formed and its overtime.

The seriousness of these relationships is reflected in the great care legislators take in selecting their legislative friends. Some legislators expressed the need to protect themselves from getting too involved in legislative friendships fearing that these relationships could cloud their judgement. However one Maryland woman resolves this issue by using a careful selection process,

> [Relationships] are good in the way that you need someone that you can talk to. You can't talk to everybody...you can talk to everybody... but personal things, and how you feel about some things, you need to have a person that you can bounce things off. And they understand that they can do the same to you. So it's very

good. And you form personal relationships down here
with maybe two or three people. Sometimes it's only one.

There also appears to be different levels associated with friendships in the legislature. For some legislators, friendships are such a necessity that they feel the need to engage members regardless of their political positions, "You build relationships with people whether you believe in their views or not." Because legislative friends may not be consistently supportive and are often made to gain support for a particular issue, some legislators distinguished between "real" friends and "associates" or "allies" in the legislature. An African American man in Maryland felt that the number of times he talked with other delegates and senators during the interim demonstrates the type of relationship he had with them. He concluded that, "They're *not* relationships, they are more associations." An African American woman in Maryland describes that there is a distinction between close personal friends and business relationships in the legislature,

[It is] very, very important [to form relationships]. [It is]
extremely important. Maybe the word is not personal
because none of these people are my friends, in particular.
I would never invite them to dinner at my house. But it is
important to have good collegial, professional
relationships or you have nothing.

In Baker's (1983) study of U.S. senators' relationships, he also notes a distinction between relationships in that some could be considered as strictly political and confined to the institution while others were more personal though not without political purpose.

Despite the variances in legislators' descriptions of these relationships most concluded that these relationships are a necessary part of the job that allows them to accomplish their legislative goals. Having such relationships with fellow members

provides a sense of security that makes these relationships worth the time it takes to develop them. As one Georgia legislator describes,

> I call them [friendships] political capital. They are very, very similar to a savings account at the bank. You've go to make deposits first, before you can make withdrawals. And, if you don't ever make any deposits, all of a sudden you have a need, and you go to make a withdrawal there ain't going to be anything in the account. So making deposits in that political capital account is very important, and you do that one by one. And you do it day by day, and over a period of time. That's just the way it works.

The ability to build good personal relationship was again and again defined by legislators as the key to passing legislation. Legislators' personal feelings about each others' character is as much a part of the voting process as the legislation itself, "When you go to the podium, if they don't like you, your ability, your sincerity, then your legislation is going to have problems." According to another legislator, "…when you start building relationships with people, then the legislation and other stuff takes care of itself. And I think that's something that took me a few years to learn, but I think its one of the most important things that you'll learn as a legislator."

In the legislature, it's not enough for a legislator to be knowledgeable on their top priority issues as the previous legislator argues. While technical expertise is important and impacts the process, such expertise without having a rapport with one's colleagues is fruitless. As one Maryland legislator articulated,

> We have people here who are extremely bright and extremely good on legislation and issues, but who don't have that personal relationships with people here, and they can't get votes. Its all about trying to get votes especially if you want people to step out on a limb and go against leadership or going against what they think their constituents want. We've had several people who have come through Annapolis, who have been some of the

> brightest people in the world who can't move a bill. They
> can't move it not because the issue is not right, not
> because they don't know what they're talking about; it's
> that people just don't like them. The same bill that they
> push would be moved with a different sponsor.

This legislator goes on to describe the importance of legislators being able to identify

other legislators who are well liked and the benefits of legislators aligning themselves

only with other members who are well liked. He continues,

> You see a bill one year come in with a certain sponsor and
> then the next year come in with a different sponsor and
> the bill moves. And it's all about the sponsor. So that
> becomes very important to lobbyists and people like that
> who can understand the system well enough to know who
> is well liked, who isn't. Because you want to get those
> people who are well liked to sponsor your legislation.

The pay offs of having built the right relationships can mean the difference

between having your legislation pass and having it strategically destroyed. As one

African American woman explained the advice she was given during her first term in

the Georgia legislature,

> If they like you, they're going to help you. Sometimes it
> doesn't matter what the issue is. I was told when I first
> came into the House, if they like you, they sign the bills.
> If we don't like you, we won't sign the bills.

Legislators were clear that in order to garner influence in the legislature, and

move legislation through the system, they had to have invested the time in building

good personal relationships with their fellow members. As one Mississippi legislator

contends,

> I think there is a great correlation between building
> relationships and influence. …building relationships can
> improve on your influence, because anybody can get up
> there, but its harder to get up there and change people's
> minds without them trusting you and knowing that you

care about them--that comes from having built relationships with them.

While building friendships in the legislature is perhaps one of a legislator's biggest challenges the benefits are tremendous. And, as legislators themselves recognize, the repercussions associated with not building legislative friendships are just as vast from not having legislation supported to not moving into leadership positions. With so much riding on these relationships, a legislator's career can flourish or be destroyed depending on how well they are liked by other legislators. Choosing the "right" friends becomes a crucial decision for legislators. Beyond respect, honesty, and trustworthiness, what other characteristics are important to legislators in choosing their legislative friends? In the following sections, I discuss various factors that have an impact on the formation of legislative friendships. Using logistic regression analysis, I also analyze which factors contribute most in predicting whether a legislator will chose an African American woman, African American man, white woman or white man when making friends in the legislature.

Gender and Race Based Legislative Friendship in the Era of Diversity?

While legislators generally agree about the usefulness of having legislative friendships and the pay-offs associated with building such relationships with the "right" legislators, in each legislature its members seemed to be less strategic concerning the formal institutional position of their choice in friends. Instead, they appear more influenced by the gender and race of their potential friendship choices. In all three legislatures, gender and race appear to be a strong indicator of legislators' friendship choices. In looking at the friendships of each group, African American men and women

and white men and women legislators, it was consistently true that each was more likely to choose members of their same gender and race group as friends.

Today's legislatures are more diverse than ever before yet, they have not adapted well to this increased diversity. My analysis of friendships in the three case study states reveals that amidst the great diversity that is today's state legislature lies a deeply entrenched racial and gender based segregation. In each legislature, legislators were more likely to mention friends that were of their same racial and gender group. For example in Georgia, 40 percent of African American women's friendships were with other African American women and 42 percent of their relationships were with African American men while only 12 percent were with white women and only 2 percent with white men. Such differences are evident with each group in each state (See Table 5-1). The racial and gender separations in these legislatures along friendship lines are tremendous. Table 5-1 illustrates that legislators first and foremost select as friends those with whom they share both gender and race.

While fellow members of both the same gender and race rank as the most desirable, legislators also chose as friends those of their same race, but of the opposite gender. For the most part, few legislators mentioned friendships with legislators outside of their racial group. In Georgia, for example, no white men have African Americans -- men or women as friends.

For African American legislators this racial separation appears to be more of an issue that they view as problematic, and appears to be less of an issue for their white counterparts. African American legislators, for the most part indicate that there is a

Table 5-1: Legislators' Friendship Choices in Three State Legislatures

Legislators	Friendship Choices			
	African American Women	African American Men	White Women	White Men
Georgia				
African American Women (n=43)	40%	42%	12%	2%
African American Men (n=12)	33	42	-	8
White Women (n=11)	9	9	55	27
White Men (n=22)	-	-	9	86
Maryland				
African American Women (n=39)	39%	23%	10%	21%
African American Men (n=24)	13	54	21	13
White Women (n=27)	7	4	44	41
White Men (n=40)	3	13	13	68
Mississippi				
African American Women (n=34)	53%	29%	-	15%
African American Men (n=29)	21	48	3	17
White Women (n=9)	11	22	11	44
White Men (n=23)	4	22	-	70

need to build relationships across racial lines. Though some African American legislators reject automatic relationships built on the basis of race, the prevalence of racial relationships abound. An African American man in Georgia expressed his disdain for such race-based ties,

> As with life or with political life, if you want people to help you, you first have to *build* relationships. So often people want to think that their relationship is based on their race or their party. But, it goes beyond that. And, I think that it's important that we realize that we may be of the same race or the same party, but that doesn't mean you have a relationship.

Upon entering the Maryland legislature, one African American woman describes being mentored by a white woman colleague who had been in the legislature for a number of years and found the advice she offered to be the reason she has moved into her current position in the legislature. She asserts that African American women must be able to "spread your tent and be sure that you are able to coalesce and work with people that can help you to get your agenda accomplished." An African American woman in Georgia echoes this point explaining an important lesson she learned in a legislative training with legislators from across the county,

> One of the things that became very apparent to me was the need to build coalitions. As an African American, Democratic woman, I have to move outside of those three groups. I can't count on all African Americans. I certainly can't count on all women. And, I cannot count on all Democrats. So, in terms of learning how to effectively cross the aisle that was one thing that I learned as part of that program, and it has worked very well for me.

Though African American legislators express that they realize the need to form friendships that extend beyond their gender and race groups, they still as a group have not implemented this approach, and their white colleagues do not express the sentiment at all.

African American women discussed building relationships across gender and race lines as a necessity of the job, rather than an act in which they freely elected to engage. According to their explanations for forming these relationships, it seems that African American women are forming relationships with their white colleagues in order to perform what they see as the role of a legislator, rather than as a result of their preferences. African American women understood that the role of legislator requires that they build relationships with their colleagues. Their approach to this task reflects an understanding of the norms of the political institution. For several of them, their understanding of their role as a legislator reflected the traditional construction of a legislator as a white male in that their efforts were directed toward emulating their white male colleagues, even in their choices of friends. Properly performing this role requires that they adopt the friendship patterns of their white male colleagues. One legislator lamented that in order to be successful in the legislature, African American women would have to overcome the way they have been socialized,

> All African American women need to broaden their
> associations. As girls in the south, we were trained to be
> afraid of white men. And you know why, we had good
> reason to be afraid of them. So it [being in the legislature]
> is clearly anti everything that you were ever taught.
> Because I work with practically all white men you've got
> to get out of that shell. You've got to get out of that 'I
> won't be comfortable if I'm not in a Black group." You'll
> never rise to the top doing it, not in this particular arena.
> So you've got to be able to sit with all white males, as I

244

did on my subcommittee – I was chairman with all white
males –, and be comfortable, and make them comfortable.
And learn who they really are and what they really like
and what they will vote for and what they won't vote for.
That's what makes you successful. You cannot be
successful without it. You can't be afraid if they are blue
or red or yellow or green and you're black.

Despite fulfilling what she saw as the requirements associated with her role as a
legislator, in her mind she has never abandoned the realities of her identity as an
African American woman. However, she found that in order to accomplish the goals
she set out to obtain in becoming a legislator, she would have to become more like her
white male colleagues. In her words,

You've got to get past your race, but never forget it. And
[think] how am I going to deal with it? -- You never
forget it. -- But you've got to get out and be able to
mingle in this particular society the way it's structured in
Annapolis. The white males still dominate. You've got to
get in there. I thought I wouldn't be able to handle money
and power, [its] not my comfort zone. There is no comfort
zone. Feel uncomfortable, but you've got to make
everybody think you're very comfortable, that you're not
uptight. You've got to be able to play poker, take a beer
and do whatever you've got to do. You can't get all
uptight. But you've got to still remember who you are and
what your goal is. Never forget your goal.

The need to emulate their white male colleagues strains the relationships
between African American women. African American women express strong
disagreement over this approach to being a legislator. And many reject this approach,
and this rejection is evident in the overwhelming propensity of African American
women to select other African American women as their friends in the legislature. This
rejection is also manifested in their expectations of other African American women's
behavior. They expect them to differ from white men and women in the legislature,

245

especially in their treatment of African American women. Speaking out about the actions of another African American woman colleague, one African American woman states,

> I think that her way of dealing with her influence is no different than any white boy, she's not empowering other Black women and has not been nurturing to them. As she moved into power, I could see that she was not about using her power to help Black women. She has been just the opposite. Because of that I don't even speak to her.

Given this dissension over relationships with their white male colleagues, it would appear that white women and African American women in the legislature would be allies. With women's caucuses in both Georgia and Maryland, it would appear that these groups would facilitate the formation and maintenance of friendships between African American women and white women. It seems, however that they have very little impact on friendship formations among women across racial lines. Though both African American women and white women are very active in these groups, it has had little impact on their relationship building. In Georgia, a state in which the women's caucus has a very strong presence, only one white woman mentions an African American woman as a friend (See Table 5-1).

The exclusiveness typical of the good ole' boy networks -- often protested by women legislators--is mirrored by women and men of color as their numbers in the legislature increase. Entry into these exclusive groups is often highly selective and they further perpetuate the insider yet outsider phenomena. These groups solicit members that fit characteristics that they see in themselves, quite similar to Patterson's (1991) descriptions using the attribute model for describing friendship networks. Even with African American women's participation in the women's caucuses these cliques form

and are a detriment to the coalition building potential among women. As an African American women accounts,

> ...they bring in one, two, three, or four that they think are like them, or they think they can control. So that's the good ole' woman's network. And, I looked at the good ole' boy network and I looked over there and saw the same thing happening with the women. I didn't want to give my time and energy to something that's not positive.

While gender-to-gender racism is apparent in African American women's voices and inferred through the friendship selections of both African American women and white women legislators, the most strained relationships continue to exist between men and women and further compromise relationship building and coalition building. One male legislator realized during our interview that his friends were all men. His descriptions of his friendships illuminated their fraternal nature, especially in light of the credit he gives to his male friends' fathers for "raising him as a young man in politics." The strains between men and women can become quite complex. For example, in Mississippi and Maryland the differences between mentions of African American men and women and white men and women as friends keenly show that sexism manifests itself as an intra-racial conflict. As one African American woman expressed,

> If you look at this body, there are five women in here and the rest of them are men. They don't think it's important to build relationships with women. First of all, they think you are not going to do anything, anyway. You have nothing to offer until you get to be a committee chair then they want to get behind you.

A legislator's gender still has a profound impact on shaping these relationships and can define the insiders from the outsiders, even in circumstances in which a

legislator should otherwise be included based on other characteristics. For example, one first term African American woman described the circumstances under which she experienced exclusion, as result of her gender. A group of her male colleagues also in their first term formed a men's basketball team and began competing in team competitions. She noted that this activity allowed these men --both African American and white to bond, and she could see the effects of their relationship during the legislative session. As she describes,

> I think that they are men and there are more of them. There are more opportunities for them to associate together just based on common interests outside of the legislative process. They have a basketball team. A team in and of itself requires practice and relationships and coaching. So I think that probably facilitates some of their relationships whereas we [women] don't necessarily have that social physical activity to help us develop relationships. I'm sure it doesn't hurt their ability; I think it probably helps. When you're social with someone and a piece of their legislation comes across your desk, you probably look at it more in terms of wanting to help them. …who you socialize with should not count, ideally, but that's not always reality.

The complexities of building legislative friendships are compounded for African American women given the emphasis on gender and race in these relationships. For these women, there are just as many penalties for building relationships with their white colleagues as there are for not building relationships with these colleagues. And, even in attempts to follow the appropriate race code, and attempt to build relationships only with members of their own race, African American women are challenged. In that African American men most often chose to befriend other African American men, not to mention that these relationships are often built around male-bonding activities from which African American women are excluded adhering to the race code is a challenge

for African American women. While gender and race are factors impacting legislative friendships, what are the additional factors that legislators value in choosing their legislative friends?

Institutional and Contextual Factors Impacting Friendship Networks

Most studies of legislative friendships were conducted in legislatures that were vastly homogeneous bodies. Particularly the work of Samuel Patterson and Gregory Calderia (1987) contribute most of our knowledge of the foundations and explanation of legislators' choice of friends. And, given that their work is based on the 1965 Iowa state legislature[2], there is little if any diversity among the legislatures' members; therefore, these authors do not explore the race nor the gender of the legislators in their models of legislative friendships. Calderia and Patterson's study found several characteristics that make legislators more desirable as friends such as representing an urban district, prior experience in government, holding a leadership position, party identification, and their legislative activism. The authors found all these attributes significant in choosing friends in the legislature, however neither the race nor the gender of the legislators were considered.

Calderia and Patterson's work can potentially remain relevant in the modern legislature. I expect that institutional and contextual factors would continue to play a part in determining legislators' selection of friends. One of the major arguments exposed by these authors is the role of proximity in facilitating friendships. They have

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2. Patterson and Calderia conducted additional analysis of data collected by Hedlund of the 1965 Iowa state legislature. Patterson also analyzed the patterns of interpersonal relationships in the 1957-58 Wisconsin Assembly for which the same argument of white male homogeneity would be made.

argued that propensity of legislators to build friendships with fellow members is largely connected to the amount of interaction they have. As well, they test the influence of characteristics and attitudes of legislators in attracting friends and whether legislators who share similar attitudes and characteristics are more likely to choose each other as friends. Given Calderia and Patterson's work, I expect that a number of factors that capture proximity -- county, tenure, committee assignment, and chamber-- are likely to have an impact on friendship choices. Legislators of the same political party are expected to build friendships in that they share ideological standings on most issues; therefore, I expect that members of the same party will be more likely to select one another as friends. Likewise, leadership is likely to have an impact in that leaders who are viewed as the most influential in the legislature will be more sought out as friends. Tables 5-2 and 5-3 show the results of this analysis.

Friendships and Legislative Cohorts

Legislators who are cohorts and share the same tenure standing in the legislature are likely to have had many opportunities to form friendship bonds. I define cohorts as legislators who entered the legislature in the same year, whether elected or appointed to the chamber. In addition to learning the ropes of the legislature together, legislative cohorts also are thrust together in many other settings. In the Mississippi legislature, for example, seating assignments are made according to tenure. The more junior legislators are seatmates. And, in Georgia office space is assigned according to tenure; therefore, cohorts share office suites in the legislature giving them many opportunities for interaction. Given the close quarters shared by legislative cohorts in each state, I expect that friendships would have evolved as a result of their high levels of interaction.

Table 5-2: Characteristics of Legislators' Friendship Choices by State

Legislators	Friendship Choices' Characteristics				
	Fellow County Representative	Leadership Position	Shared Chamber	Shared Committee Assignment	Legislative Cohort
Georgia (n=83)	37%	52%	87%	47%	30%
Maryland (n=124)	57	40	86	32	30
Mississippi (n=89)	10	55	93	72	29

251

Table 5-3: Characteristics of Legislators' Friendship Choices

Legislators	Fellow County Representative	Leadership Position	Friendship Choices' Characteristics Shared Chamber	Shared Committee Assignment	Legislative Cohort
Georgia					
African American Women (n=41)	39%	61%	83%	44%	32%
African American Men (n=10)	60	40	90	60	50
White Women (n=11)	55	55	73	55	27
White Men (n=21)	14	38	100	43	19
Maryland					
African American Women (n=36)	61%	36%	89%	42%	31%
African American Men (n=24)	71	25	71	8	29
White Women (n=26)	35	46	77	31	35
White Men (n=38)	61	47	97	40	26
Mississippi					
African American Women (n=33)	3%	64%	85%	61%	9%
African American Men (n=26)	15	42	100	77	39
White Women (n=8)	-	25	100	88	75
White Men (n=22)	18	68	96	77	32

Contrary to my expectations, less than a third of legislators in each state mentioned friendships with their legislative cohorts (See Table 5-2). African American women in the Mississippi legislature were least likely to report members of their cohort as friends. In fact, nine out of ten African American women in the Mississippi legislature report that their friends are not those with whom they entered the legislature (See Table 5-3).

In Georgia, the 1992 elections brought a highly diverse group of legislators to the legislature, and experienced a growth in the number of women elected, as did Congress and other elective bodies (Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, 1997,144). This election also reflected the results of the demographic shifts in Georgia documented by the 1990 Census numbers. With this increase in the numbers of women and people of color elected in1992, I expected friendships among legislative cohorts in Georgia to be more prevalent than in the other states, especially among African American men and women and white women. For African American men, this is indeed the case half (50 percent) of the legislative friendships African American men report are with legislators who share their same tenure. However, only a third (32 percent) of African American women's friendships are with members of their legislative cohort and only a quarter of white women report friendships with their legislative cohorts which is in keeping with legislative friendships among members in other states (See Table 5-3).

In interviews of legislators, many mentioned that they had been able to build friendships with their cohorts. And, making friends with one's cohorts appears more important for legislators in their first term in the legislature. Once legislators find their way around the legislature, they appear to expand their friendship circles to include

more legislators than those of their cohort. A Mississippi legislator finds that she is more comfortable with members of her cohort. Other first- term legislators share this sentiment. As one Georgia legislator expresses, building relationships with members of their cohort as new members to the body is easier than attempting to forge relationships with legislators who have served a number of terms. As he describes,

> It's easy to make friends with the newcomers, but to make friends with the friends who have been here a long time, the old timers its much more difficult. And I understand that; these guys have been together for years and years and they know each other and they relate to each other.

Fellow Committee Members

With much of the work of state legislatures occurring in legislative committees, legislators must work long hours with their fellow committee members. I expect that this time spent with committee members is likely to account for the basis of some legislative friendships. In the Maryland General Assembly, legislators are only assigned one committee, and much of their legislative days and additional socializing throughout the legislative session is done with their fellow committee members. Given the increased scrutiny of relationships between individual legislators and lobbyists, the wining and dining that lobbyists once did on a one on one basis with legislators has changed. Legislators are more likely to be entertained by lobbyists in the context of dinners with the entire membership of their committees. Committee members have additional opportunities to socialize and form relationships, as a result of this concern for ethical behavior between legislators and lobbyists. And, while legislators in Georgia

and Mississippi have multiple committee assignments, they are still required to spend substantial amounts of time in these committees.

In Maryland, legislators are most likely to branch out beyond their fellow committee members in choosing friends. Only a third (32 percent) of Maryland legislators claimed friendships with those on their committee, far fewer than Georgia and Mississippi. Table 5-2 shows that African American women (42 percent) and white men (40 percent) in Maryland are most likely to find colleagues with whom they are able to build relationships serving on their committees (See Table 5-3).

It is of no surprise that more legislators report friendships with their fellow committee members in Georgia and Mississippi. In Mississippi, committee assignments appear to play a much larger role in legislative friendships with nearly three quarters (72 percent) of legislators reporting legislative friendships with their fellow committee members and nearly half of legislators in Georgia (47 percent) reporting such friendships (See Table 5-3). The large number of committee based friendships in these states is likely a product of the larger number of committee assignments each legislator holds in Mississippi and Georgia. Both state legislatures rank among the highest in terms of the number of committee assignments per member (Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, 1997, 152). African American women in Mississippi are however slightly less likely to report friendships with their fellow committee members, and in Georgia both African American women and white men are the least likely to form these relationships in committee.

<u>Proximity and Friendship</u>

The proximity of legislators' districts contributes to the commonalties they share within the legislature, and I expect mutual concern over the affairs of their area of the state will facilitate relationships. The relationships between legislators of the same county often extend beyond the confines of the legislature, and as a result a different level of trust evolves between county friends. According to one Maryland legislator,

> My senator could be one of my own children because he grew up with my kids. And we have a time. Sometimes on Saturday mornings I would cook breakfast and I'd call everybody here. Say guys, I've got breakfast and they all show up. And it's an interesting thing because some of the Saturday mornings if I get to him in time the mayor will show up... and some of the city council representatives. So, we will bring others in from time to time--different people. They have a saying in my district that if you're invited to X's house for breakfast or for lunch you've made it. And it's a very interesting thing and it's fun. I enjoy it and we get a lot business done at that time.

The type of relationships established among these county friends is quite similar to what Baker (1980) identifies the "personal" relationships among United States senators. Baker differentiated between several types of legislative friendships, finding that some senators forged bonds that reflected more personal than political attachments.

Given the propensity for single member districts I have used shared counties to capture legislators' spatial proximity, as opposed to shared districts. I expect that legislators from the same county will be more likely to build relationships with one another.

The Maryland General Assembly is largely organized according to county delegations, which are responsible for deciding the fate of local legislation. As one

delegation chair in Maryland described, "...county delegations are pretty powerful when you consider that outside of education, the bulk of what we deal with is local legislation." A member's county also determines the location of their office space; county delegation members share office areas in the House and the same is true to a lesser degree in the Senate. The institutional structure of the Maryland legislature relies heavily on county delegations and as a result provides increased opportunities for interaction among members of the same county. I expect that this increased interaction results in legislators claiming more friends among their fellow county delegation members. This formal organization by county delegation has also given life to a host of informal norms, which affect many aspects of legislative interaction, and legislative friendships are also affected.

My expectations about the significance of the geographical proximity in facilitating legislative friendships did not hold for all three states. As it turns out, county friends are most prevalent among legislators in Maryland and to a lesser extent in Georgia. But, Mississippi is quite different; in fact, one in ten (89 percent) legislative friendships are between members from different counties (See Table 5-2).

In Maryland, more than half (57 percent) of the legislative friendships mentioned were between members from the same county. As is shown in Table 5-3, of the three states, county friends are more prominent among Maryland friends. African American men were most likely to befriend their fellow county members while white women were least likely. Many of these legislators make friends with their fellow county legislators to facilitate their duties as legislators. For example, one Maryland legislator described how she developed a friendship with another member from her

257

district during the course of activities legislative activities after the session as she remarks, "During the interim we have to see each other because of the Democratic club that we belong to." Another Maryland legislator describes her relationship with members from her county and specifically her fellow district mates,

> For the most part, we do everything together. Our personal appearances are together. If we can't go, we cover for each other. We have that kind of working relationship, which makes working in this office so wonderful.

Geographical proximity functions slightly differently in Georgia and Mississippi. The number of rural areas in these states impacts the formation of legislative friendships. Legislators in the Georgia and Mississippi legislatures are very cognizant of the different issues concerning legislators from urban and more rural areas. As a result of the distribution of the population, Georgia and Mississippi legislators are deeply divided along urban and rural lines. According to one legislator in Georgia, because there are only six cities in the entire state, legislators from more urban areas must be "aggressive about securing resources for their areas given the states' tendency to allocate resources to more rural areas." A Georgia legislator described the key to getting health care legislation through the legislature for example is to have a "good combination of rural versus urban legislators" signed onto the bill. This urban/rural divide creates cohesiveness among legislators from like areas. Nearly one in four (37 percent) legislative friendships in Georgia is between members from the same county. And, African American men were the most likely to find friendship among their fellow county members, while white men in Georgia were most apt to build friendships with members from differing counties (See table 5-3).

This difference in Mississippi legislators' friendship preferences is in large part explained by their preferences to make friends with legislators of their same race. Race supercedes shared county interests as a basis of legislative friendships. In Mississippi, legislators are more likely to have friends who are of their same race and from a different part of the state than claim as friends, members who are from their area and are of a different race. Race in the Mississippi State legislature is the most pronounced norm of the institution and its folkways are dictated largely by interactions among members along racial lines. Legislative friendships are no different from any other occurrence in the Mississippi legislature; they too are governed by legislators' race.

While in Mississippi, the significance of race in configuring the friendship norms are more evident, the significance of race in configuring the friendship norms of the Georgia and Maryland legislatures also can not be ignored. In Georgia, the divide existing between legislators of urban areas of the state and rural areas governs the interactions of legislators, but this urban-rural divide also translates into a racial divide. As one African American woman shared, there are instances that exasperate these divides in the legislature, and race usually overrides the urban-rural divide. She explains,

> You may have two or three bills that divide the legislators [according to] race. ...we voted on a bill to prosecute a child who is 13 years old. And the reason why that bill came into existence was an incident that happened in Augusta last year when this young man stabbed his teacher, who is a white teacher. She is now in a coma. The bill was introduced and it passed. It was hard passing to a law where jails will have the power to prosecute a child 13 years old. And it was divided. It really was divided. And our delegation, we have three on the House side, there are three of us -- three blacks and three whites. We divided really by race and they all went on that line.

> And we understood it, but you had to know what's going
> to happen in the first place.

In that there are more African American legislators representing urban areas of the state, than rural areas, the urban-rural divide functions much like Mississippi's racial divide. And in Maryland, the county delegations are equally divided along racial lines in that African Americans are clustered as representatives of the predominantly African American counties of Baltimore City and Prince Georges counties.

Chamber Friends

In my analysis, I have chosen to focus on the entire legislature, but I recognize that legislators are likely to interact more with members in their same chamber. I expect that given the small numbers of African Americans in each state relative to the number of white legislators, African Americans will be more likely than white legislators to interact with legislators from the other chamber. Women are also likely to interact with members from the opposite chamber, especially given that the two states with women's caucuses extend membership to members of both chambers As expected, legislators are most likely to build friendships with those who they share a chamber. In all three states legislature this finding was consistent.

Friends in Leadership

As discussed in the previous chapter, legislative leaders are considered among the most influential legislators in the legislature. Given the influence garnered through these institutional positions, I expect that legislators will desire friendships with those in leadership as a means of having direct access to legislative power. Patterson (1959) found in the Wisconsin legislature, the high visibility of leaders contributed to their desirability in social networks. Calderia and Patterson (1987) find that the same is true

for legislators of the Iowa legislature. For the purpose of this analysis, legislators were considered members of the leadership if they held one of the party leadership positions or if they held the position of committee chair or vice chair of a major committee.

Though legislators point to leaders as the most influential members, they do not appear to seek them specifically for friendship with overwhelming consistency. In Maryland, legislators were least likely to cite members of the leadership as their friends, while legislators in Georgia and Mississippi were more evenly split regarding the selection of leaders as friends (See Table 5-2). The lower numbers in Maryland are likely to be a reflection of the number of committee chairs in Maryland in comparison to the much higher numbers in Georgia and Mississippi. It is also interesting to note in Table 5-3 that African American men and women are least likely to cite members of the leadership as their friends. This is likely a result of there being only one African American chairing a standing committee in each chamber of the Maryland legislature.

Though legislators are just as likely to have friends in leadership, as they are not to have relationships with leaders, they understand the value of acquiring friendships with such influential members. Tremendous benefits await legislators who have built the right relationships with members of the leadership. As one African American woman in the Maryland legislature describes, "The leadership often gives bills to certain members to carry these bills. The bills are certain to be successful because they are backed by the leadership."

Choosing the right friends can mean moving into leadership and obtaining favorable committee assignments, which bodes with the argument that such friendships

are stepping stones to increased institutional influence. According to an African American woman in Maryland,

> It's very difficult [to become influential]. A lot of it has to do with timing. If a person is rising from the rank of a party chairman or even from committee chairman to be Speaker or President of the senate, and you can pick that person you're on the way. That's called 'hitching your wagon to the star.'

Though most African American women do not have personal relationships with those in leadership, they recognized the pay-offs others experience as result of these relationships. A Maryland woman recognized that her colleagues who had befriended the leadership were given legislation to carry on behalf of the leadership. With the leadership's backing, this legislation was sure to pass and the legislator would receive the accolades of passing this legislation. As she describes,

> Leadership more or less gives some legislators their bills. They know that they they're going to be the sponsor and the bill is going to be successful. That's just the way it is down here. They have certain ones that are on certain committees and they're going to build upon that. Their bills go in the chairman's drawer.

Essentially, she describes this process as one of selection and grooming of the future members of leadership. With this grooming process, the legislators also are appropriately active in the legislature to support their move into leadership.

The pay offs of building the right relationships cannot be overstated, but the burden of building these relationships with those in leadership are often reduced for some legislators. For some legislators, building relationships with those in leadership means aggressively pursuing the leadership, and in other instances members of the leadership pursue legislators. Few African American women describe their

relationships with those in leadership developing without their aggressive pursuits. However, other legislators do experience the development of a relationship with the leadership as a result of the leadership's urging. As one African American man in Maryland attests,

> The best way to get to know people, because you work so hard here, is after the end of the day. Just going out and talking to people, that's the way that I got to know people and I actually got to know the speaker [this way]. I didn't know the Speaker; I hadn't done anything. He called me and said, 'I'd like to have dinner with you. I'd like to sit down and be able to talk.' I accepted. That's really the best way I think of increasing your relations. I tell people when they come here if they really want to move up in leadership, there are a lot of people in leadership now because they have a personal relationship with the speaker or with people, that's why even I'm chair. I've only been here four years and have never chaired anything. I was the vice chair but I never chaired a subcommittee. But it's the personal relationships. People are willing to give you the benefit of the doubt, give you a chance. …it is like anything else, people like to see people move up that they like.

Variables Most Impacting Friendship Choices

Friendships in the legislature are complex making it is difficult to discern which factors account for why members will chose to make friends with particular legislators and choose not to befriend others. In the previous sections, I have provided some analyses suggesting the factors that contribute to the selection of friends. But to delve deeper into an understanding of legislative friendships particularly to understand the true effects of gender and race in determining legislative friendships, I performed logit regression analyses with a dichotomous dependent variable denoting whether a

263

legislator was chosen or not as a friend.[3] Tables 5-4 through 5-6 report the factors contributing to the probability that a legislator will be mentioned as a friend. County, chamber, committee assignment, leadership status, tenure, and the informant's gender and race were the independent variables considered in answering, "What is the likelihood that a legislator will be selected as a friend by his or her colleagues?"[4]

In all three states, the race of the legislator naming his or her friends was significant, and in the expected direction with the exception of white women in Maryland and Mississippi. Race in these state legislatures is clearly a determining factor in legislative friendships. In Maryland, the probability of an African American man being selected as a friend increases seven times if the legislator selecting is also African American, and for white men in Maryland, the probability of being selected decreases.

Gender was significant and in the expected direction for each group with the exception of white women in Maryland and Mississippi. In the case of Mississippi, because the number of white women mentioned as friends was so low, it is difficult to make predictions about the probability of white women legislators being selected as

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3. The models estimate the effect of each variable on the probability that legislators of each racial ethnic and gender group will be mentioned as friends. I analyzed each racial/gender group in each state by performing separate logit regression. The friendship choice was coded 1 if a legislator of the corresponding gender and race were chosen and 0 if they were not chosen.

4. Each of these variables is dichotomous variables and was coded 0,1. If the legislator and the friend mentioned were from the same county, the legislator-friend pair was coded as 1 and similarly sharing at least one committee assignment, sharing the same chamber, or having the same tenure in office were each coded as 1. For the purpose of the logit analysis, the friend's leadership status was taken into account given that legislators are expected to choose as friends those members who are in leadership positions and if the friend mentioned serves in a leadership position they were coded as 1 for leadership. African American legislators were coded as 1 as were women legislators. All others were coded as 0.

264

Table 5-4: Characteristics Impacting Friendship Choices Among Georgia Legislators (n=88)

	Dependent Variable: Friendship Choice							
	African American Woman		African American Man		White Woman		White Man	
Independent Variables	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)
Legislator's Race	3.247*** (1.142)	25.701	3.258*** (1.132)	26.008	-3.382*** (1.275)	.034	-4.445*** (1.101)	.033
Legislator's Gender	.231 (.762)	1.259	-.163 (.747)	.850	4.239*** (1.468)	69.306	-3.411*** (1.245)	.012
Same County	.100 (.619)	1.105	-.387 (.632)	.679	.362 (.847)	1.436	.568 (.968)	1.765
Same Chamber	.333 (.909)	1.395	-1.158 (.931)	.314	1.579 (1.675)	4.849	.661 (1.460)	1.937
Shared Committee Assignment	.311 (.666)	1.364	-.689 (.659)	.502	.700 (.830)	2.013	.333 (.926)	1.395
Legislative Cohorts	-1.310* (.692)	.2696	.772 (.653)	2.164	.289 (.918)	1.335	.435 (1.037)	1.545
Friend's Leadership Position	.285 (.625)	1.329	.591 (.636)	1.806	-3.340*** (1.310)	.036	1.827* (1.094)	6.215
Constant	-4.001** (1.409)		-2.490* (1.399)		-3.794*** (1.801)		.507 (1.571)	

*p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01 Based on a two tailed test of significance

Table 5-5: Characteristics Impacting Friendship Choices Among Mississippi Legislators (n=95)

Dependent Variable: Friendship Choice

Independent Variables	African American Woman		African American Man		White Woman		White Man	
	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)	B (S.E.)	Exp (B)
Legislator's Race	1.737** (.851)	5.677	1.176** (.560)	3.242	.467 (1.679)	1.595	-2.413*** (.605)	.090
Legislator's Gender	.874 (.600)	2.397	-.731 (.511)	.481	.420 (1.533)	1.521	-.225 (.585)	.798
Same County	-.781 (1.834)	.458	-2.0154* (1.146)	.133	-9.457 (204.072)	.000	2.441** (.979)	11.485
Same Chamber	-2.926* (1.727)	.0536	7.418 (24.605)	1.665	.766 (278.999)	2.151	.738 (1.441)	2.093
Shared Committee Assignment	.133 (.654)	1.143	.223 (.601)	1.250	8.880 (125.287)	7.187	-.474 (.696)	.623
Legislative Cohorts	-1.550* (.883)	.212	.400 (.583)	1.492	11.200 (84.605)	7.310	.153 (.632)	1.165
Friend's Leadership Position	.085 (.610)	1.089	.440 (.525)	.644	1.378 (1.685)	3.967	.214 (.590)	1.240
Constant	.297 (1.831)		-8.321 (24.612)		23.908*** (269.437)		.080 (1.533)	

*p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01 Based on two tailed test of significance

Table 5-6: Characteristics Impacting Friendship Choices Among Maryland Legislators (n=131)

Dependent Variable: Friendship Choice

Independent Variables	African American Woman		African American Man		White Woman		White Man	
	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)
Legislator's Race	1.805*** (.684)	5.388	2.026*** (.597)	7.580	-.791* (.492)	.429	-1.749* (.456)	.443
Legislator's Gender	1.684*** (.649)	6.078	-1.238* (.541)	.290	-.847 (.492)	2.206	-.815*** (.450)	.174
Same County	1.144* (.627)	3.138	1.097* (.571)	2.995	-.308 (.480)	.735	-1.189*** (.468)	.305
Same Chamber	.085 (.795)	1.089	.051 (.709)	1.052	.883 (.844)	2.418	-.699 (.624)	.497
Shared Committee Assignment	.088 (.648)	1.092	-.074 (.598)	.929	.001 (.509)	1.001	.098 (.496)	1.103
Legislative Cohorts	-.120 (.627)	.887	.507 (.576)	1.661	.133 (.504)	1.142	-.439 (.506)	.644
Friend's Leadership Position	-.203 (.603)	.816	.168 (.548)	1.183	-.096 (.504)	.909	.235 (.466)	1.265
Constant	4.578*** (1.144)		-2.860*** (.966)		-2.020** (.944)		1.944*** (.764)	

*p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01 Based on two tailed test of significance

friends. However, these few mentions are quite telling in the context of the Mississippi legislature. Women lack visibility in the legislature, especially among white men. Given the significance of race in this legislature, being invisible among white men would render them invisible all together given the likelihood of legislators to mention as friends only members of their own racial group. In Maryland, gender was not a factor reaching statistical significance, but it was in the expected direction.

Interestingly, in Maryland legislators being from the same county is statistically significant and in the right direction for the probability of selecting both African American men and women. This is true only for African American legislators; in examining the probability of white men being selected as friends the county variable is significant but in the opposite direction, and for white women this variable is not significant at all. While the significance of this variable appears to further substantiate the argument that legislative friendships are built on the basis of geographical proximity, what is most interesting is the fact that this is only true for African Americans are clustered in the same counties. Therefore, it appears that in Maryland while African American legislators are more likely to have friends from their same county, race has a mediating effect, further substantiating its significance in the formation of legislative friendships.

There was less consistency across states and groups with the other variables--serving in the same chamber, befriending those in leadership, sharing the same committee assignments, and being cohorts. The committee assignment variable was consistent in that holding the other variables constant the committee assignment added the least to explanations of friendship choices. This is in direct contrast to Calderia and

Patterson's (1987) findings in which shared committee assignments was one of the most significant contributions to legislators' choices of friends. African American women in Mississippi and Georgia are most likely to be mentioned as friends by those members who did not enter the legislature with them, while this variable did not prove to be significant with other groups of legislators. Likewise, being from the same chamber had a negative impact on the choice of African American women as friends in the Mississippi legislature. This suggests that African American women in both Georgia and Mississippi are more apt to build relationships with a more broad selection of legislators, branching out beyond their chamber and their cohorts. However, given the significance of gender and race in both states, they are reaching across these differences in order to build relationships with other African American women, suggesting that gender and race overrides these other factors.

While the literature suggests that legislators will select members of leadership more often as friends, this was not the case across groups and states. Leadership was only significant for white men and women in Maryland. The probability of a white man being mentioned as a friend increases significantly if he is a member of the leadership. But, for white women, the probability of being selected actually decreases if they are members of the leadership. It is not surprising that leadership has no effect on the propensity of members to select African Americans as friends, given the paucity of their leadership positions in these legislatures.

Legislative friendships in all three legislatures were racially segregated to varying degrees. And, in each state, institutional factors are largely responsible for the racial bifurcation in friendship networks. Legislative bodies share many norms and

269

values, which influence the formation of legislative friendship networks. Each state legislature has its own set of norms and folkways unique to that body. These norms, informed by the state's political culture, affect the formation and function of interpersonal relationships. As well, the values placed on certain relationships are informed by the attributes valued by the institution. The values associated with membership in certain legislative circles are a product of the norms and values of the institution.

Barriers to the Expansion of Legislative Friendships

Though gender and race appear to be the strongest guiding factors in determining who legislators will chose as friends, there are some additional factors that contribute to the racial and gender based segregation of legislative friendships in these institutions. The extent to which legislators socialize after hours and the growing numbers of women and African Americans in the legislature-- while dramatically different-- are both barriers to extending friendships in the legislature beyond the confines of gender and race and help to explain these separations.

Home By Dark: Socializing After Hours as a Barrier

Though legislators have changed dramatically in regard to the amount of after hours socializing that they do during their legislative sessions, still many receptions and social events are held during the evening hours long after the official legislative workday has ended. The informal workday begins in the evenings and can even occur over weekends and during the interim of the legislative session. Much has been written about women legislators' feelings of exclusion in regard to these after hours, informal affairs and likewise how these situations exasperate the conflict in women's roles as

270

politicians (Kilpatrick, 1977; Blair and Stanley, 1991; Mezey, 1978). The many

conflicts women expressed to these authors in the 1970s and 80s are still quite

prevalent.

In light of the public's perception of legislators' active social life with lobbyists,

much of the evening socializing once so prevalent in state legislatures has diminished

much to the dismay of many legislators (Moncrief, Thompson and Kurtz, 1996).

Legislators argue that such informal gatherings are needed to foster the types of bonds

needed to work through tough legislative issues. One legislator described that the first

month of their three- month session was devoted to receptions and other social events,

and he strongly felt that those events were important in helping legislators become

familiar with one another after being apart during the interim. An African American

woman who is a part of her legislature's leadership finds that legislators are more able

to see each other as people when they are able to find common interests that do not deal

with legislative matters. She sees the social functions as prime opportunities to learn

more about her colleagues,

> You have to know people more than in this chamber.
> You have to be able to know people based on other kinds
> of relationships. Not just that we serve on a committee
> together, but because there may be something else that we
> have in common that you are not going to find out about
> me just from my bringing a bill forth. And, that's why all
> the social activities are so important, because you get a
> chance to meet people, even in your own chamber during
> the event. And you get to build relationships based on
> things other than what we do in the legislature.

While this legislator assumes a networking approach to socializing with

colleagues, some African American women found little necessity in attending many

social functions preferring to spend their spare time during the session alone. Some

African American women interviewed, considered these events as an opportunity to connect with their constituents rather than as an opportunity to network with other legislators. An African American woman in the Georgia legislature expressed, "I go to speak to my constituents and hear their concerns, not to socialize with my colleagues." This emphasis on constituency interaction is consistent with most African American women's views on their major purpose for being in the legislature-- constituency service. Few African American women regarded these functions as an opportunity to network with their colleagues or with members of their chamber's leadership. Most African American women strongly adhere to the constituency service aspect of their legislative role, and many of them have yet to strike a balance between the demands of their constituents and other components of their legislative role. This role confusion, along with the gender related sexual tension associated with social events appears to prevent African American women from benefiting fully from these social engagements.

The informal nature of social events places women in uncomfortable positions. In Blair and Stanley's study of the Arkansas and Texas legislatures, women legislators found it difficult to build relationships with their male colleagues because of the ease in which their behavior could be misconstrued as sexually suggestive. Blair and Stanley conclude that women's concerns and inability to move as freely in different social situations in which legislative business takes place as their male colleagues "limits the ease with which they can function effectively" (Blair and Stanley, 1991,505). Women were once excluded entirely from the social interactions once so a part of the legislative session, and it is impossible to account for the extent to which they are currently included in social events in which legislative business is discussed. However, being

invited to attend such social functions does not necessarily amount to a benefit for women, especially given tensions and strains associated with attending such events.

Like the women interviewed in Blair and Stanley's study, most African American women expressed concern about their image in the legislature and viewed social engagements with their colleagues as having the potential to compromise the reputations they worked so hard to acquire. An African American woman in Mississippi expressed the sentiment of other women in her thoughts about the need to protect and control her image in the legislature as much as she could. She felt that in order to maintain her image as a hardworking legislator, who takes action, she could not "hang out" with her colleagues. By not "hanging out" or "partying" with her colleagues, she felt that they would understand that she was a serious legislator. Protecting their images was a consistent theme among African American women legislators.

In mentoring young African American women in the Maryland legislature, a more seasoned African American woman cautioned them to steer clear of many of the social events that take place "after hours" during their first session, especially. In her experience, once her male colleagues "had a few drinks" their respect for women as colleagues was quick to dissipate in that they "feel courageous enough to say anything to you." As a long term legislator, she had both experienced inappropriate conduct on the part of her male colleagues and witnessed countless such improprieties that left the women--not the men-- with tainted reputations that followed them throughout their legislative service. Choosing not to attend these types of functions is common among

African American women, whether by choice or by not being extended and invitation to attend such engagements.[5]

Socializing remains an important element for building successful collegial relationships. African American women appear to be at a grave disadvantage in regard to these social engagements whether they choose to attend and risk the possibility of harassment or if they choose to avoid such activities by not attending. African American women not being named as friends among their fellow legislators outside of other African American women and men is possibly connected to their inability to capitalize on the potential networking hours after the official legislative day ends.

Unintended Consequence of the Growing Numbers

The increased numbers of women and people of color in state legislatures have changed the landscape of the institution as well as the types of policies brought before these bodies (Thomas, 1994; Holmes, 2000). Along with this growth in numbers have also come institutionalized caucuses, designed to extend the reach of these groups and lend a collective voice to the group's policy priorities. At the same time that women's caucuses and minority caucuses have provided a voice for the issues, they have also served as a source of camaraderie among members. And, even in the absence of a formal caucus, the increased numbers of women and minorities have resulted in informal coalition building among these groups. The increasing numbers have also

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5. Respondents to the survey discussed in chapter three were also asked about their socializing with their colleagues after hours. Overwhelmingly, African American women are not spending much of their spare time with their fellow members of the legislature. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of African American women described seldom attending social functions where other legislators were present, and many (43 percent) had never spent a social weekend with their colleagues. Most interesting, one in five

affected collegial interaction by increasing the array of people who share similar backgrounds, policy interests and legislative experiences with which women and legislators of color have the opportunity to interact. The increased number of African Americans and women legislators has also undoubtedly helped to facilitate the segregation along gender and race lines discussed in this chapter.

Though Black caucuses are important institutions, crucial to representing issues of the African American community, and creating safe spaces for its members to interact, there is also an unintended consequence of contributing to the racial segregation prevalent in the legislative institution. An African American woman in Georgia typifies the responses of many African Americans interviewed, which illustrates the centrality of Black caucuses to African American legislators. When asked about legislators, with whom she had developed a personal relationship, she adamantly replied, "Of course most of 'us' have pretty good relationships with most all of the Blacks." Rather than name individual members as their friends some African American legislators named "the Black Caucus members" indicating that the organization itself was a friendship network. Legislators with such replies often found it unnecessary to list individual members asserting that they were comfortable with all their fellow caucus members and saw themselves as a collective. This tendency reflects the fact that some African Americans feel closer to even the most conservative member of the Black Caucus than they did to any of their white colleagues who very well may have characteristics more similar to their own beyond race.

African American women reported having never spent personal time with a member of their legislature's leadership.

275

In light of such sentiments, it is of no surprise that, as the numbers of African American women increases, their networking outside of the group may be decreasing. The safe space of the Black Caucus in these states may be resulting in an unintended consequence, in that, African American women, and to a lesser extent African American men appear to be only networking and building relationship with each other. This, of course, isolates them from the majority of the legislature's membership.

This finding further substantiates the survey findings discussed in Chapter three in which, I conclude that the larger the group of African American women serving in the legislature, the less likely they were to participate in coalition building across gender and racial groups. This would not be problematic if the numbers of African American women were so substantial that they had the power to pass and block legislation without others' help. Beyond the numbers, a level of cohesiveness would also be necessary that is most unlikely. Given the current configuration of state legislatures without such exponential growth in the numbers of African American women elected, building relationships across gender and race lines remains an important strategy for legislative success. As Miller (1990) suggests in a study of state legislative black caucuses' agenda setting activities, one of the most important factors for caucuses in getting legislation passed is their memberships' abilities to build coalitions with white legislators. Therefore, personal friendships are not only beneficial to individual legislators, given that the absence of these relationships between African American and white legislators could also impact the messages of these caucuses. If their members do not have relationships with other legislators, then they are overlooking a quite valuable mechanism for extending the caucuses' messages beyond their membership. Building

such strong relationships beyond the caucuses' membership is also in the best interests of these caucuses, while the current practice of isolation is limiting.

While increased numbers has resulted in more friendships among African American legislators, the opposite appears to have occurred between African American women and white women legislators. The increased number of African American women has not resulted in the strengthening of relationships between African American women and white women. Despite their membership in the women's caucuses in Georgia and Maryland, few relationships between African American women and white women were mentioned. And, given that Mississippi today has more women serving in the legislature than ever before, they have neither a formal nor an informal women's caucus as they once did some years ago. As one Mississippi legislator remarked,

> There is something happening to that closeness we once had. It is not there anymore. X has decided that she's going to try to bring the women-- all of us-- together again. And, I think that it will be good if that can be accomplished. It seems like the more women came [to the legislature], the further apart we became. When there were fewer, we were together. Now that there are more of us, we seem to be drifting in separate directions. We [women] really do need to make a difference and we are not doing it.

While this could be the result of ideological variances among the women elected to the legislature, given the increase in more Republican and anti-choice women being elected to state legislatures, it is just as much a result of legislators' reluctance to find commonalties beyond race. The increased number of women legislators does not appear to be resulting in relationships built across racial lines. It appears that race persists as the overriding norm governing legislators' interactions with one another regardless of gender.

277

Conclusion

Many argue that the norms and folkways of the modern state legislature are declining (Rosenthal, 1998; Bernwick and Wiggins, 1983). According to Rosenthal, legislative friendships and the trust that follows as a result of these relationships are eroding. He further argues that there are fewer friendships forming in state legislatures as a result of decreased socializing among members (Rosenthal, 1998). However, rather than eroding, these norms are changing in response to the modernization of state legislatures. In state legislatures, friendships built on mutual respect, trust and honesty are still an important feature of the modern legislature. From my analysis of these three state legislatures, it appears that legislative friendships are still very much a cornerstone of the modern legislature, and continue to be as one legislator described, "the oil that keeps the engine running" just as scholars contended decades ago.

The diversity of today's legislature is the marked difference impacting the changes associated with this legislative norm. The increased diversity has altered the formation of friendships and the role of trust in today's legislature in that legislators are more restricted in their choice of friends because of the other norms to which they adhere. As the analysis shows, building friendships across gender and race lines has presented a challenge for legislators, which has subsequently contributed to the decline of friendship networks. Friendships are not as widely built, and the lines denoting who to trust and who not to trust have changed. Rather than relying on the most credible, honest and trustworthy legislator, legislators are adding gender and race as criterion for selecting their legislative friends. The norm of legislative collegiality, and trust is not declining, but legislators are deciding whom to befriend based on expanded criteria that

include the gender and race of the legislator. One could argue that the norm has not at all changed; legislators have always sought those most like themselves, only in the context of a more diverse legislature it becomes more apparent that gender and race are a part of their friendship selection criterion. When state legislatures were more homogeneous, this did not have as much of an impact, but with legislators who are not white and not male, the effects of friendships based on gender and race are realized. Arguments that friendships have declined as a norm of state legislatures actually mask the fact that legislators are curtailing their use of friendship networks because of their reluctance to build relationships with those who are not mirror images of themselves and this is most evident in terms of race.

African American women are following the culture of the institution, but their employment of legislative friendship results in differing outcomes. For African American women, their choices of who to respect and trust are not necessarily those in the leadership. They too befriend those who are most like them. Therefore, they are most likely to befriend those who share their same status in the legislature, which does not bode well for improving their status in regards to leadership, or particularly increasing their bill passage. Though African American women recognize the significance of building relationships with a broad group of colleagues, they are conflicted about the pay offs of friendship as a means of gaining influence.

Networking beyond the confines of race and also gender remains a challenge for African American women, but in the same vain, their male colleagues and white women colleagues have equally failed in networking beyond the confines of gender and race specific groups.

White legislators overlook potential allies in their race- based friendships. And the same is true for legislators who choose to only befriend members of their same gender. This gender and race based segregation in the legislature limits the scope of coalition building-- particularly among more progressive legislators. The effectiveness of not only individual legislators, but also the overall institution is compromised as a result.

Racial separation is as much a result of the actions of individual legislators as it is a characteristic of the institution regardless of the explanation, and all legislators play a role in perpetuating its existence. The African American woman who fails to network with colleagues during social events; the African American man who realized during the interview that all his legislative friends were men and a part of a fraternal bond; the countless white legislators who failed to even recognize that they were least familiar with their fellow African American women colleagues all help to perpetuate a system of racial and gender bifurcation. And, this bifurcation is exasperated in legislators' choices of friends.

The patterns of friendship development in state legislatures have enormous implications for legislator's policy output. Legislative friendships are a tremendous source of legislative influence, but legislators appear to be heavily drawn only to legislators who are most like them; therefore, there is little opportunity to influence the opinions and legislative decisions of a more broad range of legislators. For African American women, legislative friendships may further solidify their connections among other African American legislators but they are not a source of influence beyond their race-based cohort, which contributes little to their institutional influence as demonstrated in Chapter four.

Chapter VI
Conclusion: Revisiting the Central Questions of the Research

Questions along two trajectories are at the center of this research. One set of questions are concerned with the distribution of influence in state legislatures and whether African American women legislators have any influence in their legislatures, and the second set of questions that follow from that point of inquiry question the ways in which institutions respond when confronted with difference. In this chapter, I offer a summary discussion of the dissertation's findings in terms of these two trajectories of questions. I also discuss the implications of this research for citizens, legislators, and scholars of state legislatures and legislative behavior. Finally, I present a research agenda that follows from the questions generated by this dissertation.

African American Women's Influence

One of the main goals of this dissertation was to discern whether African American women are regarded as influential among their fellow legislators. The findings suggest that African American women do hold some institutional influence. In spite of not holding the institutional positions that confer power, African American women pursue other avenues to remain players in the legislature and deliver for their communities. Though impacted by the institutional norms prevalent in the legislatures in which they serve, under certain conditions African American women are influential.

African American women's experiences in state legislatures are exemplary of the adage, "the more things change the more they stay the same." They have made progress in terms of their positions in the legislature and their increased legislative activity, yet their feelings of marginality have not dramatically changed given that those in power have sought to preserve and protect their control of the institution. As Chapter

two illustrates, as a group, African American women have made substantial progress in terms of gaining institutional positions of power in the legislature, as compared to the positions held by the African American women who first entered state legislatures. They are also quite different from the women who served in the 1970s in terms of their educational attainment and their occupations prior to legislative service, which often constitutes them as experts knowledgeable of the complex issues before state legislatures.

African American women have made strides in terms of securing institutional positions of power in their legislatures. They also do not shy away from the work of being a legislator, as was once the case of newly elected women. More than a quarter of African American women legislators responding to the survey indicate that they serve on the committees in the legislature that decide money issues in their legislature, which are typically considered among the most prestigious committee assignments and more than half report that they hold some leadership position in the legislature. Despite doubting their acceptance as full members in the legislature, African American women still participate in the day to day activities typical of legislators. Their level of activity suggests that they are more fully integrated into their legislature. They speak out on the floor during debates, question witnesses in committee, and participate in committee deliberations and, more than a quarter of them report having more than 40 percent of their bills signed into law (Chapter three).

Though African American women hold institutional positions that are considered favorable by the legislature's standard, they nevertheless, across the board report less than favorable legislative experiences. Those African American women

legislators who hold some of the attributes favored by the legislative institution, report legislative experiences that differ little from those who have not acquired these institutional attributes. Many of those who hold legislative leadership positions are not in the top party leadership positions that confer institutional power, which offers some explanation for their frustrations. But even more so, they extremely doubt the likelihood that they will move into more powerful positions in the institution. The harder they work in the legislature and have more success in passing legislation, for example, the more they seem to carry the sentiment that working harder does not necessarily lead to institutional promotion.

The level at which African American women participate in the day to day business of the legislature, holding formal leadership positions, introducing and passing legislation, and gaining seniority in the institution conflicts with the isolation and marginality that they report. Their activity levels and advancement in the institution indicate that they are critical to the operation and performance of the legislature. However, in focusing on African American women legislators in the context of the three state legislatures in this study, their feelings of marginality are more fully understood. By providing a context for their experiences, the data from the case studies allowed for more critical analysis of African American women's experiences. Focusing on their experiences in particular legislative settings, helps to account for the disconnect between the progress they have made in the legislature and their feelings of marginality in the institution.

From the case studies, it is further evident that while African American women are not as a group, without influence; however, their influence is limited. As discussed

in Chapter four, they have not become the power brokers that wield influence across policy areas, which is partially explained by the types of leadership positions they hold in the legislature and their exclusion from informal leadership structures that wield a great deal of influence. Instead, their influence is more limited to specific policy areas in which they have developed some expertise.

The extent to which African American women's influence is impacted by the racial and gender divides so evident in their state legislatures is perhaps most alarming. In defining legislative influence, legislators do not include the gender and race of the legislator as factors in determining their legislative influence, but it is evident that these factors play a role in their determinations of who is influential in the institution. Reflective of the deeply embedded gender and racial divides existing in the state legislatures studied, African American women are largely influential only among other African Americans; in fact, few white legislators consider any African American legislators as influential.

Despite the prevalence of gender and race norms, African American women still diligently pursue avenues that they are convinced will increase their influence in the legislature, even in the absence of holding institutional positions associated with influence. They pursue additional paths using a range of means, and some are more progressive than others. In Chapter four, I discuss how African American women have sought to expand the possible power resources available to them in the legislature by building strong relationships with the executive branch. And, understanding that playing by the "rules of the game" will not necessarily result in their advancement into institutional positions of power, African American women have rejected these

traditional rules of the institution, deciding instead to chart their own course. In some cases, less progressive measures that make use of stereotypes informed by historical constructions of African American women are used in their relationships with other legislators.

The data from the case studies contribute to understanding the feelings of exclusion in the legislature that African American women responding to the survey express. Influence is concentrated in the hands of a select group of legislators, most of whom are the top leaders of the party, and as previously mentioned African American women are not in such positions. And, as illustrated in Chapter four, even when African American women hold the institutional positions that suggest that they will be included in shaping the legislative agenda, there is no guarantee that they will in fact be included. Given this reality, it is of no surprise that African American women continue to harbor feelings of "outsiders on the inside." Therefore, despite their incredible strides-- advancing into formal leadership positions, serving on the money committees, and gaining seniority-- when compared to African American women serving in the 1970s when scholars first began to inquire about their legislative experiences, I find that in spite of these advances, African American women are still largely marginalized in state legislatures.

State Legislatures Responding to Difference: The Importance of Context

The context in which African American women state legislators serve is important in constructing their legislative experiences. African American women are not the embodiment of who has traditionally been considered as state legislators--white men. In focusing on the experiences of African American women, I inherently question

how state legislatures respond when confronted with difference. And, how these institutions respond to difference is an important question in light of the increase in the numbers of women and people of color who are being elected to these institutions. The findings of the dissertation show that African American women's influence is not only dependent upon their formal positions in the legislature, but is more so dependent upon the extent to which the institution is governed by its preferences regarding gender and race that manifests as norms of the institution. African American women legislators can be regarded as influential or void of any institutional influence at all dependent upon the types of norms that take precedent in the legislature.

From my findings, I conclude that those African American women legislators who chair committees are, for the most part, influential. African American women who have not risen to the ranks of leadership are able to wield influence among other African American legislators through their caucus activities. However, the extent of African American women's influence is dependent largely upon the legislative context in which they serve. As shown in Chapter four, the likelihood of African American being regarded as influential increases when they serve in legislatures that are more professional. More professional legislatures preference knowledge of policy issues and prior expertise, which is beneficial to African American women. In Maryland, all legislators, including African American women were more likely to be recognized as influential on the basis of the expertise they brought to the legislature on an issue or the expertise they cultivated on issues while in the legislature. However, while African American women in Maryland are recognized as influential on the basis of their expertise on issues, they still have not moved into meaningful formal institutional

positions, which imply that efforts at diversifying leadership may have been satisfied at a much lower level in Maryland (Bratton and Spiller, 2000).

In contrasts, less professional legislatures are more apt to operate according to norms reflecting gender and race-based preferences, which decrease the prospects of African American women being appointed to leadership positions or being regarded by their colleagues as influential, whether they hold such positions or not. Chapter four illustrates the extent to which gender and race are the primary organizing norms in the Mississippi legislature, so much so that separate influence structures exist for African American and white legislators. Men are most often recognized as influential, and women legislators, regardless of race are seldom considered influential, which also negatively impacts women's policy issues in Mississippi. In this study, Maryland and Mississippi represent opposite ends of the professionalization continuum with Georgia falling in between the two. For example, while Georgia has an elaborate party leadership structure, evident of its more professional characteristics, legislators were still more likely to identify those of their same race, and white legislators seldom identified African American legislators as influential.

While the legislature's level of professionalization is an important factor impacting African American women's influence, perhaps equally important is the state's political culture. In more traditionalistic political cultures, norms regarding gender and race are likely to be more pronounced and play a larger role in governing the institution. Given the social and political histories of women and African Americans in the south, it is of no surprise that the Georgia and Mississippi legislatures reflect their states' racist and sexist political culture. According to the findings in Chapter three,

287

African American women in southern states report more severe feelings of exclusion in their state legislatures than African American women serving in other parts of the country. Compared to African American women legislators in other parts of the country, African American women serving in southern states report in higher numbers that they are less optimistic about their likelihood of moving into leadership positions, that they must work harder to prove themselves than their colleagues, and that their gender and race impact their legislative experiences. African American women in southern legislatures appear to be adversely affected by the traditionalistic political culture of their southern legislatures. Given that adherence to preferences and norms is characteristic of a traditionalistic political culture, it is difficult to separate the effects of the political culture from the effects of legislatures' level of professionalization.

The legislative context in which African American women serve greatly impacts whether or not their colleagues will regard them as influential. While context is important, my findings still suggest that gender and race based norms are apparent in most legislative institutions, which reflects the extent in which gender and race structure U.S. society. For example in Chapter five, I find that in all three legislatures, gender and race norms govern the formation of legislative friendships, which are an important resource for gaining influence in the legislature. The race of the legislator and to a lesser extent their gender were the most significant factors in predicting legislator's friendship choices. Gender and race norms are very much a part of state legislatures, regardless of their level of professionalization or their political culture.

Prospects for Change

Change is not likely to occur quickly if it occurs at all in light of the difficulties associated with bringing about change in institutions. And, as long as legislatures continue to be controlled by white males who govern from a specialized point of privilege, and influence is mediated by race, gender and a host of other differences, then our institutions are not democratic governing institutions. Electors continue to go under-represented or un-represented all together. As Kathlene (1995,185) argues, "Power concentrated among certain groups of elected officials at every level of the institution is systematic discrimination that is neither just for the individuals working within the organization nor enabling of the institution to produce fair policies."

Influence in institutions is not static; instead it is continuously shifting. At various points, some are advantaged and others disadvantaged. And as Patricia Hill Collins suggests in her discussion of power, " Another way of approaching power views it not as something that groups possess, but as an intangible entity that circulates within a particular matrix of domination, and to which individuals stand in varying relationships." The challenge for students of state legislatures, legislators serving in these institutions, and anyone interested in fostering and ensuring democratic institutions is to discern better ways of enabling the circulation of power and influence.

Therefore, I do not argue that change is impossible because state legislatures are gendered and racialized institutions, and that influence cannot be afforded to those differing from the white male norm. Instead, I have attempted to identify the ways in which gender and race norms manifest in state legislatures. By identifying the operation and function of such norms, we are better able to devise changes in operating

procedures dictated through the formal and informal rules governing state legislatures. And, according to Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, it is when we not only identify such norms, but offer ways to evoke change, "What appears to be universal and stable becomes contextual and part of a continuous process of change" (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995, 267).

The types of changes necessary to improve conditions for legislators differing from the white, male norm are complex and difficult. To truly realize change within legislative institutions would require a re-engineering of society such that gender and race are no longer all-inclusive structures organizing U.S. society and its institutions. In lieu of a total re-ordering of U.S. society, there are institutional changes that are more direct, albeit challenging, that can take place and are likely to have an affect on the day-to-day function of the legislative institution. These changes involve both the formal and informal rules governing the institution. For example, formalizing the rules regarding leadership appointments is one such change in the operating procedures that is likely to impact African American women and others in the legislature. Currently, the subjective nature in which committee assignments and leadership appointments are decided negatively impacts African American women's prospects of entering these positions. Even as African American women establish more seniority in the legislature, there is no guarantee that even their increased tenure will result in greater access to these institutional positions of power.

Institutional changes are likely to occur when internal or external conditions encourage change to take place and the Georgia and Mississippi legislature appear to be headed towards change. Whether these changes, if they occur will benefit African

American women by increasing their influence in the legislature remains to be seen, but the potential is there. For change to occur, it is incumbent upon those most affected by the norms of the institution--people of color and women-- to actively pursue change.

In Mississippi, institutional change is a part of the House's not so distant past, and there are several factors at work that suggest that further changes are pending. In 1987, long term Speaker of the House, Buddy Newman was overthrown by a biracial, bipartisan effort. His overthrow resulted in a greater distribution of power and more defined rules governing procedures (Feig, 1992). If political unrest is strong enough, major institutional change can occur and Mississippi is fertile ground for such uprising. The greater institutionalization of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus has the potential to bring about changes in the formal rules governing the legislature, as African American legislators begin to use the Caucus' strength to intensify their demands for institutional positions. Similarly, women legislators in Mississippi are discussing the prospects of reinstating a formal women's caucus, and once in place the Caucus could very well make demands for women to occupy more positions of influence in the legislature. The process, as well as, the results of redistricting in Mississippi always has the potential to provoke political unrest in the state. Finally budget hearings during the 2000 legislative session suggest that the election of former legislator Ronnie Musgrove as governor also has the potential to incite institutional changes in the legislature in that by attending the budget hearings, an unprecedented move for a Mississippi governor, he made clear his interest in sharing in the legislature's power. These are only a few of the factors that can spur institutional change in Mississippi.

In Georgia, there are many political changes underway that indicate that major institutional changes are on the horizon there as well. The Speaker of the House, Tom Murphy is the longest serving speaker in the country, and those who follow the Georgia Legislature predict that his tenure is approaching its end, given his age and questionable health. A change in the Speaker will undoubtedly bring about some institutional changes, as much of the House's operating procedures are a product of Speaker Murphy's long- term leadership. Likewise, redistricting following the 2000 Census is likely to increase the number of districts in which African American legislators can win, which would result in a larger Georgia Legislative Black Caucus. The increase in the GLBC is likely to prompt African American legislators to demand increased institutional positions of power in proportion to their numbers in the legislature. Also in Georgia, the steady increase in the number of Republicans elected to the legislature is definitely likely to alter power dynamics in the legislature, if nothing more than increasing party cohesiveness, which may make it more important to ensure that all Democratic legislators are appeased (Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, 1997,174). Finally, the current governor of Georgia, Roy Barnes also a former state legislator is aggressively chipping away at the power of the legislative branch and increasing the powers of the executive branch (Pruitt, March 26, 2000). The growing significance of the executive branch in relation to the legislative branch might also spur institutional changes within the legislative branch.

Of the three states included in this dissertation, Maryland appears least likely to undergo major institutional changes. Maryland lawmakers, particularly African Americans and women appear to be much more content with their current legislative

configuration. And, when Maryland legislators evaluate their situation in a comparative context, it is easy to have a sense of contentment. The Maryland Legislative Women's Caucus as well as the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus have been successful in moving their members into powerful leadership positions and their members currently chair the most prized committees in the House and also chair prestigious committees in the Senate. Further, Speaker of the House, Casper Taylor's successful strategies of warding off insurgency by including more legislators in the leadership fold may continue to be a useful strategy. Therefore, Maryland legislators are least likely to seek institutional change.

Implications of the Research

Increasing the number of women and people of color is an important step in making our political institutions more democratic. However, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, its not enough to only be concerned with the numbers. It is more important that women and people of color acquire institutional positions that confer power once elected. And, even still the most important factor is for women and people of color to have meaningful institutional power that is conferred not only through holding institutional positions, but also through being regarded by those who serve with them as powerful and influential in the legislature. As a result of these findings, there are three major implications that follow from these findings affecting legislators as well as those who study state legislatures.

By understanding the legislative process better, we are better able to understand its outputs. If we understand that African American women are evaluated differently by their peers and that the legislature as an institution places value on attributes that are out

of reach for African American women, then citizens and scholars alike are better able to evaluate their legislative outputs. In essence, by increased understanding, we reduce the effects of unrealistic expectations on their service in the legislature. Not that citizens and scholars should "lower the bar", but perhaps a different system of evaluation is justified. In that African American women's constituents continue to re-elect them as their representatives conveys that their constituents are ahead of political scientists in that they already have a different system of evaluating their effectiveness as representatives.

Secondly, this research sheds new light on the inherent difficulties of building coalitions with gender and race norms in operation. In the face of these norms, coalition building as discussed in Chapter three is often race-based, and given the small numbers of legislators of color in these institutions, such coalitions are unlikely to be winning coalitions. As communities become increasingly more diverse and the challenges, as well as the possible solutions become more complex, legislators will not be able to cling to gender and race norms and preferences in their coalition efforts and expect to succeed in addressing these complex problems. Democrats in particular are not at liberty to engage in such legislative behavior given the rise of Republican power in state legislatures across the country. Beyond partisan splits, the progressive agenda in general suffers at the hand of legislators perpetuating the institutional norms and practices this dissertation addresses.

Rather than continuously strategizing to build coalitions that are race based or gender based, it may prove more productive for African American women legislators and others to focus more on building progressive agenda based coalitions, which are

294

likely to be more diverse, rather than consistently following the short cuts of race-based or gender-based coalitions. For African American women, this also reduces the effects of the institution's tendency to divide their allegiances between African American legislators and women, forcing them to choose an institutional identity that does not fully represent who they are. A coalition building strategy based on a progressive based agenda provides African American women the opportunity to maximize their strengths as advocates for the needs of both women and people of color in their communities. As opposed to the current practice of having them artificially "chose" a legislative identity, which does not play to their strengths, but rather weakens them.

The state legislature is becoming more professional as an institution, and some states have moved farther than others. Rosenthal argues that between 1965 and 1980, state legislatures moved towards redefining themselves as political institutions building their capacity, increasing professionalization, and becoming more institutionalized (Rosenthal, 1998, 49). Though legislatures have undergone this reform process, the findings of this dissertation suggest the need to revisit state legislative reform specifically examining the formal and informal rules governing them. Rosenthal argues that the previous reforms may have gone too far, but it appears that the increased diversity in state legislatures illuminates the need to revisit reform of the institution.

Future Research Agenda

This dissertation moves toward developing better understandings of women of color in politics, which is largely an underdeveloped sphere of both the women in politics literature and the minority group politics literature. While it is often difficult for researchers to operationalize the interconnectedness of gender, race, and other

295

differences, inclusiveness moves us further towards truly understanding the ways in which people experience the world, and in the case of this research, how political elites experience political institutions. This research raises a plethora of future research questions in that there is so much that remains unknown about state legislatures, the intersection of gender and race in political institutions, and political institutions' reactions to difference.

Our understanding of the complexities of this topic would benefit from further exploring institutions' responses to difference. The case studies in this dissertation reflect a focus on the instances in which there are larger numbers of African American women in the legislature. However, given the survey findings in Chapter two, suggesting that African American women serving with fewer African American women in the legislature feel more incorporated into the legislature, it would be instructive to apply a variation on Kanter's thesis testing the significance of numbers in institutions as it applies to African American women. Future research could examine the experiences of African American women in state legislatures with fewer African American women. It is impossible to fully examine Kanter's thesis in relation to African American women given that their numbers have not approached the percentage levels to escape tokenism. Nevertheless, exploring African American women's experiences in legislatures with fewer African American women serving is likely to contribute to our understandings of these complex topics. In addition to focusing on the numbers, it would be interesting to investigate whether women in legislatures with fewer African American women serving have garnered more formal institutional power.

This study's focus has been African American women; however, expanding the study to include additional women of color in state legislatures would increase our knowledge about the intersection of gender and race in political institutions. The major challenge of such an expansion is the limited number of states in which there are a sufficient number of women of color serving in the legislature. Moreover, given their even more recent entry into the political arena, it will be even more of a challenge to disaggregate the effects of their limited seniority from the institution's adherence to gender and race preferences and norms.

This study reflects a snapshot in time--one legislative session. Therefore, discerning whether or not these findings remain consistent over time would also be an interesting point of inquiry. A series of questions arise including: Would the same legislators be regarded as influential? and How would an increase in African American women's seniority affect the outcomes? Finally, how would African American women's influence among their peers be impacted by conducting such research during a legislative session in which one of their signature issues was at the forefront of the political agenda?

Finally, it would also be instructive to raise similar questions in the context of a different political institution. For example, African American women have a long history of political participation and activism at the local level; therefore, it would be informative to conduct a similar study of influence in local governing bodies, such as city councils. The fact that these institutions reflect the local culture of its city presents an even greater challenge to researching the types of questions raised by this dissertation. Nevertheless, the greater access to these bodies for women and people of

color make them an interesting body in which to raise these questions. This type of research will continue to give way to even more questions, as the quests to identify ways of making political institutions more democratic continue.

APPENDIX A

National Survey of African American Women State Legislators

This survey is a part of a dissertation research project by **Wendy G. Smooth of the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland**. The project's goal is to understand the experiences of African American women state legislators. Please take a moment to complete the short survey. Your complete confidentiality is assured. Only group level data will be used; therefore, you will not be mentioned individually.

1. Including yourself, how many African American women serve in your state's legislature?
_____ 0-5 _____6-10 _____ 11-15 _____ More than 15 _____ Don't Know

2. Is your state legislature term limited? _____Yes _____ No

3. Do you hold any leadership positions (i.e.. Speaker, Speaker Pro-Tempore, Whip, Caucus Chair, etc.)?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, what position(s) do you hold? _____

_____

4. On which committees do you currently serve?

1. _____   6. _____
2. _____   7. _____
3. _____   8. _____
4. _____   9. _____
5. _____   10. _____

5. Do you currently serve on a committee that covers an issue in which you have prior expertise?
_____ Yes _____ No

6. Are you currently a committee or subcommittee chair or a ranking member?
_____Yes _____ No If yes, what position do you hold? _____

7. How many bills did you introduce during the last legislative session (1999)? _____

8. How many of these bills were signed into law? _____

9. How many bills did you co-sponsor during the last legislative session (1999)? _____

1

10. How many of these bills were signed into law? _____

11. How many amendments did you sponsor during the last legislative session (1999)?_____

12. How many of these amendments passed? _____

13. Please list the 3 issues that are most important to you.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

14. Based on your experience, how often do the following legislators support the issues of importance to you (Please circle only one. If no legislators of the racial/ethnic group serve in your state legislature, please leave blank)?

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never
African American men	1	2	3	4
African American women	1	2	3	4
Asian American men	1	2	3	4
Asian American women	1	2	3	4
Latinas	1	2	3	4
Latinos	1	2	3	4
White men	1	2	3	4
White women	1	2	3	4

2

15. Please indicate the frequency with which you do the following in an average week of a legislative session (Please circle only one).

	Never	1-5	6-10	More than 10
Speak on the floor during a debate	1	2	3	4
Discuss issues in committee during a hearing	1	2	3	4
Question a witness in committee	1	2	3	4
Speak in party caucus meetings	1	2	3	4
Bargain with other legislators to win support for your bills	1	2	3	4
Interact with members of the leadership about policy issues of importance to you	1	2	3	4
Speak with lobbyists about policy issues of importance to you	1	2	3	4

16. Do you find it difficult to get the issues of interest to you on the legislative agenda?
_____Yes   _____ No

If yes, why?_____
_____

17. Reflecting on the last legislative session, did you prevent any piece of legislation from passing?
_____ Yes   _____ No

If yes, what was your strategy to deter this legislation?_____
_____

18. In what policy areas have you developed expertise?
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

3

19. Have you made major accomplishments on these issues?

_____Yes _____ No

If yes, what were these accomplishments?_____
_____

20. How often do the following legislators ask for your assistance in these areas during a legislative session (Please circle only one. If no legislators of the racial/ethnic group serve in your state legislature, please leave blank)?

	Never	1-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20
African American men	1	2	3	4	5
African American women	1	2	3	4	5
Asian American men	1	2	3	4	5
Asian American women	1	2	3	4	5
Latinas	1	2	3	4	5
Latinos	1	2	3	4	5
White men	1	2	3	4	5
White women	1	2	3	4	5
Legislators of a different political party	1	2	3	4	5

21. Do you find it difficult to bargain with other legislators for their votes?
____ Most of the time ____ Some of the time ____Rarely ____Never ___I don't bargain with other legislators

22. Please list the 3 issues that you believe will be of great concern to your legislature in the upcoming session (2000).

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____

4

23. Please indicate the frequency with which you build coalitions with the following legislators (Please circle only one. If no legislators of a racial/ethnic group serve in your state legislature, please leave blank).

	Never	1-5	6-10	More than 10
African American men	1	2	3	4
African American women	1	2	3	4
Asian American men	1	2	3	4
Asian American women	1	2	3	4
Latinas	1	2	3	4
Latinos	1	2	3	4
White men	1	2	3	4
White women	1	2	3	4
Legislators of a different political party	1	2	3	4

24. Please indicate the frequency with which you do the following activities during a legislative session or in the past year (Please circle only one).

	Never	1-5	6-10	More than 10
Attend social functions where other legislators are present	1	2	3	4
Spend vacations or "get away" with other legislators	1	2	3	4
Spend personal time with members of the leadership	1	2	3	4
Discuss policy issues with other legislators in informal settings	1	2	3	4

5

25. Please indicate the response that best represents your beliefs about your state legislature (Please circle only one).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
African American women legislators experience a particularly difficult time as a result of their race and gender.	1	2	3	4
African American women legislators must work harder than their colleagues to prove themselves.	1	2	3	4
African American women legislators are less likely to serve in leadership positions.	1	2	3	4
African American women legislators find support for their issues most often from white women legislators.	1	2	3	4
African American women legislators find support for their issues most often from African American men legislators.	1	2	3	4
African American women legislators find support for their issues most often from white men legislators.	1	2	3	4

26. What is your party identification?
_____ Democrat   _____ Republican   _____ Other   _____ None

27. What is your current age? _____

28. What was your age when you were first elected to the state legislature? _____

29. How many years have you served in your state legislature? _____

30. What is your present or prior occupation? _____

6

31. What is your highest level of education?

_____Some High School

_____High School Graduate

_____Some College/Associates Degree

_____College Degree

_____Graduate or Professional Degree

32. In which state are you serving? _____

33. Please indicate your combined family income.

_____ Less than $20,000

_____ $20,000- $35,000

_____ $35,000- $50,000

_____ $50,000- $65,000

_____ $65,000- $80,000

_____ $80,000- $95,000

_____ More than 95,000

If you have additional comments or concerns that will help us better understand the experiences of African American women state legislators, please write them in the space below.

Thank you for participating in this very important research project.
For More Information Please Contact:
Wendy G. Smooth
The University of Maryland
Department of Government and Politics
3140 Tydings Hall
College Park, MD
wsmooth@gvpt.umd.edu

7

305

National Survey of African American Women State Legislators

To receive a copy of the results of this national survey, please supply your contact information.

NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

PHONE:

8

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

3140 Tydings Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742-7215
301.405.4156 TEL 301.314.9690 FAX

Thank you for participating during this busy time of the year. As you know, this interview is a follow up to the National Survey of African American Women Legislators. The data being collected is part of a larger dissertation research project. All the African American women legislators in your state are being approached for an interview. Your state was chosen as a case study based on a number of factors, including the geographical location and the diversity among legislators. Please remember that all of your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name ever be associated directly with your responses. Again, thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule.

First, let's talk about influence in the Georgia State Legislature.

1. What does it mean to be an influential legislator in the Georgia State Legislature? and Are there different ways of being influential in the legislature?

2. Do you think your colleagues view you as being an influential legislator?

3. What resources would you need to become more influential?

4. Who do you consider to be the most influential members of the Georgia State Legislature?

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

5. Who do you think are the most influential members of the legislature when it comes to the following issues:

Education

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

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Healthcare/Healthcare Reform

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Economic Development/ Employment Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Women's Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Children's Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Thinking about your relationships with fellow legislators:

6. With which members of the Georgia State Legislature do you tend to work most closely on legislative matters?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

7. Do you feel you are:

Taken seriously by your colleagues?

Sought out for advice? On which issues do they seek your advice?

As influential in comparison to other legislators?

8. Do African American women in the legislature tend to work together? Have there been instances in which the African American women have put forth a collective effort on an issue? Give an example. How was it received by your fellow legislators? Do you find this a particularly useful /effective strategy?

9. How important is it to form good personal relationships with your fellow legislators? What impact do such friendships have on your ability to do a good job? Are friends easily made? And How does one go about making friends in the legislature?

10. Who do you consider to be your three closest friends in the legislature?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

11. Who are the friends among your colleagues whom you see most often socially?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Now, let's explore your relationship with the Leadership:

12. Some would say that power in Georgia emanates from the Speaker, how would you describe your relationship with the Speaker? Is this relationship typical? How would one become close to the Speaker? Is there an inner circle...consisting of those closest to the speaker?

13. How frequently are you:

Included in important leadership discussions?

Provided with timely strategic information by leadership?

Provided with timely strategic information by your other colleagues?

Sought out to advise leaders on issues outside the committee?

Georgia has both a Black Caucus and a Women's Caucus:

14. Do you participate with the Women's Caucus? Black Caucus? Do you participate in any other formal or informal groups in the legislature?

15. Do you find the Women's Caucus generally concerned with the issues of interest to you? What about the Black Caucus? Are African American women's issues a part of the Caucus' agendas?

In closing,

16. Are there any "rules of the game" in the Georgia state legislature that apply specifically to African American women? How are these rules different for white men and women or African American men? How does an African American woman legislator go about learning these rules?

17. Describe your overall success and level of satisfaction with your experience with the legislature?

18. Are there any other thoughts you would like to share with me about your experiences as a legislator?

Again, thank you for your time.

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____

DATE: _____

INTERVIEW TIME: _____

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

3140 Tydings Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742-7215
301.405.4156 TEL 301.314.9690 FAX

Thank you for participating during this busy time of the year. As you know, I would like to talk to you today about influence in the Georgia State Legislature. The data being collected is part of a larger dissertation research project. Your state was chosen as a case study based on a number of factors, including the geographical location and the diversity among legislators. You were · selected for an interview based on your tenure in office. Please remember that all of your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name ever be associated directly with your responses. Again, thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule.

First, let's talk generally about influence in the Georgia State Legislature.

1. What does it mean to be an influential legislator in the Georgia State Legislature? and Are there different ways of being influential in the legislature?

2. Do you think your colleagues view you as being an influential legislator?

3. What resources would you need to become more influential?

4. Who do you consider to be the most influential members of the Georgia State Legislature?

   1. _____   2. _____

   3 _____   4. _____

   5 _____   6. _____

5. Who do you think are the most influential members of the legislature when it comes to the following issues:

Education

   1. _____   2. _____

   3. _____   4. _____

   5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Healthcare/Healthcare Reform

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Economic Development/ Employment Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Women's Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Children's Issues

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

Are these the members you would go to first if you were working on these issues?

Thinking about your relationships with fellow legislators:

6. With which members of the Georgia State Legislature do you tend to work most closely on legislative matters?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

7. How important is it to form good personal relationships with your fellow legislators? What impact do such friendships have on your ability to do a good job? Are friends easily made? And How does one go about making friends in the legislature?

8. Who do you consider to be your closest friends in the legislature?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

9. Who are the friends among your colleagues whom you see most often socially?

1. _____   2. _____

3. _____   4. _____

5. _____   6. _____

10. Are there additional insights you would like to share abut influence in your state legislature?

Again, Thanks for your time.

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____

DATE: _____

INTERVIEW TIME: _____

COMMENTS:

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