Whose South is it anyway? Race and the Confederate battle flag in South Carolina

Gerald R. Webster [a,*], Jonathan I. Leib [b]

[a] Department of Geography, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487, USA
[b] Department of Geography, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306, USA

Abstract

The states of the former Confederacy are embroiled in vitriolic debates over the display and meaning of the Confederate battle flag. The purpose of this study is to examine this conflict in South Carolina through an analysis of two legislative votes taken in the state's House of Representatives. After first discussing the study's relevance, this article provides a brief historical overview of the contested meanings of the flag. It then focuses upon the debate in South Carolina using a logistical regression analysis to model legislative voting on the issue. It finds legislative positions on the battle flag are strongly divided along partisan and racial lines. These finding are then discussed in the context of "ethnic" nationalism and whiteness studies. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Confederate battle flag; Southernness; Nationalism; Whiteness

Introduction

The American South is in the midst of a "war" over the proper display and meaning of symbols associated with the two most significant events in its history: the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement (Jackson, 1992; Associated Press, 1993b; Wilson, 1995; Sack, 1997a; Cobb, 1999). This war includes controversies over the region's fragmented public memory and whose rendition of its "true" past will become dominant. The implications of these "battles" are over much more than conflicting interpretations of the past. The "victors" in these controversies will also hold significant sway over the memorialization and celebration of the region's history in

---

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-205-348-1532; fax: +1-205-348-2278.
E-mail address: gwebster@bama.ua.edu (G.R. Webster).

the future. In short, they will dominate construction of the region's self-perception, identity (or identities) and sense of place.

These controversies have raged over a wide assortment of issues from statuary (Reeves, 1996; Leib, forthcoming), to street names (Alderman, 1996), to the appropriateness of long-recognized regional and state songs (Los Angeles Times/ Washington Post, 1994; Associated Press, 1999c). But the most widespread and vitriolic debates over southern symbols have pertained to the public display and meaning of the Confederate battle flag (Cobb, 1999; Leib, Webster, & Webster, forthcoming). Controversies over Confederate flags have involved private organizations and citizens, as well as the federal, state and local governments. The debates have resulted in conflicts in the region's schools (Sack, 1997b), large public demonstrations (Stroud, 2000a,b), lawsuits (Forman, 1991; Martinez, 1997), heated debates on the floor of the US Senate (Webster & Webster, 1994; Preston, 1999), and even murder (Horowitz, 1996). The controversy pertaining to the display of the battle flag in public locations has led to myriad debates in the chambers of city councils, county commissions, and in the legislatures of nearly every southern state. Despite the widespread discussion in these bodies, formal votes have been rare, most particularly in the region's legislatures (Leib, 1995). Any position a state legislator might take on the flag issue will almost certainly alienate some constituents. State legislators have therefore arguably avoided expending political capital on an issue which will build no schools or bridges, create no jobs, and have no effect on tax rates. A major exception to this unwillingness by legislators to publicly register their opinions occurred in South Carolina during the 1997 legislative session.

The Confederate battle flag was first placed above the South Carolina capitol building in the early 1960s. Beginning in the early 1990s there were increasing demands that it be removed as an inappropriate symbol and reminder of the state's racially painful history (e.g. Bass & Nelson, 1984). In late-1996 South Carolina state legislators were asked by the state's governor to consider legislation to move the battle flag from the capitol dome to a nearby Confederate memorial on the State House grounds. Many legislators were forthcoming in their opinions on the issue. As a result, various indicators of legislative sentiment about the flag are available including multiple formal votes by the body's House of Representatives. These indicators of the battle flag positions taken by members of the South Carolina House constitute a unique data set for analyzing the influences and motivations of legislators' viewpoints over the preservation and presentation of the region's contested public memory.

The purpose of this paper is to gain a greater understanding of regional identity (or identities), race, and racism as they pertain to the Confederate battle flag by examining the 1997 flag debate in the South Carolina legislature. Toward that end, we draw upon a variety of perspectives including iconographic interpretation from cultural geography, whiteness theory from critical race studies, and electoral analyses from political geography. First, we discuss the relevance of this research. Second, we provide a brief historical overview of the flag's contested meanings. Third, we provide context for the South Carolina debate. Fourth, we determine which factors most influenced the positions of South Carolina State House lawmakers on the flag

debate. While multiple indicators of legislative sentiment are examined, for the purposes of discussion we highlight two formal votes by members of the South Carolina House. Using a logistical regression model, selected characteristics of each legislator, including party, race, gender, seniority, and region of South Carolina represented, are examined for their statistical salience. Subsequent to the statistical analysis we discuss our results in the context of ethnic nationalism and whiteness studies. We conclude with an update on the flag debate in South Carolina and discuss how our findings inform current debates over race, politics and power in the southern United States.

Relevance of this research

This paper has relevance to multiple bodies of geographical research. First, the past several decades have witnessed a renewed and increased interest in "place" and "region" in human geography (e.g. Agnew, 1987; Agnew & Duncan, 1989; Entrikin, 1991). The nature and process of changes in regional identities have also been examined (e.g. Passi, 1986; Johnston, 1991). Of the various regions that might be identified in the United States, the South remains the most distinct and protective of its perceived cultural contrasts with the rest of the country. This distinctiveness has long been eloquently emphasized in the work of southern writers (Cobb, 1999, p. 128). In addition, this paper is relevant given the growing interest in issues such as the social construction of race, racial identities (e.g. Jackson & Penrose, 1994; Bonnett, 1996) and whiteness studies (e.g. Bonnett, 1997; Jackson, 1998). Given the long history of relations between blacks and whites in the region, the South is an important study area for research on the construction of racial identity (or identities).

As argued below, an emphasis upon the preservation of a sense of place, cultural traditions, identity, and historical uniqueness undergirds the current controversies over the Confederate battle flag. If there is a region in the United States for which Faulkner's (1951, p. 92) statement that "The past is never dead . . . It's not even past" is appropriate, it is most assuredly the South (see also Polk, 1981). Thus, the southern sense of cultural distinctiveness and the propriety of the past leads Confederate symbols to be viewed not only with religious fervor but also as near-religious symbols by many white residents of the region (see Webster, 1997). As stated by a white Alabamian who viewed the flag as symbolic of "southern heritage" (Tombrello, 1999),

> As a Southern-American, I am tired of being told by others what the Confederate flag means to me. . . . Speaking for myself, Southern heritage represents a way of life. . . . It represents a time when you could walk the streets without fear. A time when the little man had a chance to make a life for his family. A time when God's law was above all else.

Of course the letter writer forgets that African American Southerners have only recently been extended the legal rights and economic opportunities traditionally

enjoyed by white Southerners. They are therefore only now attempting to define the region's sense of place as inclusive of their cultural contributions as well.

Operational here is the sense among white Southerners that the culture and integrity of their "nation" and region must be protected; African American Southerners are viewed as outsiders though their regional ties may be longer and stronger than those of many in the white majority. Such strong feelings further explain why regional symbols are viewed with such fervor. As stated by one white Southerner when asked why the South needed a symbol like the battle flag when the North did not, "That's because the North isn't a place. . . . Its just a direction out of the South" (as quoted by Cobb, 1999, p. 137). Thus, this paper further attempts to add to the body of work on the importance of political iconography dating to Gottmann (1952) and reviewed more recently by Leib (1998). It does so by coupling white southern nationalism with the developing body of work in whiteness studies.

An overview of the flag's contested meanings

During its existence between 1861 and 1865, the Confederate States of America (CSA) had three national flags: the first national flag ("Stars and Bars"), the second national flag ("Stainless Banner") and the third national flag (a revision of the "Stainless Banner") (Sumrall, 1999). While the more familiar Confederate battle flag, sometimes referred to as the "Rebel flag," was proposed as the national flag of the CSA in March 1861, it was never formally adopted for that role. But its design, based on the St Andrews Cross, was central to a wide array of "battle flags" employed by various Confederate states and their armies. Possibly because of their limited longevity and use, the three national flags of the CSA are frequently not recognized today even by many Southerners. Instead the Confederate battle flag has become more associated with the short-lived CSA than any other symbol (Cannon, 1988).

During Reconstruction the Confederate battle flag was frequently flown at private residences as a symbol of defiance against occupying federal troops. It was also employed at meetings and celebrations of the United Confederate Veterans. The popularity of gatherings to celebrate and memorialize the "Lost Cause" of southern independence grew greatly by the late-19th century (Wilson, 1980; Foster, 1987). Battle flags were commonly flown in the parades of veterans at these events (McElroy, 1995, pp. 40–43). But the public and private display of the battle flag decreased after the turn of the century. While it continued to be used by some Confederate historical and memorial organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans, it "slipped into obscurity in the eyes of the general public" (McElroy, 1995, p. 47).

The Confederate battle flag received renewed attention beginning in the 1930s with the release and popularity of the movie *Gone With the Wind* (Hale, 1998, pp. 277–284), and in the 1940s due to its use by southern regiments in World War II (McElroy, 1995, pp. 47–48). But the greatest basis for the rejuvenation of its visibility occurred in 1948 at the Democratic Party's national presidential nominating convention. Various civil rights proposals were adopted at the convention and in

response several southern delegates walked out while waving the battle flag. Those attending the subsequently organized alternative August 1948 Dixiecrat convention in Birmingham, Alabama, enthusiastically embraced the battle flag as emblematic of their efforts to prevent a liberalization of civil rights statutes (Barnard, 1985; Springer, 1993).

The use of the battle flag as a symbol of southern intentions to resist federal court orders increased dramatically after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. In the wake of the Court's decision striking down "separate but equal" school facilities, white Citizens Councils formed to fight integration in Mississippi with the organizational concept rapidly spreading across the South. The battle flag was actively used by these Councils, as well as by other groups standing in opposition to desegregation in the region including the Ku Klux Klan (Leib, 1998; Wilson, 1995, pp. 18–36; McElroy, 1995, pp. 52–58).

The Civil War Centenary also led to increasing public display of the battle flag. In 1956 the Georgia state legislature added the battle flag to the Georgia state flag, ostensibly to prepare for the centenary. But Leib's (1995) analysis of this event strongly suggests the legislative bill altering the state's flag was also enacted to underscore the state's intent to defy Court decisions dismantling segregation. In the early 1960s, the state of South Carolina raised the Confederate battle flag over its capitol dome during the Civil War Centenary. This move also arguably had defiance of the federal courts as a twin motivation (Eddings, 1994). In 1963, Governor George Wallace raised the Confederate battle flag over the Alabama state capitol the same day as Attorney General Robert Kennedy was to visit Wallace to discuss a resolution to the controversy spawned by efforts to desegregate the University of Alabama. Clearly defiance was a motivating factor in Governor Wallace's decision to display the flag for the US Attorney General's visit (Clark, 1993, pp. 180–184).

Due to its association with *both* the 19th century Confederacy and racist post-World War II pro-segregation groups, the Confederate battle flag today inflames regional sensitivities and passions like no other symbol (Hitt, 1997).[1] Regional attitudes towards the Confederate battle flag are further polarized with strong differences of opinion on the issue dividing along a racial fault line (Leib, 1998, p. 234). Various polls have indicated that most African Americans view the Confederate battle flag as racist and emblematic of 19th century efforts to preserve slavery as well as 20th century efforts to maintain a segregated South. The battle flag is thus seen as an icon of hate. In contrast, a significant majority of white Southerners view the battle flag as symbolic of their ancestors' struggle, sacrifice and heroism against the perceived destructive power and tyranny of the federal government during the Civil War and Reconstruction. While some concede that the battle flag has been blatantly employed as a racist symbol by such hate groups as the Klan, they argue the actions

---

[1] At times the controversy over the flag has led to violence. For example, in 1996 two African American teenagers were convicted of murder in Tennessee over the shooting death of a white teenager who had a Confederate battle flag flying from his pickup truck (Associated Press, 1996a). Notably, at the 19-year-old victim's former high school the athletic teams are named the "Rebels" and the mascots are Confederate soldiers (Davis, 1995; Horowitz, 1996).

of these groups should not be allowed to taint the battle flag's meaning to them—
that of a treasured symbol of heritage and sacrifice.

The South Carolina controversy

The exact date for the first placement of the Confederate battle flag above the
South Carolina Statehouse is unclear (Associated Press, 1999d). The last living mem-
ber of the state's Confederate War Centennial Commission, Daniel Hollis, claims
that it was first raised over the Statehouse on April 11, 1961, at the request of a
state legislator from Aiken. Others suggest that it was not until March 20, 1962,
when the South Carolina legislature voted in favor of a resolution to fly the flag above
the capitol's dome. Regardless of the actual date, there seems general agreement that
there was little or no overt opposition or controversy pertaining to the flag's place-
ment above the capitol dome. But it is also true that at the time there were no African
Americans seated in the legislature, and the only black presence in the chambers
were "porters" who acted in both janitorial and messenger capacities (Associated
Press, 1999d).

White state leaders recalling the events of March 1962 universally claim that the
flag's placement above the state capitol was to commemorate and celebrate the Civil
War and the Confederate States of America. Notably many also suggest that the flag
should have been taken down at the end of the centenary in 1966, but that the original
resolution failed to provide for the flag's removal (Strope, 1999c). But the raising
of the flag also occurred in a period of increasing social and political friction over
the issue of integration during which the flag was frequently employed as a symbol
of those supporting the "massive resistance" against court-ordered desegregation
(Bartley, 1969; Bass & DeVries, 1976). At the time of the resolution, lunch counter
sit-ins were occurring in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and the state was involved in
a lawsuit to prevent Harvey Gantt, later mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina and a
candidate for US Senator from that state, from becoming the first African American
student to enroll at Clemson University, one of South Carolina's two leading state
universities (Bass & Nelson, 1984, pp. 11–12; Eddings, 1994; Associated Press,
1999d).

Between the early 1960s and early 1990s the flying of the Confederate battle flag
over the South Carolina state capitol appears to have created little public controversy.
Though bills were filed in the legislature to remove the flag, they regularly died in
committee without coming to a vote. In January 1993, for example, heated debates
were ongoing in both Alabama and Georgia over the flag but not in South Carolina.
When asked why little controversy over the flag was emanating from the state, the
chair of the Legislative Black Caucus responded that the "caucus is more concerned
with creating job opportunities and business opportunities" (Associated Press,
1993a).

The nature of the debate changed in mid- to late-1993, during which South Carol-
ina was one of three finalist states vying as the site for a new Mercedes Benz plant.
After the corporation announced that an Alabama site had been selected instead of

one in South Carolina, an Alabama economic development official suggested that the lack of a Confederate battle flag above the state's capitol had played a positive role in the decision (Associated Press, 1993c). This statement did not go unheeded in South Carolina, as the state has aggressively pursued foreign direct investment since the 1960s (Cobb, 1993). As of the late 1980s, South Carolina led the country in the percentage of its workers employed by foreign corporations. The northern portion of South Carolina, especially the Greenville–Spartanburg area, is the location of numerous branch plants and the regional headquarters of several foreign corporations (Glickman & Woodward, 1989). The suggestion that the flag may have played a role in the Mercedes-Benz decision was therefore a significant cause for concern in the South Carolina business community. Thus, rather than remaining a purely local issue, the flag controversy was viewed by some as an impediment to South Carolina's efforts to strengthen its linkages with the wider global economy.

The statement by the Alabama official led an African American freshman South Carolina State Senator to seek support in South Carolina's business community for moving the flag from above the state's capitol dome to a nearby Confederate memorial (Karr, 1993; Associated Press, 1993d). In response, several pro-flag state Senators vowed to strongly oppose any legislation introduced into the 1994 legislative session to move the flag from the dome, as well as various alternative compromise proposals (Associated Press, 1993e). Among the compromise proposals rejected were replacing the battle flag with the first flag of the Confederacy, or placing the Black Liberation Flag near the battle flag on the capitol dome (Associated Press, 1993f).

The flag issue became a major topic of debate in the 1994 legislative session in South Carolina (e.g. Associated Press, 1994b,c,d), though the session ended without a resolution to the issue. As a result of the impasse, a coalition of African American leaders and organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), threatened to lead a national boycott of the state's tourist industry if the flag continued to fly above the capitol dome. On July 23, 1994, the NAACP sponsored an anti-flag march with as many as 8000 participants in Myrtle Beach, a mainstay destination of the state's tourist industry. Later the same day 1000 pro-flag supporters marched along the same route in response (Tanner, 1994). In reaction to the demonstrations and threat of an economic boycott, South Carolina Republicans sponsored a non-binding referendum on the flag in their 1994 primary with 76% of those participating voting to keep the flag flying (Levin, 1994). At the time public support for changing the status of the flag in South Carolina was weak with only 33% of those polled agreeing that the flag should be removed from the capitol dome (Associated Press, 1994e).

In the November 1994 elections conservative Republican David Beasley won the South Carolina governor's race. Beasley's campaign platform included a pledge to keep the battle flag flying over the state capitol dome, and he signed legislation in 1995 which strengthened the legal standing for flying the flag (Adams, 1997). During the following several months, South Carolina, like other southern states, experienced an increase in racial tensions with visible Klan activity and the burning of several predominantly African American churches (Pederson, 1996). Governor Beasley's concern over increases in racially motivated violence, its likely negative impact on

the state's efforts to attract new business investment, and a morning of prayer and Bible study, led him to reverse his position on the flag in October 1996. In a televised statewide address he stated that it was time to "compromise on the Confederate flag, and teach our children that we can live together" (Bragg, 1996). He was immediately accused of "heresy" and being controlled by the "scourge of political correctness" as "propagated by liberal intellectuals and their allies in the media" by a group of 16 conservative Christian pastors (Paulsen, 1997). Some South Carolina whites referred to him as the "devil incarnate" and accused him of treason (Bandy, 1997). A white Republican leader in the Senate suggested that removing the battle flag from the dome would be an act of "cultural genocide" and analogous to Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Adolf Hitler by allowing the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany in 1938 (Jacoby, 1996; see also Leib, 1998, p. 234).

Governor Beasley proposed a bill entitled the "Heritage Act" to move the battle flag from the top of the dome to a Confederate soldier's monument in front of the state capitol. The Heritage Act also included language dictating the official state meaning of the Confederate battle flag by declaring it "a nonpolitical symbol of heritage." The governor's proposal received support from the legislature's black caucus, former governors, members of the state's congressional delegation (including 1948 Dixiecrat presidential candidate Senator Strom Thurmond), several clergy, as well as the public (Associated Press, 1996b; Tanner, 1996a). In December, 1996, a poll found that 52% of South Carolinians supported Beasley's proposal, with 43% in opposition (Tanner, 1996b).

Legislative deliberations and votes

The South Carolina State House of Representatives has 124 members which are elected every two years. After the November 1996 elections, there were 68 Republicans (55%), 54 Democrats (43%) and two Independents (2%) (Fig. 1). Thirty percent of South Carolina's 3.5 million citizens are African American. As of January 1997 there were 26 African American members of the State House, all Democrats. Additionally five more districts had black majority voting age populations though they were represented by whites—in all cases Democrats (Fig. 2). At the time 19 women served in the House including 11 Republicans and eight Democrats. While the 11 Republican women were white, six of the eight Democratic women were African American.

As a result of Beasley's November 1996 proposal a poll of state legislators' positions on the flag's removal was published on January 19, 1997, by the Columbia, South Carolina daily newspaper (The State, 1997a). In total 59 (48%) of the 124 members of the State House were willing to go on record as being opposed to removing the flag from atop the capitol dome. The remaining 65 legislators were split among several responses from being undecided, to supporting Beasley's Heritage Act, to wanting the issue put to a public vote. Most notable is the fact that 61% of the Democrats supported Republican Beasley while 72% of all GOP members directly opposed his effort.

Party by District
- ☐ Democrat
- ■ Republican
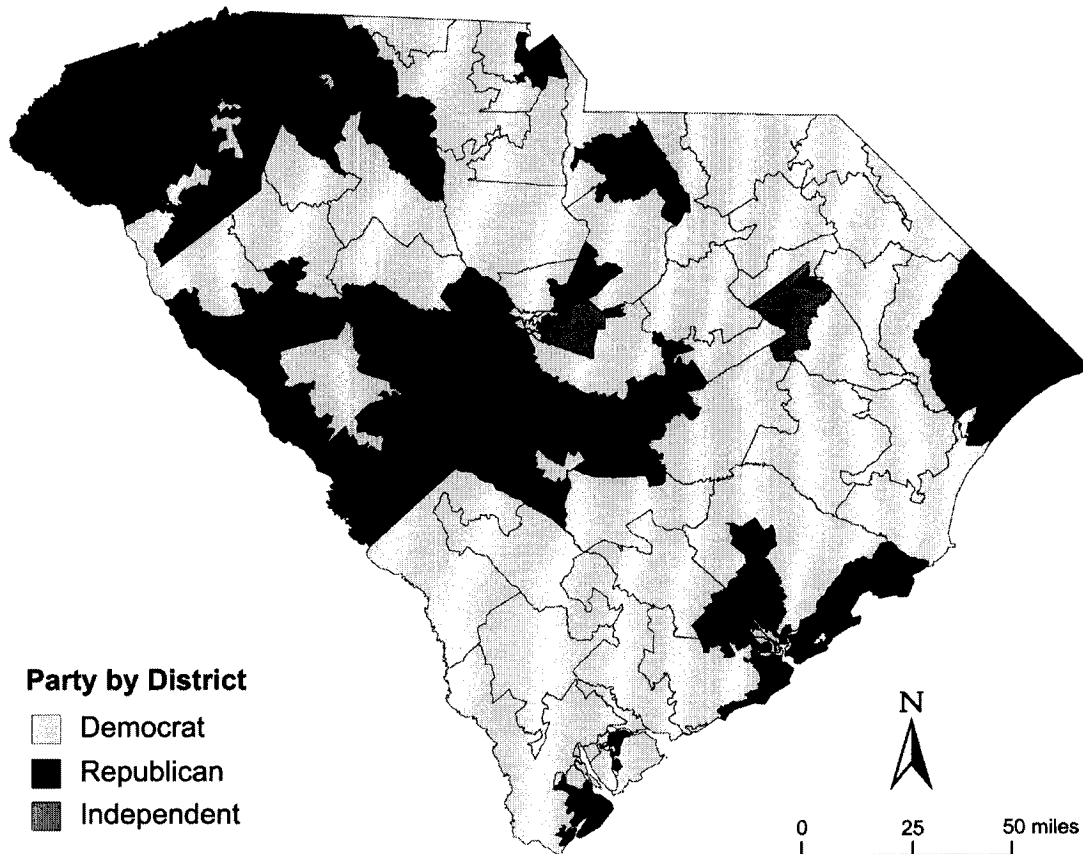- ▨ Independent

N

0   25   50 miles

Fig. 1.   South Carolina House districts by party, 1997.

In advance of the scheduled January 23, 1997 debate in the South Carolina House of Representatives over Beasley's Heritage Act, a large group of legislators drafted a substitute bill to force a referendum vote by the South Carolina electorate on the flag issue (*The State*, 1997b; Scoppe & Sponhour, 1997). The referendum bill ignored Beasley's suggestion for compromise and instead asked voters to register a simple "yes" or "no" on whether the flag should continue flying over the state capitol dome. Given that most white voters supported the battle flag remaining atop the capitol dome, pro-flag legislators were likely to be confident that such a "yes" or "no" referendum would "democratically" confirm their positions.[2] The substitute bill had 10 primary sponsors and 62 cosponsors. Nine of the 10 primary sponsors were

---

[2] This action was seen as a slap by GOP House members at Beasley for several reasons. First, the referendum would only ask voters whether they wanted the flag to remain above the state capitol, rather than ask them to vote on Beasley's proposal for ending the flag debate. Second, the bill was introduced and rushed to the floor of the House during the week of Beasley's 1997 State of the State address, approximately one-fifth of which was devoted to the flag issue. Third, analysts argued that given the referendum would be scheduled in November 1997—a non-presidential election year—those favoring keeping the flag above the dome would be likely to win due to typically low voter turnout.

Percent Black

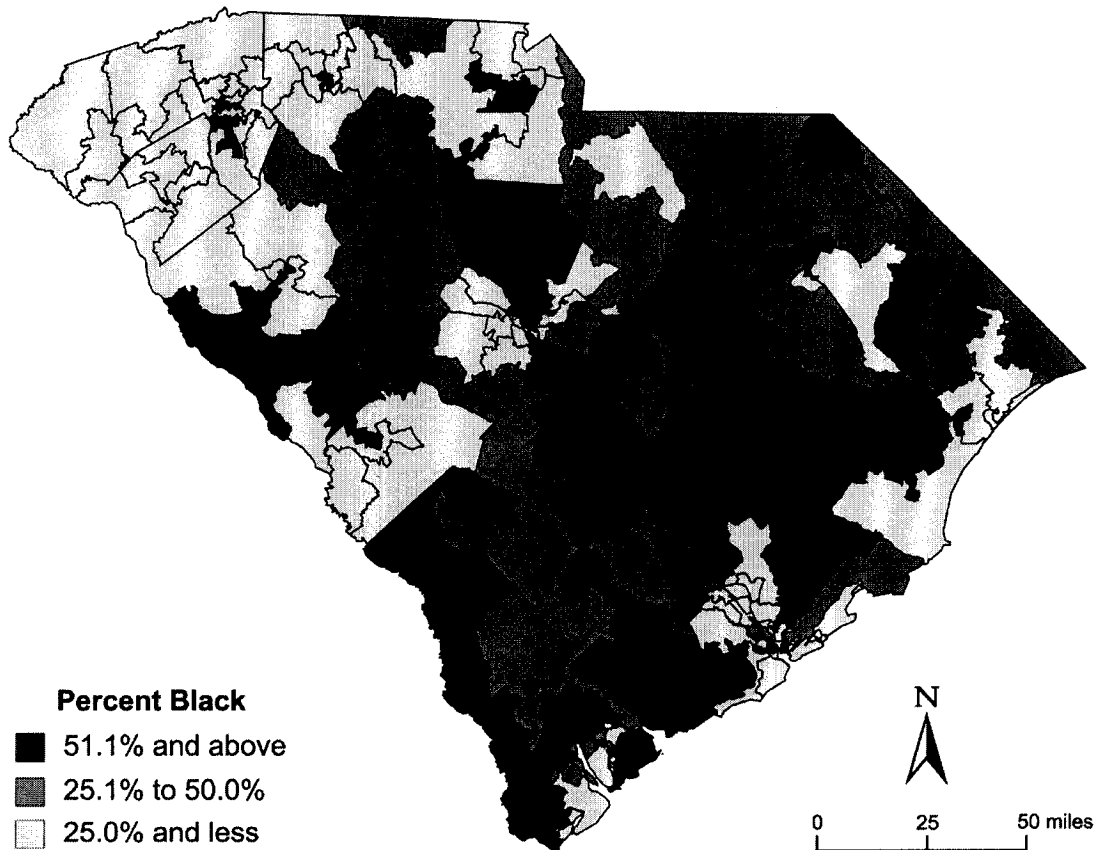■ 51.1% and above

▨ 25.1% to 50.0%

▢ 25.0% and less

Fig. 2.   South Carolina House districts by proportion of African American population, 1997.

Republicans, with one being a Democrat. Of the total 62 cosponsors, 53 were Republicans, eight were Democrats, and one was an Independent. Thus, 58% of all legislators were sponsors of the bill, including 91% of all Republicans, but only 17% of all Democrats.

On January 23, 1997, the South Carolina House debated the substitute bill instead of Governor Beasley's Heritage Act. During the three and one-half hour debate multiple votes were taken on various unsuccessful amendments to the substitute bill (Scoppe, 1997a). The House's debate concluded with the substitute bill being passed by a vote of 85 to 32. All but rejecting the compromising tone of the Governor's Heritage Act, the final bill provided for a public referendum limited to a simple "yes" or "no" on the continued flying of the battle flag above the state capitol. By the time the final vote on the substitute bill was taken, its passage was not in doubt. It is possible that both pro-flag and anti-flag legislators believed a public referendum was the politically safest means of deciding the sensitive issue.

As noted above, prior to the final vote on the substitute bill various amendments to the bill had been considered and rejected. One of these attempted to add a second option for voters on the public referendum—whether or not the flag should be moved from the top of the dome to the Confederate memorial in front of the capitol building.

This failed amendment was an effort to resuscitate the compromise included in Governor Beasley's Heritage Act. The vote on this amendment was closer than for the substitute bill, though it failed 74 to 40 (Scoppe, 1997a). Arguably this vote more clearly delineates legislators who were strong flag supporters from those willing to consider compromise, and this vote was therefore selected for additional analysis.

The vote on this bill was characterized by a strong contrast in party support. While 94% of all Republicans voted against the bill, 67% of all Democrats supported its passage (Table 1a). Also of note is the fact that 15% of all Democrats were absent or not voting—this compares with only a single Republican House member. Not surprisingly, support for the bill was influenced by the racial makeup of each legislator's district (Table 1b). Eighty-eight percent of the legislators from overwhelmingly white districts, defined here as districts with the African American voting age population (VAP) constituting 25.0% of the population or less, voted in opposition. In contrast, no legislator from a majority black voting age district cast a vote against the bill—87% of these representatives voted yes with the remaining 13% absent or not voting. The geographic pattern of "yes" and "no" votes in the state is complicated (Fig. 3), and generally reflects the partisan and racial makeup of districts. Thus, Democratic lawmakers representing urban and rural areas with significant black populations generally voted in favor of the amendment. Republican lawmakers representing largely white suburban and rural areas generally voted against the amendment.

The second South Carolina House vote selected for analysis pertained to whether the state should provide specialty license plates which included a battle flag in their

Table 1
Results of January 23, 1997, legislative vote to add a second option to bill requiring public referendum on whether to remove the flag from South Carolina's capitol dome[a]

(a) Results by party

	Republicans	Democrats	Independent	Total
No[b]	64 (94.1%)	10 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)	74 (59.7%)
Yes	3 (4.4%)	36 (66.7%)	1 (50.0%)	40 (32.3%)
Absent/not voting	1 (1.5%)	8 (14.8%)	1 (50.0%)	10 (8.1%)
Total	68 (100%)	54 (100%)	2 (100%)	124 (100%)

(b) Results by African American voting age population proportion of district population

	25.0% and below	25.1–50.0%	50.1% and above	Total
No[b]	64 (87.7%)	10 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	74 (59.7%)
Yes	6 (8.2%)	7 (35.0%)	27 (87.1%)	40 (32.2%)
Absent/not voting	3 (4.1%)	3 (15.0%)	4 (12.9%)	10 (8.1%)
Total	73 (100%)	20 (100%)	31 (100%)	124 (100%)

[a]The second option was to move the flag to a Confederate memorial on the capitol's grounds.
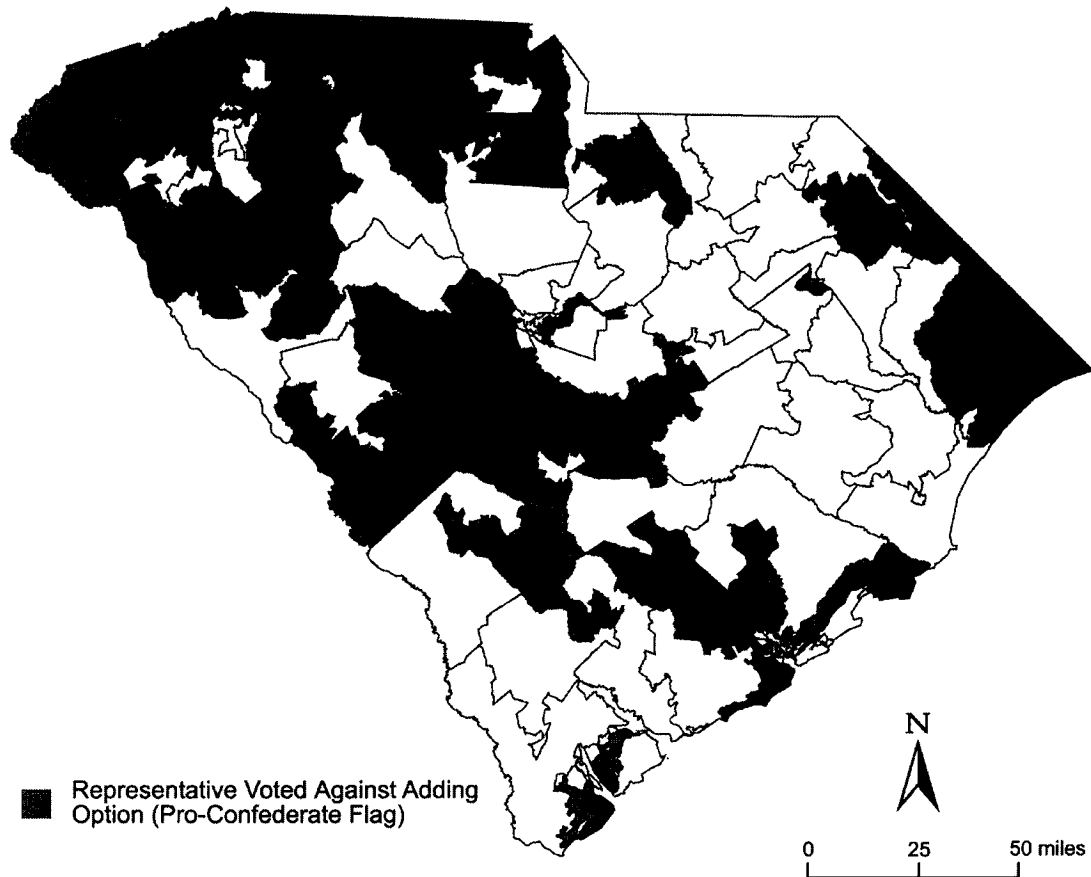[b]Pro-flag position.

Fig. 3.   Legislative vote on bill to add Confederate memorial option to public referendum.

design for members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) (Scoppe, 1997b; Dragon, 1999). Occurring over two months after the debate about the replacement bill for the Heritage Act, the final vote was 71 (58%) in favor to 30 (24%) opposed, with 22 (18%) legislators absent or not voting. As was the case with the previous vote, the final tally of legislative opinions was significantly partisan (Table 2a). While 85% of the House's Republican members supported the SCV, only 23% of the Democrats did so. It is also notable that while less than half of the Democrats cast votes against the bill, nearly a third were absent or did not vote.

The votes of legislators on this bill were also highly dependent upon the racial makeup of their districts (Table 2b). Nearly 85% of all legislators from overwhelmingly white districts, with voting age populations less than 25.0% African American, supported passage. In contrast, 74% of those representatives from majority black voting age districts voted against passage. Also notable is the division of opinion by legislators from minority influence districts, defined here as having 25.1% to 50.0% African American voting age populations, over half of which were absent or did not vote on the passage of this bill. In such diverse districts any position will surely alienate potential supporters. Hence, it is possible that legislators from such

Table 2
April 4, 1997, South Carolina House vote by party on whether to allow specialty automobile license plates to be issued for the Sons of Confederate Veterans

(a) Vote by party

	Republicans	Democrats	Independent	Total
Yes[a]	58 (85.3%)	12 (22.6%)	1 (50.0%)	71 (57.7%)
No	5 (7.3%)	24 (45.3%)	1 (50.0%)	30 (24.4%)
Absent/not voting	5 (7.3%)	17 (32.1%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (17.9%)
Total	68 (100%)	53[b] (100%)	2 (100%)	123[b] (100%)

(b) Vote by African American voting age population proportion of district population

	25.0% and below	25.1–50.0%	50.1% and above	Total
Yes[a]	62 (84.9%)	8 (42.1%)	1 (3.2%)	71 (57.7%)
No	6 (8.2%)	1 (5.3%)	23 (74.2%)	30 (24.4%)
Absent/not voting	5 (6.8%)	10 (52.6%)	7 (22.6%)	22 (17.9%)
Total	73 (100%)	19[b] (100%)	31 (100%)	123[b] (100%)

[a]Pro-flag position.
[b]Decrease in totals due to death.

districts felt that no position and not voting was more defensible than an affirmative or negative vote. The spatial pattern of legislators' positions on this bill was very similar to the previous vote's pattern, and appears most reflective of the racial makeup of districts (Fig. 4).

Other variables and logistical regression analysis

The above discussion strongly suggests that race and party were substantial influences upon the voting behavior of South Carolina legislators on the flag issue. To quantitatively verify the relative importance of these two influences in a logistical regression model, an effort was undertaken to collect additional potential explanatory variables. This effort was hampered by the number of available indicators at the legislative district level for South Carolina. A data set at the scale of state legislative districts was built after the completion of the early 1990s round of redistricting which includes potential independent variables such as income and educational attainment levels (Lilley, DeFranco, & Dienfenderfer, 1997). But after the completion of the data set there were successful legal challenges to some majority–minority legislative districts in South Carolina (Kuzenski, 1998). As a result, several of South Carolina's State House districts were redrawn though the data set was not updated to reflect these changes. Thus, our selection of potential variables was limited to those calculated by the state government as part of the redistricting process (e.g. African American voting population), characteristics of the legislator representing each district
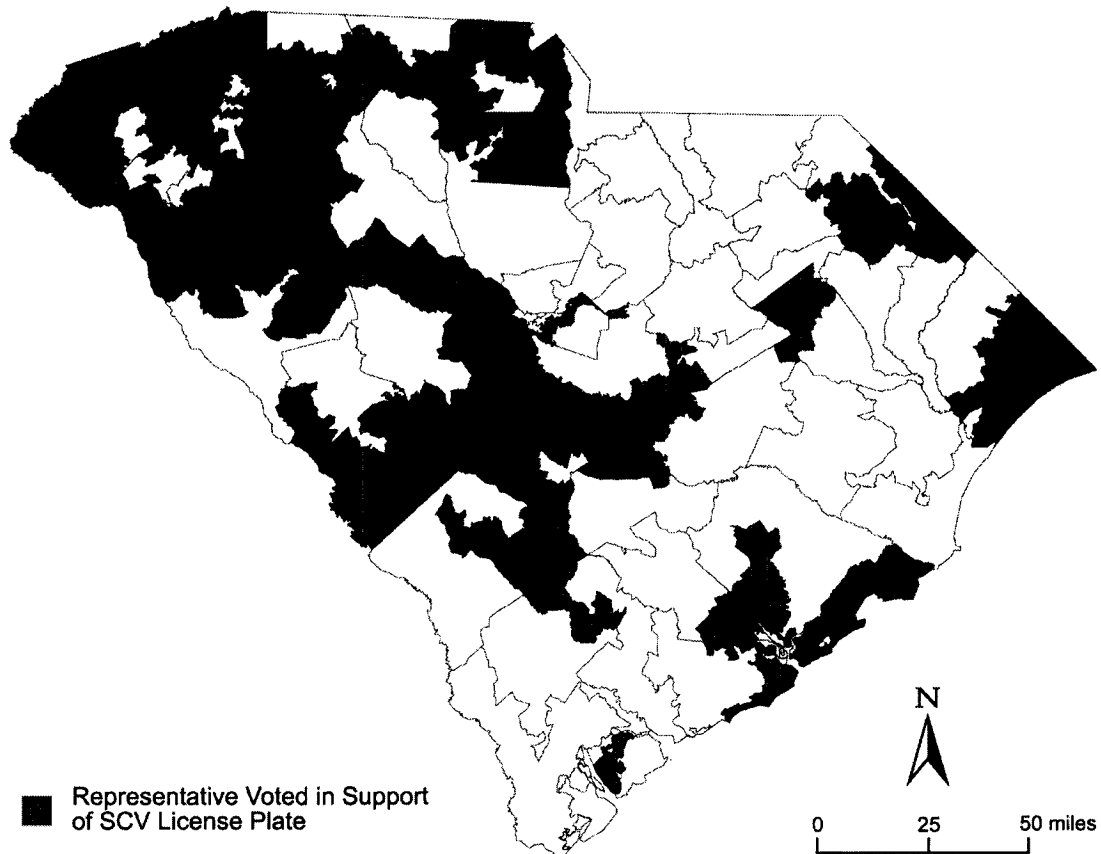
Fig. 4. Legislative vote on bill providing for specialty license plate for Sons of Confederate Veterans.

which are accessible from the state legislature's website (e.g. party, seniority, gender), and variables constructed by the authors (e.g. geographic character of district).

In total, nine variables were collected (see Appendix A). These included the urban versus rural character of each district, the region of South Carolina in which each district is located, the party, seniority and gender of each legislator, and the African American population's proportion of each district's total voting age population. After a review of the frequencies for each of the variables, and to avoid spurious results, the gender variable was dropped from the analysis because there are so few women among the members of the South Carolina State House. The seniority variable was maintained for the analysis with the notion that junior members of the legislature would be more constrained to vote in alignment with their political party and the dominant flag position among their constituents. In contrast, more electorally secure senior members of the body might be less constrained by the positions of either their parties or constituencies.

A rural–urban variable was also constructed to gauge the possible contextual impact of each representatives district's profile. This variable was constructed in a trichotomous fashion with rural coded 0, mixed urban and rural districts coded 1,

and districts dominantly urban coded 2. It has long been suggested that the process of urbanization would bring social and political change to the South (e.g. Key, 1949, p. 673; Brunn & Ingalls, 1972; Killian, 1985, p. 53). The purpose of this variable was therefore to assess whether legislators from comparatively conservative rural areas were more supportive of the flag than legislators from districts located in urban areas with more politically moderate constituents.

Finally, South Carolina has a distinct regionality based upon its physical environment, history, levels of urbanization and industrialization, and characteristics of the past and present populations. To account for the possible differences this regionality might have upon the positions of State House members, their districts were assigned to one of four regions in the state (Fig. 5). Our regionalization of the state is a modification of Kovacik and Winberry's (1987, pp. 207–215) South Carolina "geographic regions." Their eight regions were collapsed into four based upon geographic location and similarity to insure sufficient numbers of observations, here districts, in each region for the logistical regression. For example, the "Pee Dee Tobacco" region was merged with the "Agricultural Coastal Plain" region to delineate an "Agricultural Region" given that they jointly constitute the state's "agricultural heartland" (Kovacik & Winberry, 1987, p. 214). All things being equal, we might expect dominantly rural areas to be comparatively conservative and against changing the flag's status.
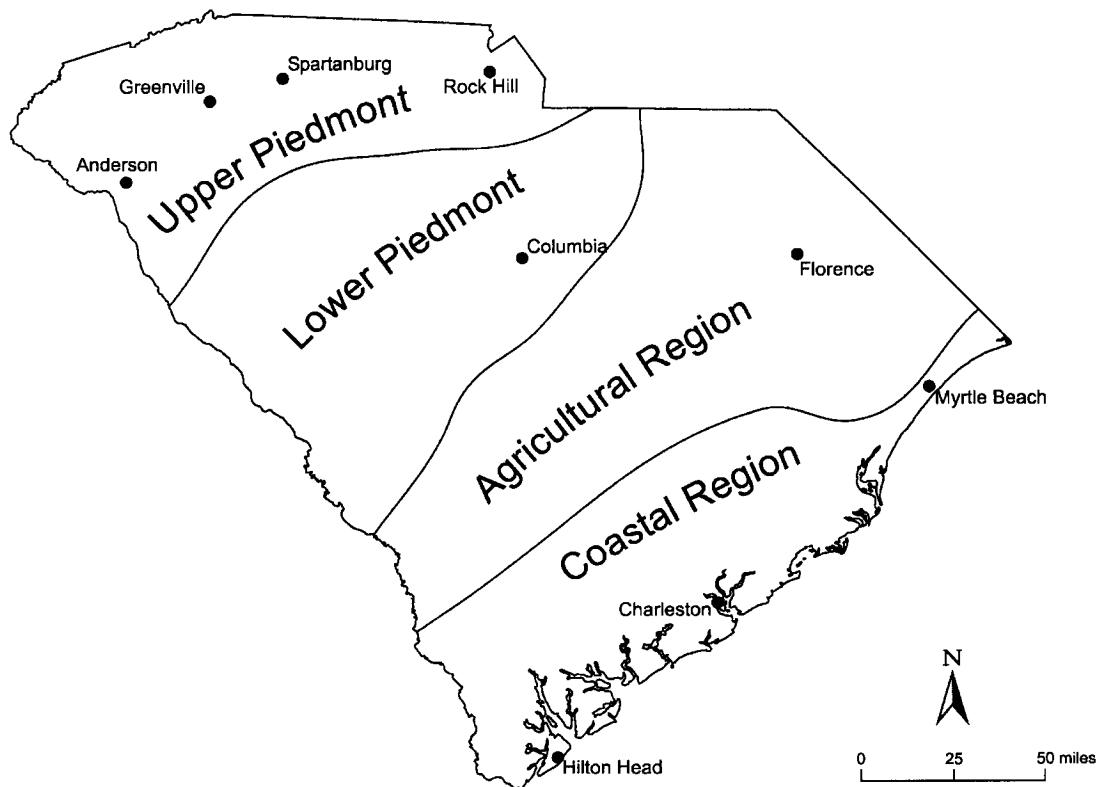

Fig. 5. Regionalization of South Carolina.

Due to its limited area and the fact that it has no common boundary with any other South Carolina region as identified by Kovacik and Winberry (1987, p. 213), the "Blue Ridge" region was merged with the "Upper Piedmont Manufacturing" region to form an "Upper Piedmont" region for the analysis. Given the importance of outside investment to this region, we might expect greater support for change and compromise by legislators representing this portion of the state. The state's narrow "Coastal Zone" and "Plantation Forest" regions were merged to form a "Coastal Region." This region includes the state's important tourist destinations which might be expected to support change if it preserved the positive image of locations like Hilton Head and Myrtle Beach. Finally, a "Lower Piedmont Region" was formed by the merger of Kovacik and Winberry's (1987, p. 213) "Midlands" and "Forested Lower Piedmont" regions. Expectations here are less clear, but the region does include the growing metropolitan area of Columbia including the University of South Carolina. Arguably, large urban areas should be expected to be more politically moderate than those which are dominantly rural and agrarian in character. This modified regionalization was overlaid upon a map of the state's House districts for the allocation of each district to a geographic region.

Logistical regressions for each vote were undertaken using all variables save the deletion of one of the region dummy variables as the "reference category" (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975, p. 374) (Table 3). The "Coastal Region" was selected as the reference category due to its non-existent statistical relationships with either of the legislative votes on the flag based upon the calculation of both Cramer's V and Lambda, both measures of association between nominal variables (Norusis, 1990, pp. 289–298). Though not all remaining variables proved statistically viable, both regression models were quite successful with over 92% of the legislators' votes correctly predicted. But the results also indicated that only two variables had statistically significant relationships with the two legislative votes: race and party.[3]

Table 3
Logistic regression results: all variables[a]

Independent variables	Vote on adding second option to referendum	Vote on SCV license plates
Constant	4.26	6.81
Party	2.84 (3.30)[b]	0.21 (0.16)
Black VAP	−2.84 (3.31)[b]	−3.57 (3.24)[b]
Urban	−0.92 (1.45)	−0.48 (0.77)
Upper Piedmont	1.36 (1.13)	−0.46 (0.40)
Lower Piedmont	−0.07 (0.06)	0.58 (0.40)
Agricultural region	1.83 (1.36)	2.74 (1.54)
Percent correctly predicted	92.9	92.0

[a]See Appendix A variable descriptions. The first numbers provided are the logistic regression coefficients. The ratios of the regression coefficients to their standard errors are in parentheses.
[b]Values above 2 are generally regarded as significant. See Dixon, 1988; Overby, 1991.

---

[3] Logistical regressions were performed for all indicators discussed in the text including the poll of legislators in November 1996, and the sponsorship of the substitute bill in January 1997. Because all legislative position indicators examined were highly intercorrelated with Cramer's Vs above 0.70, we limit our discussion here to only the two legislative votes.

Given these findings, a second set of logistical regressions was undertaken focusing upon the relative explanatory salience of race and party (Table 4). Political party and district percentage black voting age population are highly related in South Carolina (Cramer's V=0.73) as they are in most of the South. Therefore, single variable logistical regressions were run using only either black voting age population or party. All four of these regressions correctly predicted above 80% of the legislators' votes. The most successful regression was that using only district percentage black voting age population to model legislative votes on the state's issuance of a special plate for the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Black voting age population alone correctly predicted 92% of legislative votes on the bill. In short, party, and most particularly race, singularly correctly predicted nearly the same proportion of votes as the longer list of variables included in the multivariate logistical regressions.

"Ethnic" nationalism and whiteness

The previous discussion on the two legislative votes underscores the importance of racial cleavages to opinions on the Confederate battle flag. There are several conceptual perspectives that aid in explaining the racialized ferocity of the debate over the battle flag in the South. Among these are iconography (Webster & Webster, 1994; Leib 1995, 1998), landscape representation and public memory (Foote, 1997; Dwyers, 1999; Leib, forthcoming; Schein, 1999), and symbol theory (McElroy, 1995, pp. 7–28). Here we discuss the debate in terms of "ethnic" nationalism and whiteness studies.

How is it possible for different groups of Southerners to view "southern" symbols in such polarized ways? We might posit that black and white Southerners have strongly contrasting levels of emotional attachment to the region, but this difference is not supported by polls. A Southern Focus poll in 1994 (Associated Press, 1994a),

Table 4
Single variable logistic regression results: comparison of black VAP and party only models[a]

Independent variables	Vote on adding second option to referendum		Vote on SCV license plates	
	Black VAP	Party	Black VAP	Party
Constant	5.45	−1.25	5.04	−0.74
Regression coefficient	−2.83 (6.0)[b]	4.02 (6.4)[b]	−2.40 (5.9)[b]	3.04 (5.4)[b]
Percent correctly predicted	86.0	87.6	92.1	83.0

[a]See Appendix A for description of variables. The first numbers provided are the logistic regression coefficients. The ratios of the regression coefficients to their standard errors are in parentheses.
[b]Values above 2 are generally regarded as significant. See Dixon, 1988; Overby, 1991. Cramer's V correlation between party and black VAP is 0.73.

for example, found that 96% of whites and 91% of blacks in the South were proud of their southern heritage. Second, today the South is experiencing a substantial in-migration of African Americans, many of whom are returning to their perceived ancestral homes (Frey, 1998; Shelley & Webster, 1998, pp. 168–171).

A more defensible argument to explain the differences in the perceptions of "southern" symbols between black and white Southerners is their contrasting interpretations of the region's past and what and who they define as "southern" (Wilson, 1995, pp. 159–163). Though both "southern" in terms of regional associations, black and white Southerners arguably constitute two separate "nations" occupying the same space. This division is not new, having developed over centuries of the region's racially defined social, economic and political systems. Traditional white southern identity was forged by the issue of race as well as the region's legacy of conflict in the 19th century with the North (Escott, 1991; Woodward, 1993). As Woodward (1993, p. 243) argues, the white southern "obsession with race had suffused and coerced all aspects of regional life" in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. This white southern obsession with race was so pronounced that in V.O. Key's seminal 1949 work entitled *Southern Politics in State and Nation* he proclaimed that "In its grand outlines the politics of the South revolves around the position of the Negro" (p. 5). White Southerners saw themselves as a distinctly separate entity from the region's African Americans. This separation (and domination) was spatially enforced through the Jim Crow segregation system (Delaney, 1998).

As a result, both southern and non-southern whites, even many sympathetic to African American causes, have commonly failed to view black Southerners as "southern." Cobb (1999, p. 127) notes that while southern whites "sought to defend their exclusionary version of the southern community from any and all would-be-black invaders" during the Civil Rights Movement, out-of-region white "critics found it logical and easy enough to conclude that the last thing that any black would crave would be an identity as a southerner." He further notes that even the comparatively "enlightened" W.J. Cash, in his monumental 1941 book *The mind of the South*, referred to southern whites as "Southerners," while referring to southern blacks as "blacks" (Cobb, 1999, p. 127).

The patterns of interaction between black and white Southerners, or lack thereof, are not of recent origin. Clearly the region's past system of *de jure* segregation, and continuing levels of *de facto* segregation, have created the circumstances under which both groups are less cognizant of the other's perceptions than would be expected after hundreds of years of living in the same region. Goldfield (1990, p. 1), for example, states that in the South "the supreme irony . . . [is] . . . that the two races lived side by side for centuries and knew each other not at all." He attributes this lack of understanding to the "abyss" of "race pride." In this context "race pride" is not simply pride in one's heritage or the accomplishments of one's ancestors. Rather it is arguably analogous to extreme nationalism or chauvinism. Slavery, the Jim Crow system, and the massive resistance to the court-ordered desegregation of public facilities are but a few examples of the results of extreme "race pride." Such racial chauvinism is all but a necessary precondition for singularly judging some citizens

based upon their skin color as opposed to their levels of contribution to the community.

While Goldfield's comments surely have significant validity, they also characterize black and white Southerners in similar fashion to too great a degree. Clearly southern whites were far more ignorant of their black "neighbors" than southern blacks were of their white "neighbors." As a matter of survival during slavery and the Jim Crow system, southern blacks made efforts to be as cognizant of the attitudes and perspectives of white Southerners as possible in an effort to avoid being targeted for abuse or violence (Woodward, 1957; Berlin, Favreau, & Miller, 1998). And in his 1933 collection of short stories, Langston Hughes (1962) clearly indicates that African Americans were making an effort to understand *The ways of white folks*. In contrast, Bucklin Moon's 1945 edited volume, *A primer for white folks*, plainly underscores that whites across the United States were largely unaware of the social, economic and political obstacles faced by black Americans. While such ignorance might be somewhat understandable in overwhelmingly white parts of the United States, it is far less so in the South where blacks and whites had long interacted due to necessity. But many southern whites in the 1950s and 1960s were ostensibly taken by surprise by black aspirations during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, Killian (1985, p. 56) notes that a common feeling expressed by white Southerners during the 1960s stated that "I always thought I understood our coloured people but now I feel like I never knew them at all."

The Confederate battle flag provides an excellent example of the impact of the continuing lack of understanding maintained by many white Southerners for their black "neighbors" as well as Goldfield's "abyss" of "race pride." Significant improvements in race relations *have* occurred in the aftermath of the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s (Black & Black, 1987; Woodward, 1993). *De jure* segregation no longer exists and opinion polls show dramatic change over time in white southern racial attitudes (Black & Black, 1987). As a result of these changes, Leib (1995, p. 40) argues that in the late 20th century "the meaning of being a 'Southerner' and the nature of 'Southernness' continue to evolve." However, while some (e.g. Smith, 1985; Wilson, 1995, pp. 159–163) have suggested the adoption of symbols to which both white and black Southerners can relate, Ayers (1996, p. 79) argues that the "Confederate flag is a topic of such debate and divisiveness in the South today because it denies all that black and white Southerners share, because it reduces the South to a one-time and one-sided political identity." In short, while we might identify qualities that collectively define Southerners, both black and white, the Confederate battle flag defines "southernness" exclusively as "white Confederate southernness."

John Shelton Reed (1982, p. 78; see also Cobb, 1999, pp. 140–141) has argued that "white Southerners can be regarded as an ethnic group." He concludes that white Southerners are "characterized by a surprisingly high level of group identification by its members, crosscutting (as an ethnic group identification should) class, sex, and age lines." Reed suggests that "socialization processes" are responsible for this strong sense of identity, and that the foundation for the sociological "unity of the white South" was the maintenance of a white-dominated and controlled South (Reed,

1982, p. 83; see also Phillips, 1928). Buttressing this view is that both of the major upheavals in the region's history, the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, were centrally associated with the maintenance of white control over the region.

A 1998 editorial by African American columnist Bill Maxwell (p. 11A) makes clear the dilemma of identity faced by black Southerners.

> I love the South and, until quite recently, fancied myself a Southerner. Even though I was born and reared in the South and do not plan to ever leave it, I no longer believe that an African-American can be a Southerner. . . . The African-American, as imported chattel, was the South's original exile, the bastard who could not join the fraternity.

One basis for Maxwell's (1998; see also Cobb, 1999, p. 139) change of heart about his southernness was a letter from a South Carolinian that stated, "Sir, a n____r can't be a Southerner. You and your kind have never belonged here." Such perceptions all but negate the ability and desire of many whites in the South to understand why black Southerners find the Confederate battle flag objectionable. As a white undergraduate student stated to one of the authors after a lecture on the "Confederate Battle Flag as Political Iconography," "If those people don't like our symbols, they should go back to where they came from." In response to the instructor's question about when her family had arrived in the South, she replied in the 1920s, more than a century after the development of the slave-plantation system in the region.

The concept of "whiteness" also aids in the understanding of the dissonance of the Confederate battle flag debate.[4] Whiteness studies are a rapidly growing subdivision of critical race theory (Delgado, 1995). Critical race theory holds that racial categories are social and legal constructions with little or no basis in biology (Lopez, 1995, pp. 194–195, 1996). The "white race" has therefore been "invented" (Allen, 1994). Hannaford's (1996) analysis of the development of concepts about racial divisions confirms that the allocation of people to different racial categories and a "self-conscious idea of race" date largely to the 17th century and after.

Whiteness studies argue that white people constitute an operational cultural group,

---

[4] It is important to note that though the development of whiteness studies has occurred largely in the past decade, an understanding of many of its central concepts is not new. Arguably, activists in the civil rights community have no doubt understood that white people operate largely in concert for some time. For example, in 1945 Lillian Smith (p. 484) wrote

> We have looked at the "Negro problem" long enough. Now the time has come for us to right-about-face and study the problem of the white man: the deep-rooted needs that have caused him to seek those strange, regressive satisfactions that are derived from worshiping his own skin color. The white man himself is one of the world's most urgent problems today; not the Negro, not other colored races. We whites must learn to confess this.

Despite the central quality of Smith's 55-year-old sentiments to current whiteness studies, whiteness studies have provided labels for these implicitly understood realities among those in the civil rights community. In this sense, the growing body of work is indeed helpful.

though most fail to recognize themselves as such (Frankenberg, 1997). At present most white people view themselves as unraced in a racialized world, the "norm," essentially as the societal standard by which others are evaluated (Bonnett, 1997; Jackson, 1998; Center for the Study of White American Culture, 1999). The "centered" character of white culture and attitudes in the United States presents obstacles for people of color to participate in the definition of American culture(s). As stated by Pitts (1999), "The nation has always seen its black citizenry as some strange, unfathomable species. Tolerated but not embraced, in America but not of it." In response to this reality, whiteness proponents argue that white culture should be "decentered" or "displaced" in lieu of a multi-cultural center (Frankenberg, 1997).

The Confederate battle flag debate reflects the centered character of white culture in the South. White culture's historic control in the region led to the construction of a dominant white southern culture as well as a parallel southern black culture, with little meshing of perspectives to form a multi-racial regional culture. Many pro-flag white Southerners assume that white southern culture *is* the "regional culture," and cannot comprehend why black Southerners do not feel the same emotional attachment to "southern" symbols as they do. White Southerners with this view frequently do not see the Civil War as having been fought over slavery, but rather southern independence and/or states' rights. They argue as confirmation that thousands of black slaves fought for the Confederacy (e.g. Associated Press, 1997a), and thus the battle flag is an icon that all "true" Southerners view as heritage. It should be noted that the US Army Military History Institute says there is "practically no evidence of black participation as Confederate soldiers" (Associated Press, 1997a).

Concluding perspectives

South Carolina's fractious debate over the Confederate battle flag is but one example of the conflict over Civil War and Civil Rights symbols now ongoing across the South. A central finding here is that these issues are dominantly racial in character. While not dismissing the role of political party entirely, increasingly partisanship is defined by race in the South. As stated by one Alabama political pundit, "Understanding political parties in Alabama is as simple as black and white" (Bryant, 1997). Given our results, this same comment seems equally applicable to South Carolina— at least as far as party politics pertain to the Confederate battle flag debate.

This conclusion leads to the question of whether issues of race have truly subsided in the South during the past several decades. Arguably, race continues to dominate southern politics and the differences between 1970 and 2000 are degrees of clarity. Simply said, today's debates over race are cloaked in the guise of other issues— welfare reform, education, public transportation, and the meaning of the Confederate battle flag. These debates are centrally about power, and whose collective vision or agenda will be carried out. The Confederate battle flag controversy degrades into shrill debate because southern whites see themselves as distinct, under siege by attacks on their symbols, and their point of view as culturally and morally centrist. Possibly more fundamentally they fear a loss of power and control over "*their*

region." This battle is thus over more than a flag; it is over the constitution of the South's regional identity, and whether that identity can overcome the region's racist history towards the formation of a multi-racial or "national" sense of place. Thus the fundamental question is whether black Southerners, long treated as exiles in their own land, will be accorded a central role in defining the region's past, present and future.

Anti-flag voices continue to be criticized as having given in to "political correctness," being radicals, or representing special interests, the latter frequently employed as a code word for "minority" or African American. Given the "ethnic group" status of southern whites coupled with their assumption that their southernness is the only southernness, these debates all but preclude an imminent decentering of white culture in the South. This being true, the ongoing controversies over the Confederate battle flag are over much more than the flag—they are over the definition of who is southern and how the South as a region will be defined. As such, we expect this controversy will continue throughout the region for many years to come.

South Carolina postscript

The South Carolina House's 1997 battle flag related legislation was never enacted, having been stalled in the State Senate (Associated Press, 1997b; Tanner, 1997). Republican Governor Beasley was defeated in his re-election bid in 1998 by Democrat Jim Hodges by over 10 percentage points. Beasley struggled through a controversy over charges of martial infidelity in addition to a focused campaign for an education lottery by Democrat Hodges. Beasley has suggested that his efforts on the flag issue significantly contributed to his defeat (Strope, 1999b). While it is incorrect to suggest that the Confederate battle flag controversy singularly cost him the election, it most assuredly did erode the commitment of his electoral base of conservative white voters.

Democratic Governor Hodges won the 1998 gubernatorial election with a significantly above-average turnout of African American voters (Hill, 2000). Though he was able to maintain some distance from the flag flap in the first several months of his administration, by late-1999 his involvement became unavoidable. In July 1999 the NAACP voted to impose economic sanctions on the state if the flag was not removed from the capitol dome (Associated Press, 1999a,b). The resolution targeted the state's $7 billion tourist industry calling for conventions, business meetings, family reunions, and other such gatherings "to consider locations other than the state of South Carolina . . . until such time as the Confederate Battle Flag is removed" (NAACP, 1999).

Although the NAACP sanctions were not to begin until January 1, 2000, the state suffered cancellations by some groups almost immediately (Holland, 1999). By March 2000, an estimated 100 conventions and reunions had been canceled (L'Heureux, 2000). Such efforts had their desired impact as governments in many of the state's largest cities including Charleston, Columbia, Greenville, Hilton Head

and Spartanburg, called for removing the flag from the capitol dome (Associated Press, 1999e; Collins, 2000; Surratt, 2000). Similarly the Council of Presidents of South Carolina's public universities voted unanimously to "respectfully request" that the flag be removed (Associated Press, 1999g). Governor Hodges had multiple private meetings with the principals in the controversy including the NAACP, attempting to formulate a compromise with the black leaders (Associated Press, 1999f). South Carolina's flag debate received national prominence as 2000 presidential candidates could not avoid addressing the issue, with Republicans George W. Bush and John McCain both suggesting that "outsiders" should allow the state to settle the issue (Smith, 1999; Strope, 1999a), while Democratic contenders Bill Bradley and Al Gore both called for the flag's removal (Sobieraj, 2000; Stensland, 2000).

In January 2000, on the eve of the state legislature's general session, 6000 flag supporters marched on the capitol building in Columbia to demonstrate their support for the flag remaining on top of the capitol building (Stroud, 2000a). A week later, 46,000 flag opponents rallied at the capitol calling for the flag to be removed (Stroud, 2000b). Public opinion polls indicated that a solid majority of South Carolinians agreed that the flag should be removed from the capitol dome (Associated Press, 2000), but little consensus emerged over where or if the flag should be relocated. Some flag supporters, seeing momentum growing for removing the flag from the top of the dome, agreed that the flag should be moved to the Confederate soldier monument located in front of the capitol. However, many flag opponents argued that the flag would be too prominent if located at the monument in front of the State House, the site of a busy intersection of two main roads in downtown Columbia, and that it should be moved off the State House grounds entirely.

Governor Hodges publicly entered the debate in January 2000 by calling in his annual State of the State message for the flag to be removed (Hodges, 2000). In February, Hodges proposed a compromise solution: take the flag down from the top of the capitol and fly it at a second Confederate monument (this one honoring former Civil War General and 19th-century political leader Wade Hampton) located *behind* the capitol building. In announcing his proposal, Hodges was joined by white and black politicians, Republicans and Democrats, representatives from the state's business community and tourism industry, and the head coach of the University of South Carolina's football team (Stroud, 2000c). However, the compromise was widely criticized by both flag supporters and opponents. Flag supporters argued that by being placed behind the capitol, the flag would not be widely visible, and was therefore an affront to their heritage. Flag opponents argued that by remaining on the State House grounds, though at an obscured location, the flag would still symbolize racist government authority and was therefore unacceptable. As a result, Hodges' compromise failed.

In April 2000, the State Senate, with bipartisan support including both black and white Senators, voted to remove the flag from the top of the capitol dome and place a square version of the battle flag on a 20-foot flag-pole behind the Confederate soldier monument in front of the capitol. The spirit of cooperation in the Senate, however, failed to materialize in the State House. In May, after divisive debate, the House voted to approve the Senate plan, adding amendments that would increase

the flag's prominence in front of the capitol (including raising the height of the flag pole to 30 feet and adding lights surrounding the pole to illuminate the flag at night). The House narrowly passed the measure, 63–56, with only three of the chamber's 26 African American members voting for passage (Stroud, 2000d). The split between State Senate and State House African American caucuses was evidenced again a week later on final passage of the legislature's conference committee bill (which retained the higher flag pole and lights). While six of seven African American Senators voted for the bill, only four of the 26 African American House members supported final passage (Stroud, 2000e).

On May 23, Governor Hodges signed the bill in his first statewide address on commercial television. In his address he stated that "Today, the descendants of slaves and the descendants of Confederate soldiers join together in the spirit of mutual respect" (quoted in Eichel, 2000). The legislation was also praised by the state's business community (Stroud, 2000e). However, the change in the flag's location did not universally appease everyone in either the black or white communities. For example, in mid-July NAACP president Kweisi Mfume stated that those African American legislators who supported the flag compromise were "weak-kneed, shifty-eyed, [and] back-bending" while vowing to maintain the boycott until the flag is moved completely off the State House grounds (Shepard, 2000). And with a slogan of "No Votes for Turncoats," the overwhelmingly white South Carolina Heritage Coalition made endorsements of candidates for election to the state legislature based upon their flag positions (Davenport, 2000). As a result of the continuing vitriol, it is unlikely that the issue is yet fully resolved or will be in the near future.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A. Variable list for logistical regressions

Dependent variables

Legislative vote taken January 23, 1997, on whether a second option for voters, to move the flag to a memorial, should be added to a public referendum on the flag. "No" (pro-flag) coded 1 and "yes" coded 0.

Legislative vote taken April 3, 1997, on whether vanity license plates should be made available to the Sons of Confederate Veterans. "Yes" (pro-flag) coded 1 and "no" coded 0.

Independent variables

Party. Republican coded 1, and Democrat coded 0. The two Independent's were not included.

African American voting age population proportion by district. Trichotomous with 0.0% to 25.0% coded 0, 25.1% to 50.0% coded 1, and 50.1% and above coded 2.

Seniority in years for each legislator. Trichotomous with 4 or less years of service coded 0, 5 to 8 years coded 1, and 9 or more years coded 2.

Gender of legislator—male coded 1 and female coded 0.

Urban/rural character of district—trichotomous with rural coded 0, mixed urban and rural coded 1, and urban coded 2.

Regions of South Carolina (coded 1 in district was in region, and 0 if district was outside of region):

Upper Piedmont—region corresponding to Kovacik and Winberry's (1987) Upper Piedmont Manufacturing and Blue Ridge regions.

Lower Piedmont—region corresponding to Kovacik and Winberry's (1987) Forested Lower Piedmont and Midlands regions.

Agricultural Region—region corresponding to Kovacik and Winberry's (1987) Agricultural Coast Plain and Pee Dee Tobacco regions.

Coastal Region—region corresponding to Kovacik and Winberry's (1987) Plantation Forest and Coastal Zone regions.

References

Adams, R. (1997). Confederate flag's future is in hands of legislature's leaders. *The State, 4 February*, A9.

Agnew, J. A. (1987). *Place and politics: the geographical mediation of state and society.* Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Agnew, J. A., & Duncan, J. S. (1989). *The power of place: bringing together geographical and sociological imaginations.* Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Alderman, D. H. Jr. (1996). Creating a new geography of memory in the South: (re)naming of streets in honor of Martin Luther King. *Southeastern Geographer, 36*, 51–69.

Allen, T. W. (1994). Racial oppression and social control. In *The invention of the white race, vol. 1*. New York: Verso.

Associated Press (1993a). Flag no issue in Carolina. *Tuscaloosa News, 17 January*, 5B.

Associated Press (1993b). Protest rages over South's symbols. *Tuscaloosa News, 6 June*, 8B.

Associated Press (1993c). Camp says flag could have cost [Mercedes] plant. *Tuscaloosa News, 2 October*, 3B.

Associated Press (1993d). Economics, weariness heat up flag debate. *Tuscaloosa News, 17 October*, 4C.

Associated Press (1993e). Senate battle flag fans vow to fight. *Tuscaloosa News, 12 November*, 4B.

Associated Press (1993f). Compromise posed on Confederate flag in S.C. *Tuscaloosa News, 10 November*, 7B.

Associated Press (1994a). Most Southerners proud of heritage. *Tuscaloosa News, 8 February*, 5B.

Associated Press (1994b). S.C. to consider flag compromise. *Tuscaloosa News, 10 March*, 6B.

Associated Press (1994c). S.C. House blocks plans to remove flag from Statehouse. *Tuscaloosa News, 3 June*, 8B.

Associated Press (1994d). Fear of conflict keeps rebel flag flying in S.C. *Tuscaloosa News, 24 June*, 4B.

Associated Press (1994e). About half favor flag flying over Statehouse. *Tuscaloosa News*, 6 August, 5B.

Associated Press (1996a). Teens convicted in rebel flag shooting. *Tuscaloosa News*, 13 January, 3A.

Associated Press (1996b). Caucus backs proposal to move flag. *Tuscaloosa News*, 24 December, 3B.

Associated Press (1997a). Question of black soldiers for the South becomes part of Confederate flag debate. *Tuscaloosa News*, 3 March, 7A.

Associated Press (1997b). Businesses not hurt by black boycott: flag was focus of Greenville NAACP strike. *The State*, 22 June, B3.

Associated Press (1999a). NAACP backs boycott of S.C. *Tuscaloosa News*, 16 July, 2A.

Associated Press (1999b). Beasley: leaders hold key to South Carolina rebel flag issue. *Birmingham News*, 28 July, 8C.

Associated Press (1999c). Lawyers group wants "Dixie" dropped. *Birmingham News*, 11 August, 9D.

Associated Press (1999d). Rebel flag stirred little fuss in '62 debut over S.C. capitol. *Birmingham News*, 8 November, 4B.

Associated Press (1999e). Greenville, Spartanburg City Councils say take down the Confederate flag. *Birmingham News*, 10 November, 2B.

Associated Press (1999f). Governor, black leaders discuss flag. *Birmingham News*, 30 November, 4A.

Associated Press (1999g). S.C. senator wants flag removed. *Birmingham News*, 10 December, 3B.

Associated Press (2000). Majority of residents want flag to come down. *The State*, 10 January http://thestate.com/metro/docs/poll10.htm.

Ayers, E. L. (1996). What we talk about when we talk about the South. In E. Ayers, P. N. Limerick, S. Nissenbaum, & P. S. Onuf, *All over the map: rethinking American regions* (pp. 62–82). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Bandy, L. (1997). Fairfield's Winds favor battle flag: passions running high for banner's supporters. *The State*, 15 February, A1.

Barnard, W. D. (1985). *Dixiecrats and Democrats*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama.

Bartley, N. V. (1969). *The rise of the massive resistance: race and politics in the South during the 1950s*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Bass, J., & DeVries, W. (1976). *The transformation of southern politics*. New York: Basic Books.

Bass, J., & Nelson, J. (1984). *The Orangeburg massacre*. Macon, GA: Mercer Press.

Berlin, I., Favreau, M., & Miller, S. F. (1998). *Remembering slavery: African Americans talk about their personal experiences of slavery and freedom*. New York: New Press.

Black, E., & Black, M. (1987). *Politics and society in the South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bonnett, A. (1996). Constructions of "race", place and discipline: geographies of "racial" identity and racism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19, 864–883.

Bonnett, A. (1997). Geography, "race" and whiteness: invisible traditions and current challenges. *Area*, 29, 193–199.

Bragg, R. (1996). Time to lower rebel flag, a southern governor says. *New York Times*, 27 November, A16.

Brunn, S. D., & Ingalls, G. L. (1972). The emergence of urban Republicanism in the urban South. *Southeastern Geographer*, 12, 133–144.

Bryant, T. (1997). Political segregation: are racial lines dividing Alabama's two-party system? *Birmingham News/Birmingham Post-Herald*, 5 April, C1, C5.

Cannon, D. D. (1988). *The flags of the Confederacy*. Memphis: St Lukes Press.

Cash, W. J. (1991). *The mind of the South*. New York: Vintage Books (first released 1941).

Center for the Study of White American Culture (1999). http://www.euroamerican.org/org/orgindex.htm.

Clark, E. C. (1993). *The schoolhouse door*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cobb, J. C. (1993). *The selling of the South: the southern crusade for industrial development, 1936–1990*. (2nd ed.). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Cobb, J. C. (1999). *Redefining southern culture: mind and identity in the modern South*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Collins, L. M. (2000). Eastover Town Council asks State to remove Confederate flag. *The State*, 20 January http://www.newslibrary.com/nlsearch.asp, Article ID: 0001190228.

Davenport, J. (2000). Confederate flag supporters push candidates in S.C. *Tuscaloosa News*, 7 September, 4B.

Davis, D. (1995). Rebel banner spells tragedy in Tennessee. *Tuscaloosa News, 20 January,* 5A.

Delaney, D. (1998). *Race, place, and the law.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Delgado, R. (1995). *Critical race theory: the cutting edge.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Dixon, W. J. (1988). *BMDP statistical software manual.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Dragon, R. (1999). Notes from the States. *ALPCA Newsletter, 45,* 62–67.

Dwyer, O. (1999). Memory on the margins: the location of civil rights memorials. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Honolulu, Hawaii, March.

Eddings, J. (1994). Business takes on the Confederate flag. *U.S. News and World Report, 4 December,* 57.

Eichel, H. (2000). Gov. Hodges signs bill to move flag. *Charlotte Observer, 24 May* http://www.charlotte.com/observer/local/pub/Zo1.1st.Local-025.htm.

Entrikin, J. N. (1991). *The betweenness of place: towards a geography of modernity.* London: Macmillan.

Escott, P. D. (1991). The special place of history. In P. D. Escott, & D. R. Goldfield, *The South for New Southerners* (pp. 1–11). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Faulkner, W. (1951). *Requiem for a nun.* New York: Random House.

Foote, K. (1997). *Shadowed ground: America's landscapes of violence and tragedy.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Forman, J. R. (1991). Driving Dixie down: removing the Confederate flag from southern state capitols. *Yale Law Journal, 101,* 505–526.

Foster, G. M. (1987). *Ghosts of the Confederacy: defeat, the lost cause, and the emergence of the New South.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Frankenberg, R. (1997). *Displacing whiteness: essays in social and cultural criticism.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Frey, W. H. (1998). Black migration to the South reaches record highest in 1990s. *Population Today, 26* (2), 1–3.

Glickman, N. J., & Woodward, D. P. (1989). *The new competitors: how foreign investors are changing the U.S. economy.* New York: Basic Books.

Goldfield, D. R. (1990). *Black, white, and southern: race relations and southern culture, 1940 to the present.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Gottmann, J. (1952). The political partitioning of our world: an attempt at analysis. *World Affairs, 4,* 512–519.

Hale, G. E. (1998). *Making whiteness: the culture of segregation in the South, 1890–1940.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Hannaford, I. (1996). *Race: the history of an idea in the West.* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Hill, R. (2000). The state of black political participation in South Carolina in 2000. In K. Campbell, *The state of black South Carolina* (pp. 173–183). Columbia, SC: Columbia Urban League (millennium edition).

Hitt, J. (1997). Confederate semiotics. *Nation, 264* (16), 11–17.

Hodges, J. (2000). Text of Gov. Jim Hodges' State of the State address. *Charlotte Observer, 19 January* http://www.charlotte.com/hodges1.htm.

Holland, J. (1999). SCLC cancels convention in Charleston. *Birmingham News, 21 July,* 7C.

Horowitz, T. (1996). A death for Dixie. *The New Yorker, 18 March,* 64–77.

Hughes, L. (1962). *The ways of white folks.* New York: Vintage Classics (first published 1933).

Jackson, H. (1992). Symbol of what? *Birmingham News,* 16 August, 1C, 5C.

Jackson, P. (1998). Construction of "whiteness" in the geographical imagination. *Area, 30,* 99–106.

Jackson, P., & Penrose, J. (1994). *Constructions of race, place and nation.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Jacoby, J. (1996). Lower the flag, South Carolina. *Tuscaloosa News, 4 December,* 5A (*Boston Globe* column).

Johnston, R. J. (1991). *A question of place.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Karr, G. (1993). S.C. Senator calls for flag removal. *Tuscaloosa News, 19 October,* 30J.

Key, V. O. Jr. (1949). *Southern politics.* New York: Vintage Books.

Killian, L. M. (1985). *White Southerners.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Kovacik, C. F., & Winberry, J. J. (1987). *South Carolina: a geography.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Kuzenski, J. C. (1998). South Carolina: the heart of the GOP realignment in the South. In C. S. Bullock, & M. J. Rozell, *The new politics of the Old South: an introduction to southern politics* (pp. 25–48). New York: Rowan and Littlefield.

L'Heureux, D. (2000). Business leaders seek anti-flag aid. *The State*, 14 March, B6.

Leib, J. I. (1995). Heritage versus hate: a geographical analysis of Georgia's Confederate flag debate. *Southeastern Geographer*, *35*, 37–57.

Leib, J. I. (1998). Teaching controversial topics: iconography and the Confederate battle flag in the South. *Journal of Geography*, *97*, 229–240.

Leib, J.I. (forthcoming). Separate times, shared spaces: Arthur Ashe, Monument Avenue and the politics of Richmond, Virginia's symbolic landscape. *Ecomene: A Journal of Cultural Geographies*.

Leib, J.I., Webster, G.R., & Webster, R.H. (forthcoming). Rebel with a cause? Iconography and public memory in the Southern United States. *GeoJournal*.

Levin, A. (1994). S.C. GOP'ers vote to keep flag flying. *Tuscaloosa News*, 10 August, 4A.

Lilley, W., DeFranco, L. J., & Dienfenderfer, W. M. (1997). *The atlas of political and cultural diversity*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Lopez, I. F. H. (1995). White by law. In R. Delgado, *Critical race theory: the cutting edge* (pp. 542–550). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lopez, I. F. H. (1996). *White by law: the legal construction of race*. New York: New York University Press.

Los Angeles Times/Washington Post (1994). Virginia's embattled state song stirs group's support. As reprinted in the *Birmingham News*, 1 March, 7A.

Martinez, J. M. (1997). State displays of Confederate symbols: legal challenges and the political question doctrine. *Southeastern Political Review*, *25*, 163–180.

Maxwell, B. (1998). I'm an African-American; I cannot be a Southerner. *Tuscaloosa News*, 22 June, 11A (Reprinted from the *St Petersburg Times*).

McElroy, P.M. (1995). The Confederate battle flag: social history and cultural contestation. Unpublished Anthropology Masters Thesis, University of Alabama.

Moon, B. (1945). *A primer for white folks*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Co.

Overby, L. M. (1991). Assessing constituency influence: congressional voting on the nuclear freeze, 1982–83. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *16*, 297–312.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1999). Emergency resolution: economic sanctions for South Carolina. 12 July, http://www.naacp.org/em-resolution.htm.

Nie, N. N., Hull, C. H., Jenkins, J. G., Steinbrenner, D., & Bent, D. H. (1975). *Statistical package for the social sciences*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Norusis, M. J. (1990). *The SPSS guide to data analysis*. Chicago: SPSS Inc.

Passi, A. (1986). The institutionalization of regions: a theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of regions and the constitution of regional identity. *Fennia*, *165*, 105–146.

Paulsen, M. (1997). The flag and the fury. *U.S. News and World Report*, 10 March, 13.

Pederson, D. (1996). Southern discomfort: taking aim at a costly symbol in South Carolina. *Newsweek*, *9 December*, 36.

Phillips, U. B. (1928). The central theme of southern history. *American Historical Review*, *34*, 30–43.

Pitts, L. (1999). Tragic that compassion not always colorblind. *Birmingham News*, 30 May, 3C.

Polk, N. (1981). *Faulkner's requiem for a nun: a critical study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Preston, M. (1999). Democrats angry at Helms. *Roll Call Online*, 22 October http://www.rollcall.com/newsscoops/3rdscoop.html.

Reed, J. S. (1982). The cardinal test of a Southerner? In J. S. Reed, *One South: an ethnic approach to regional culture* (pp. 78–87). Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University.

Reeves, J. (1996). Civil-rights sculpture in Birmingham Park draws concern, praise. *Tuscaloosa News*, *24 February*, 5B.

Sack, K. (1997a). Symbols under siege. *Tuscaloosa News*, 9 February, 5E (From the New York Times News Service).

Sack, K. (1997b). Ole Miss struggles with heritage: university could banish Confederate symbols. *The State*, 17 March, A1 (From the New York Times News Service).

Schein, R. H. (1999). Teaching "race" and the cultural landscape. *Journal of Geography*, *98*, 188–190.

Scoppe, C. R. (1997a). "Let the public decide": House backs proposal to put flag's fate on November ballot. *The State*, 24 January, A1.

Scoppe, C. R. (1997b). House unravels on flag: vote on Confederate license tags flares into angry debate on race. *The State*, 4 April, A1.

Scoppe, C. R., & Sponhour, M. (1997). Flag's fate unfurling in House as S.C. lawmakers begin debate on banner, 72 representatives are backing a referendum. *The State*, 22 January, A1.

Shelley, F. M., & Webster, G. R. (1998). Population, settlement, race, and ethnicity in the South. *Journal of Geography*, 97, 163–176.

Shepard, P. (2000). NAACP chief calls black legislators who backed flag compromise "weak-kneed". *Tuscaloosa News*, 11 July, 3A.

Smith, L. (1945). Addressed to white liberals. In B. Moon, *A primer for white folks* (pp. 484–487). Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Co.

Smith, S. A. (1985). *Myth, media and the southern mind.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press.

Smith, B. (1999). McCain says battle flag issue up to S.C. voters. *Wilmington Morning Star*, 5 September http://starnews.wilmington.net/daily/0901999/local_st/23123.htm.

Sobieraj, S. (2000). Flag should come down, Democrats agree. *The State*, 18 January, A3.

Springer, C. (1993). The troubled resurgence of the Confederate flag. *History Today*, 43, 7–9.

State The (1997a). A House and Senate divided over the flag. *The State*, 19 January, A10.

State The (1997b). A flag's future: where lawmakers stand on the issue. *The State*, 26 January, D4.

Stensland, J. (2000). Confederate flag should come down, Bradley says. *The State*, 9 February, A1.

Stroud, J. S. (2000a). 6,000 attend spirited rally for Confederate flag. *The State*, 9 January, A1.

Stroud, J. S. (2000b). "The flag is coming down," 46,000 cry at King Day rally. *The State*, 18 January, A1.

Stroud, J. S. (2000c). Hodges lays out plan. *The State*, 15 February http://www.thestate.com/headlines/a1docs/web_flag.htm.

Stroud, J. S. (2000d). S.C. House votes to move flag, 63–56. *The State*, 11 May http://www.thestate.com/headlines/a1docs/flag11f.htm.

Stroud, J. S. (2000e). Governor says he'll sign bill that "Achieves what was most important". *The State*, 19 May http://www.thestate.com/headlines/a1docs/aaron_flag19.htm.

Strope, L. (1999a). Bush: outsiders butt out of flag flap. *Charleston Post and Courier*, 7 September http://www.charleston.net/pub/news/state/bshflg0907.htm.

Strope, L. (1999b). Klansman featured in anti-Confederate flag ads. *Birmingham News*, 21 November, 3B.

Strope, L. (1999c). Ex-lawmakers seek flag's removal. *Birmingham News*, 8 December, 4A.

Sumrall, A. (1999). Battle flags of the Confederacy. http://freeweb.pdq.net/flags/index.htm.

Surratt, C. (2000). Coble fears city hurt by flag. *The State*, 7 March http://www.newslibrary.com/nlsearch.asp, Article ID: 0003070097.

Tanner, R. (1994). Civil rights leaders threaten S.C. boycott over rebel flag. *Tuscaloosa News*, 24 July, 14A.

Tanner, R. (1996a). Ministers join call for rebel flag compromise. *Tuscaloosa News*, 13 December, 4B.

Tanner, R. (1996b). Poll: voters support Governor's flag plan. *Tuscaloosa News*, 21 December, 2B.

Tanner, R. (1997). Flag campaign: low-key and no success. *Tuscaloosa News*, 2 April, 5B.

Tombrello, D. (1999). Southern heritage a way of life. *Birmingham News*, 2 November, 6A Letter to the editor.

Webster, G. R. (1997). Religion and politics in the American South. *Pennsylvania Geographer*, 35 (2), 151–172.

Webster, G. R., & Webster, R. H. (1994). The power of an icon. *Geographical Review*, 84, 131–143.

Wilson, C. R. (1980). *Baptized in blood: the religion of the lost cause, 1865–1920.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

Wilson, C. R. (1995). *Judgement and grace in Dixie: southern faiths from Faulkner to Elvis.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

Woodward, C. V. (1957). *The strange career of Jim Crow.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Woodward, C. V. (1993). *The burden of southern history.* (3rd ed.). Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.