

## CHANGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE NEED FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE SOUTH

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### Introduction

After emerging from its agrarian past somewhat later than the rest of the nation, there is little doubt that the South today would be described as successful from a development standpoint. The area has grown in an absolute sense and relative to the nation as a whole, and as Clay and Stuart note in a recent study, is radically different from the South of relatively recent times. The key question is whether or not past growth rates can be maintained in the future. Or, in other words, does the future call for different development strategies than the past.

To set the stage for this discussion, this paper will briefly review trends in population and employment growth in the South at the regional and state level and compare these trends to the U.S. as a whole. After this review the paper will look in more detail at factors underlying the growth of manufacturing employment in the central states of the South and discuss one area where a new development strategy or set of strategies appears necessary.

### The South: An Overview

The sixteen states and the District of Columbia comprising the South Atlantic, the East South Central and the West South Central census divisions in 1980 contained over 33 percent of the nation's population, (Table 1). Further, while the national population growth rate slowed significantly over the 1970-1980 period, each of the three southern census divisions grew faster over the 1970-1980 period than over previous ten-year census intervals. Also, with the exceptions of Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, each state within the region had population growth rates which exceeded the national growth rate (Table 2). Of those states exceeding the national population growth rate over the 1970-1980 period, only three, Florida, Texas, and Virginia, grew faster than the nation over the 1960-1970 period.

Southern population growth has also been paralleled by increases in employment. As noted, the south in 1980 contained slightly over 33 percent of the nation's population, and in 1981 the region represented almost the same percentage (32.56) of total U.S. employment. The region also contained slightly over 30 percent of the nation's manufacturing employment (Table 3).

Looking at the distribution of employment by type in the southern states (Table 4) reveals the importance of manufacturing employment in the south. Nine states have a concentration of employment in manufacturing which equals or in many cases significantly exceeds, the percentage of employment in manufacturing for the United States as a whole. With the exception of Delaware, this represents a group of eight contiguous states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas) centrally located in the southern region. These eight states generally have less than national average concentrations of employment in trade and services while six of the eight states exceed national concentrations for government employment.

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TABLE 1

Population, Southern States and United States, selected years, 1940-80. (Thousands)

State	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
South Atlantic	17,823 (13.48)*	21,182 (13.99)	25,972 (14.48)	30,678 (15.08)	36,959 (16.31)
Delaware	267	318	446	548	594
Maryland	1,821	2,343	3,101	3,924	4,217
District of Columbia	663	802	764	757	638
Virginia	2,678	3,319	3,967	4,651	5,347
West Virginia	1,902	2,006	1,860	1,744	1,950
North Carolina	3,572	4,062	4,556	5,084	5,882
South Carolina	1,900	2,117	2,383	2,591	3,122
Georgia	3,124	3,445	3,943	4,588	5,463
Florida	1,897	2,771	4,952	6,791	9,746
East So. Central	10,778 ( 8.15)	11,477 ( 7.58)	12,050 ( 6.72)	12,808 ( 6.30)	14,666 ( 6.47)
Kentucky	2,846	2,945	3,038	3,221	3,661
Tennessee	2,916	3,292	3,567	3,926	4,951
Alabama	2,833	3,062	3,267	3,444	3,894
Mississippi	2,184	2,179	2,178	2,217	2,521
West So. Central	13,085 ( 9.90)	14,538 ( 9.60)	18,951 (10.57)	19,326 ( 9.51)	23,747 (10.48)
Arkansas	1,949	1,910	1,786	1,923	2,286
Louisiana	2,364	2,684	3,257	3,645	4,206
Oklahoma	2,336	2,233	2,328	2,559	3,025
Texas	6,415	7,711	9,580	11,229	14,220
Southern Region	41,686 (31.54)	47,197 (31.19)	56,973 (31.17)	62,812 (30.89)	75,372 (33.27)
United States	132,165	151,326	179,323	203,302	226,564

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-83.

\*Numbers in parentheses are percentages of the United States total.

TABLE 2

Percentage Change in Population, Southern States and United States, Selected Years, 1940-1980

State	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80
	18.8	22.6	18.1	20.4
Delaware	19.1	40.3	22.9	8.4
Maryland	28.6	32.2	26.5	7.4
District of Columbia	20.9	- 4.7	- 0.9	-15.7
Virginia	23.9	19.5	17.2	14.9
West Virginia	5.4	- 7.2	- 6.2	11.8
North Carolina	13.7	12.1	11.5	15.6
South Carolina	16.6	12.5	8.7	20.4
Georgia	10.2	14.4	16.3	19.0
Florida	46.0	78.7	37.1	43.5

TABLE 2 (continued)

Percentage Change in Population, Southern States and United States, Selected Years, 1940-1980

State	1940-50	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80
East So. Central	6.4	4.9	6.2	14.5
Kentucky	3.4	3.1	6.0	13.6
Tennessee	12.8	8.3	10.0	16.9
Alabama	8.0	- 6.6	5.4	13.0
Mississippi	- .2	- .04	1.7	13.7
West So. Central	11.2	16.5	14.0	22.8
Arkansas	- 1.9	- 6.4	7.6	18.8
Louisiana	13.5	21.3	11.9	15.3
Oklahoma	- 4.4	4.2	9.9	18.2
Texas	20.2	24.2	17.2	26.7
United States	14.4	18.5	13.3	9.9

Source: Calculated from Table 1.

TABLE 3

Employment by Type, Southern States and United States, 1981. (Thousands)

State	Total	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
South Atlantic	14,853	3,036	3,310	3,073	2,703	825	802	836
Delaware	259	71	56	44	49	12	13	13
Maryland	1,710	231	406	422	377	86	93	96
District of Columbia	612	15	64	275	187	26	34	12
Virginia	2,160	412	463	510	416	117	106	116
W. Virginia	624	111	131	131	101	42	22	28
N. Carolina	2,386	817	473	409	352	117	98	115
S. Carolina	1,197	392	231	234	(NA)	54	50	71
Georgia	2,183	520	503	434	359	144	114	102
Florida	3,722	467	983	615	863	229	272	283
East So. Central	5,109	1,362	1,066	1,016	853	265	222	236
Kentucky	1,193	272	258	227	215	67	52	51
Tennessee	1,746	507	373	309	307	86	78	77
Alabama	1,350	362	271	293	211	72	59	66
Mississippi	821	221	163	187	121	41	33	42

TABLE 3 (continued)

Employment by Type, Southern States and United States, 1981. (Thousands)

State	Total	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
West So. Central	9,705	1,737	2,314	1,676	1,692	628	512	658
Arkansas	740	210	160	138	117	43	32	34
Louisiana	1,628	220	369	306	288	132	75	139
Oklahoma	1,193	199	278	237	202	69	59	54
Texas	6,144	1,107	1,506	995	1,085	384	347	431
United States	91,105	20,173	20,551	16,024	18,592	5,157	5,301	4,176

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-83.

TABLE 4

Percentage Distribution of Employment, Southern States and United States, 1981

State	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
South Atlantic	20.4	22.3	20.7	18.2	5.6	5.4	5.6
Delaware	27.4	21.6	17.0	18.9	4.6	5.0	5.0
Maryland	13.5	23.7	24.7	22.0	5.0		5.4
District of Columbia	2.4	10.4	44.9	30.6	4.2	5.6	2.0
Virginia	19.1	21.4	23.6	19.3	5.4	4.9	5.4
W. Virginia	17.8	21.0	21.0	16.2	6.7	3.5	4.5
N. Carolina	34.2	19.8	17.1	14.8	4.9	4.1	4.8
S. Carolina	32.7	19.3	19.5	(NA)	4.5	4.2	5.9
Georgia	23.8	23.0	19.9	16.4	6.6	5.2	4.7
Florida	12.5	26.4	16.5	23.2	6.2	7.3	7.6
East So. Central	26.7	20.9	19.9	16.7	5.2	4.3	4.6
Kentucky	22.8	21.6	19.0	18.0	5.6	4.4	4.3
Tennessee	29.0	21.4	17.7	17.6	4.9	4.5	4.4
Alabama	26.8	20.1	21.7	15.6	5.3	4.4	4.9
Mississippi	26.9	19.8	22.8	14.7	5.0	4.0	5.1

TABLE 4 (continued)

Percentage Distribution of Employment, Southern States and United States, 1981

West So. Central	17.9	23.8	17.3	17.4	6.5	5.3	6.8
Arkansas	28.4	21.6	18.6	15.8	5.8	4.3	4.6
Louisiana	13.5	22.7	18.8	17.7	8.1	4.6	8.5
Oklahoma	16.7	23.3	19.8	16.9	5.8	4.9	4.5
Texas	18.0	24.5	16.2	17.7	6.3	5.6	7.0
United States	22.1	22.6	17.6	20.4	5.7	5.8	4.6

Source: Calculated from Table 4.

Comparing 1969 to 1981 reveals some insights into changes in employment in the South relative to the nation. Over this period, total U.S. employment increased by 29.9 percent while employment increased by 44.8 percent, 35.3 percent, and 68.3 percent, respectively, in the South Atlantic, the East South Central, and the West South Central divisions. With the exceptions of Delaware, the District of Columbia and West Virginia, each state in the Southern region increased employment at a rate faster than the national average over the 1969-1981 period (Tables 5, 6, and 7).

In the nation, with the exception of manufacturing, all categories of employment showed significant increases over the 1969-1981 period with each Southern region and each state within the three regions exceeding the national growth rate. There is, however, a major distinction between the region and the nation in manufacturing employment changes. Over the 1969-1981 period national manufacturing employment increased only slightly (0.25 percent). In the South manufacturing employment increased 11.0 percent in the South Atlantic Region, 15.4 percent in the East South Central and 48.9 percent in the West South Central. Manufacturing employment decreased in Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia and West Virginia. All other Southern states showed increases ranging from 9.0 percent in Georgia up to more than 40 percent in Florida, Oklahoma and Texas.

To be sure, this brief review of Southern population and employment growth has been cursory and based only on aggregate data. However, the conclusion with respect to development in the region as a whole seems beyond question. There are, however, some distinct differences among states or groups of states in the region.

The rapidly growing states of Florida and Texas immediately stand out from the others. For each major category of employment (manufacturing, trade and services) these two states accounted for more than 40 percent of new employment in the region over the 1969-1981 period. Oklahoma and Louisiana could also be included in this group. Each of these four states has relatively low concentrations of employment in manufacturing, and total employment (including manufacturing employment) grew rapidly over the 1969-1981 period.

At the other end of the Southern region, the states of Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia stand out for different reasons. Increases in population in Delaware and Maryland were below the national average over the 1970-1980 period while the population growth rate in West Virginia exceeded the national average by only two percentage points. Further, each of these states had declines in manufacturing employment over the 1969-1981 period, and total employment growth was generally slower than for other states in the region.

In this same geographic region Virginia also appears different from other states. The concentration of employment in manufacturing is lower but showed a significant increase over the 1969-1981 period. Total employment grew rapidly over the same period, especially in the services sector. In a sense Virginia appears more similar to the rapidly growing states than to her sister states on either side.

The remaining states in the region (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas) are similar. All have relatively high concentrations of employment in manufacturing, and all increased both total and manufacturing employment over the 1969-1981 period.

Table 5

Employment by Type, Southern States and United States, 1969. (Thousands)

State	Total	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
South Atlantic	10,261	2,733	2,112	2,081	1,510	1,015	478	629
Delaware	208	73	43	30	29	11	9	13
Maryland	1,277	281	293	245	227	79	66	85
District of Columbia	681	20	85	360	134	31	32	18
Virginia	1,434	370	295	293	208	95	65	94
W. Virginia	513	131	93	95	64	41	15	26
N. Carolina	1,735	713	309	254	201	90	67	97
S. Carolina	812	339	135	140	83	35	28	49
Georgia	1,522	477	320	285	177	103	72	82
Florida	2,079	329	539	379	387	148	124	165
East So. Central	3,775	1,223	725	715	492	212	152	210
Kentucky	895	247	181	167	123	60	35	55
Tennessee	1,312	470	255	214	176	66	56	68
Alabama	999	324	185	205	127	56	41	54
Mississippi	569	182	104	129	66	30	20	33
West So. Central	5,941	1,228	1,351	1,144	916	430	290	382
Arkansas	532	168	105	101	72	32	21	30
Louisiana	1,044	181	228	207	151	93	49	83
Oklahoma	754	130	165	185	108	53	36	37
Texas	3,611	749	853	651	585	252	184	232
United States	70,141	20,121	14,644	12,227	11,103	4,448	3,559	3,411

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1970.

Rates of employment increase, however, were generally less than in the rapidly growing states but above those for the nation as a whole. As noted earlier these states represent a contiguous belt of manufacturing states located in the central part of the Southern region.

#### A Need for a New Development Strategy

As is evident from the review here and from more detailed studies such as the one by Clay and Stuart, the South is not a homogenous region. At least three distinct groups of states are seen, the rapidly growing states of Florida and Texas along with the similar states of Louisiana, Oklahoma, and perhaps Virginia, the group of states consisting of Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia with slower growth and declining manufacturing employment, and the remaining group of centrally located Southern states with relatively high concentrations of manufacturing employment.

It is in this latter group of manufacturing states that the need for a new development strategy appears most obvious. The region cannot continue to grow rapidly by continuing to attract employment in a



Table 6

Changes in Employment, by Type, Southern States and United States, 1969-81. (Thousands)

State	Total	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
South Atlantic	4,592	303	1,198	1,140	1,194	194	324	207
Delaware	51	- 2	13	14	20	1	4	0
Maryland	433	- 50	113	177	150	7	27	11
District of Columbia	- 69	- 5	- 21	62	53	- 5	2	- 6
Virginia	726	42	168	217	208	22	41	22
W. Virginia	111	- 20	38	36	37	1	7	2
N. Carolina	651	104	164	155	151	27	31	18
S. Carolina	385	53	96	94	83	19	22	22
Georgia	661	43	183	149	182	41	42	20
Florida	1,643	138	444	236	476	81	148	118
East So. Central	1,335	189	340	301	362	54	70	26
Kentucky	298	25	77	60	92	7	17	- 4
Tennessee	434	87	118	95	131	20	22	9
Alabama	351	38	86	88	84	16	18	12
Mississippi	252	39	59	58	55	11	13	9
West So. Central	3,764	601	962	532	776	198	212	276
Arkansas	208	135	55	37	45	11	0	4
Louisiana	584	39	141	99	137	39	26	56
Oklahoma	439	69	113	52	94	16	23	17
Texas	2,533	358	653	344	500	132	163	199
United States	20,964	52	5,907	3,797	7,489	709	1,742	765

Source: Calculated from Tables 3 and 5.

sector that is slow-growing or declining in the nation as a whole. To substantiate this point it is useful to look at some of the factors underlying the growth of the region in the past.

How does one explain the growth in manufacturing employment in the South? There seems to be little hard evidence of any overt strategy sufficient to swing the development balance from the Northeast or Midwest. One can point to the regional development programs of the 1960s (Newman) or to the activities of state and local development groups in the region, but there is no strong evidence of regional impact. In fact, most studies of various development incentives conclude that they have minimal effects on interregional location decisions of manufacturing firms (Mulkey and Dillman, Miller).

For those who subscribe to the "Sunbelt" philosophy and see capital fleeing the decaying Northeast and Midwest to higher returns in the South, the neo-classical model or the cumulative causation model of regional growth offer attractive alternatives for explaining Southern growth (Richardson). In the former differential regional growth rates represent the market's attempt to equalize rates of return to factors of production across space while, in the latter, growth in the region stimulates productivity

Table 7

Percentage change, by Type, Southern States and United States, 1969-81. (Thousands)

State	Total	Manufac- turing	Whole- sale and retail trade	Govern- ment	Serv- ices	Trans- portation, public utilities	Fi- nance, insur- ance, real estate	Contract con- struction
South Atlantic	44.8	11.0	56.7	54.7	79.0	19.1	67.7	32.9
Delaware	24.5	— .02	30.2	46.6	68.9	.09	44.4	0
Maryland	33.9	— 17.7	38.5	72.2	66.0	.08	40.9	12.9
District of Columbia	— 10.1	— .25	— 24.7	17.2	39.5	16.1	.06	— 33.3
Virginia	50.6	11.3	56.9	74.0	100.0	23.1	63.0	23.4
W. Virginia	21.6	— 15.2	40.8	37.8	57.8	.02	46.6	7.6
N. Carolina	37.5	14.5	53.0	61.0	75.1	3.0	46.2	18.5
S. Carolina	47.4	15.6	71.1	67.1		54.2	78.5	44.8
Georgia	43.4	9.0	57.1	52.2	102.8	39.8	58.3	24.3
Florida	79.0	41.9	82.3	62.2	122.0	54.7	38.7	71.5
East So. Central	35.3	15.4	46.8	42.0	73.5	25.4	46.0	12.3
Kentucky	33.2	10.1	42.5	35.9	74.7	11.6	48.5	— 7.2
Tennessee	33.0	34.0	46.2	44.3	74.4	30.3	39.2	13.2
Alabama	35.1	11.7	46.4	42.9	66.1	28.5	43.9	22.2
Mississippi	44.2	21.4	56.7	44.9	83.3	36.6	65.0	27.2
West So. Central	63.3	48.9	71.2	46.5	84.7	46.0	73.1	72.2
Arkansas	39.0	25.0	52.3	36.6	62.5	34.3	0	13.3
Louisiana	55.9	21.5	61.8	47.8	90.7	41.9	53.0	67.4
Oklahoma	58.2	53.0	68.4	28.1	87.0	30.1	63.8	45.9
Texas	70.1	47.7	76.5	52.8	85.4	52.3	88.5	85.7
United States	29.8	.002	40.3	31.0	67.4	15.9	48.9	22.4

Source: Calculated from Tables 4 and 6.

growth which, in turn, leads to more growth. Neither approach, however, is consistent with the findings of a recent study of regional productivity growth in U.S. manufacturing. Hulten and Schwab conclude that the main source of variation between regions in output growth over the 1951-1978 period was the increased use of inputs in the rapidly growing regions, not increased productivity in the regions.

An alternative explanation of manufacturing employment growth in the South consistent with the findings of Hulten and Schwab is Hansen's treatment of the concept of spatial-industrial filtering and the related product life cycle. In this approach as products reach the mature stage of their life cycle, production is associated with an increasing use of capital, a decreasing use of skilled, expensive labor, and an associated geographic relocation of production.

In support of this approach Hansen cites the growth of manufacturing employment in non-metropolitan areas (lower-skilled, lower-wage places) and evidence that a large part of new manufacturing employment is in branch plants of national firms. The product cycle approach is also supported by findings of a study of business climates and industrial performance by Fisher and Hanink. They found above national



average growth rates in manufacturing employment associated with a set of factors which translate to lower-skill and lower-wage labor.

If the product cycle approach is accepted as explanatory of growth in Southern manufacturing employment, then the Southern development strategy of the past has been an implicit one centered on relatively cheap labor. Again, the major implication is, as Hansen notes, the process cannot continue forever. Eventually, shifts of manufacturing employment to the region can no longer offset national slow growth or decline of the manufacturing sector. Further, as wages in the region increase, manufacturing jobs may relocate to other countries with even lower wages.

The possibility then looms that the South at some point may experience structural changes similar to those of the Northeast and Midwest. In fact, a county level study of Southern growth by Clay and Stuart indicates that the process may be starting. They note that of those counties in the South experiencing slow growth or losses in population, many are dependent on low wage manufacturing and tend to be older industrial areas of the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama with manufacturing concentrated in textiles.

### **Some Observations on Policy Alternatives**

If then, as suggested here, the future of the South is not in the continued development of manufacturing industry based on relatively lower wages, what are the implications for development policy alternatives? Some observations are offered with respect to continued development activity in the manufacturing area and investments in human capital in the region.

First, it seems that the time is ripe for a careful evaluation of past state and local development practices which offer a variety of financial inducements to industry with much of the activity centered on manufacturing employment. Once more prevalent in the South, this type of activity, especially industrial revenue bond financing, has spread rapidly to other states since 1966 (Miller). This increased competition would seem to imply reduced effectiveness of a group of policies whose effectiveness was already in doubt. This is however, a regional perspective, and the prospect of ending any type of incentive program may be attractive at the state level only with some assurance that other states in the region will take the same action. Achieving the regional cooperation necessary to evaluate programs which are costly to the states but of questionable regional impact would seem a worthwhile goal of policy makers, although an extremely difficult one.

Another area of emphasis for public policy in the Southern region is the formation of human capital. As noted above, the South faces increasing competition from other states in its search for manufacturing employment. Further, as Hansen notes, the South faces increasing competition from foreign countries for low-wage industry and from other states like California for the newer high-wage or high technology industry. The brief review of data here also suggests that the manufacturing states of the South face stiff competition from within the region in the high technology area, namely Florida and Texas. As noted, these two states captured over 40 percent of new manufacturing employment in the South over the 1969-1981 period.

Competition for jobs in this new arena would seem to require a substantial and sustained commitment to investment in human capital. Hansen also warns against wholesale efforts to create "... research and educational magnets on the model of Stanford-Berkeley and Harvard MIT" (p. 10). Again, the success of such efforts are long run and require commitments in all aspects of human capital formation and at all levels of the educational process. To be sure the South has made great progress in these areas, but deficiencies remain, and as Hansen concludes "... the future of the South will be tied to its success in addressing these deficiencies" (p. 11). This conclusion appears particularly relevant for the manufacturing states where transition and structural change appear to be a reality.

### **Concluding Comments**

In conclusion the South has been successful from the standpoint of economic development. Both population and employment have increased faster than national averages. Further, the line of reasoning here does not suggest any imminent collapse or decline in the region. However, it is suggested that past Southern performance in the growth of manufacturing industry cannot continue indefinitely. Thus, particularly for those states with high concentrations of employment in manufacturing, the need for a

new development strategy seems a reality. Such a strategy should be based on a detailed state-by-state and regional assessment of past growth and future prospects. Two areas suggested for emphasis are a review of current development incentive programs and continued improvements in the human capital of the region.

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