

Social Heterogeneity and Party System Fragmentation in the United States: New Parties for New Groups?*

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In this chapter, I conduct a within-case analysis of the United States. Unlike Israel, the United States has never been a parliamentary democracy. Instead, it has employed a presidential system of government since its founding. Also in marked contrast to Israel, its electoral system falls on the extremely restrictive end of the continuum: with minor exceptions since the mid-1800s, the electoral system used by the United States at the federal or national level has consisted of single member districts and a plurality formula, otherwise known as “first past the post”. This makes the United States a good case with which to explore how changes in society have shaped the fragmentation of the party system when the electoral system is majoritarian, this chapter’s goal.

What the United States and Israel do have in common, however, is that both have experienced rapid, fairly large-scale change in the composition of their citizenries. Like Israel, the United States is a country of immigration. But immigration has not been the only historical process to increase the social, and specifically the ethnic, heterogeneity of the United States’s citizenry: the extension of the franchise to African Americans is another. While immigration has introduced numerous social groups differentiated by various attributes from language to religion to the United States, African American enfranchisement has introduced a single social group with an accordingly greater latent capacity for collective action. This is why I turn my lens from the historical process of immigration to the franchise in this within-case analysis of the United States. First emancipated from slavery and then enfranchised in the late 1860s and early 1870s following a civil war between the Northern and Southern states, African Americans were subsequently disenfranchised in large parts of the country by the turn of the last century and only finally re-enfranchised almost one hundred years later in the 1960s. Never a large share of the United States’s national electorate, African Americans

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have nevertheless constituted a large share of the electorates of some individual states. Their share of states' electorates has also varied dramatically over time due to a wave of internal migration lasting from the 1910s through the 1970s.

The obvious question raised by these changes in social heterogeneity concerns their effect upon party system fragmentation in the United States. As noted earlier, the federal electoral system of the United States has been effectively held constant over the period I study. Accordingly, to the extent to which African American sectarian parties have successfully emerged to contest some federal elections but not others, empirical support is provided for my argument that factors besides the electoral system help to determine sectarian party success, thereby conditioning the relationship between social heterogeneity and party system fragmentation. Any appearance and success of African American sectarian parties also suggests that we need to think carefully about how majoritarian electoral systems do (or do not) act as a constraint on the participation of new latent social groups.

Moreover, because social heterogeneity has varied over time and space in the United States from African American enfranchisement and internal migration, this within-case study is well-suited to testing my hypotheses about why some new social groups are likely to be more successful than others at forming their own sectarian parties. As in the Israeli case, the addition of this new social group to the electorate can be viewed as a quasi-experiment. Many factors are held constant while allowing for variance in some of the factors that were hypothesized to shape the likelihood of a new latent group's successful participation. For example, with respect to the factor of group size, African Americans have been a majority of some states' electorates at some points in time (e.g., Mississippi until the early 1900s) and an extreme minority of others' (e.g., Vermont), as mentioned above. By seeing how variation in the emergence and success of African American sectarian parties empirically relates to variation in the hypothesized independent variables, I can draw conclusions about which factors do shape sectarian party success. Further, by taking advantage of the United States's longer history and its federal structure, I can conduct a rigorous quantitative empirical analysis, in contrast to the Israeli case study.

As I will argue below, there has been great empirical variation in both the entry and success of African American sectarian parties at the federal level. The case of African Americans in the United States accordingly bolsters my argument that factors besides the electoral system shape the success of sectarian parties that aim to represent new social groups—just as the case of the Sephardim and Russians in Israel did. Further, I find that group size, group politicization and the responses of existing, catch-all parties to the new group are the factors that empirically account for the observed variation in African American sectarian party entry and success. This means that these same factors have also conditioned the relationship between social heterogeneity and party system fragmentation in the United States. The findings of this chapter accordingly either triangulate or supplement the findings of the earlier empirical chapters. Last but not least, I argue that the appearance but ultimately limited success of African American sectarian parties in the United States is not best laid at the altar of the United States's restrictive electoral system, as we might erroneously be tempted to assume.

1 Social Heterogeneity in the United States

In 1867, in the aftermath of the bloody four year civil war that pitted Northern states against Southern ones, the United States embarked upon a remarkable experiment in bi-racial democracy (Valelly 2004, 73). This civil war saw the emancipation of African Americans from slavery.¹ But an equally momentous sea change in race relations followed on emancipation's heels. From 1867 to 1877, the victorious Northern states attempted to both rebuild the rebellious Southern states and reintegrate them into the federal union, a period known as Reconstruction.² During this period, African Americans were enfranchised, an exceptional event that radically reshaped the electorate.³

Once the Civil War guns fell silent, African Americans began pressing for the right to vote. They were supported by many northern whites, particularly those in the Radical wing of the Republican Party. The June 1866 passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the constitution of the United States was Congress's first national sally in this direction. This amendment affirmed African American citizenship and challenged legal discrimination on racial grounds by guaranteeing all citizens equal protection under the law. It fell short of African American enfranchisement, however (Foner 2002, 254–258). At the same time, a campaign of violence was unleashed against both African Americans and white Republicans in the South, while the newly formed Southern state governments legally codified racial discrimination. Beginning in early 1866, Congress accordingly embarked upon a variety of measures that expanded federal oversight of the franchise with the goal of securing the civil and political liberties of African Americans.

These Congressional actions cumulated in the Reconstruction Act of March 1867, which enfranchised African Americans in the former Confederate states. Existing southern state governments were denied recognition and continued military rule was authorized. To be readmitted to the Union, each southern state was required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment and to approve by universal male suffrage a constitution permitting African Americans the vote on the same terms as whites. The effect was a wholesale transformation of Southern

¹In the former Confederate states of the South, home to the vast majority of slaves, emancipation was enacted by the two executive orders that constituted the Emancipation Proclamation (1862 and 1863). The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution later (in 1865) ended slavery throughout the country.

²Much has been written on this chapter of American history. To provide just a few examples, see Keyssar (2001), Kousser (1975), Perman (2001), Valelly (2004) and the modern classic of Foner (2002).

³This exceptionalism becomes apparent when one considers the history of the franchise in the first half of the nineteenth century, when most states had retracted suffrage for free African Americans while simultaneously broadening the franchise to lower class white males (Keyssar 2001, 43–47). Slaves had always been ineligible to vote, but free blacks had been initially granted the franchise if they met property and taxpaying restrictions in all states except Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina. However, as more free blacks became eligible to vote with the broadening of the economic franchise; the free black population grew; and what Keyssar (2001, 45) describes as an “efflorescence” of racism swept over the land, a cascade of racial suffrage exclusions were enacted either in constitutional conventions or through popular referenda. By the 1850s, only Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island did *not* deny African Americans the vote on racial grounds, even though they collectively contained less than five percent of the nation's free black population (Ibid.).

politics.

Republicans then turned their attention to granting African Americans voting rights in the North while simultaneously securing them more permanently in the South via a constitutional amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, the subject of a dramatic and partisan debate, was passed in February 1869 and eventually ratified in February 1870. This amendment forbade the denial of the vote to citizens on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. While African American men were accordingly granted the vote on the same terms as white men, the amendment fell short of establishing universal male suffrage, opening the door to poll taxes, literacy tests and property qualifications in the South, and failed to guarantee African Americans' right to hold office (Foner 2002, 446–447). Nevertheless, it was a “landmark in the history of the right to vote” (Keyssar 2001, 82).

Yet biracial politics in the South did not last. Direct Northern enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and hence Reconstruction, came to an end following the 1876 presidential election and the removal of the last federal soldiers from the South. The ebbing of the “high tide of faith in democracy” reached at mid-century left an “increasingly heterogeneous society contending awkwardly with its own professed political values” (Keyssar 2001, 63). Women’s suffrage aside, the period from the 1850s through World War I was generally characterized by a narrowing of the franchise. African Americans were to prove no exception.

In this vacuum, white Southern Democrats launched an two-phase assault on African American voting rights, the key both to driving Republican governments from power and to maintaining white control of black labor.⁴ The first phase, a period labeled “Redemption” by Perman (2001), lasted from 1877 through the mid-1890s. It was characterized by hotly contested elections marked by efforts at de facto disenfranchisement of African Americans and opposition whites through fraud and violence. The second phase, labeled “Restoration” (Ibid.), followed on the heels of the first. It was characterized by systematic campaigns to legally disenfranchise African Americans through the use of poll taxes, literacy tests, secret ballot laws, gerrymandering, a state-wide white Democratic primary and lengthy residence requirements, among others. The less well known result of these campaigns was to additionally disenfranchise a wide swathe of lower class white voters (Kousser 1975, 238, 250–257). By 1910, the process of disenfranchisement was complete (Ibid., 224) and the solidly Democratic South, with its strikingly low levels of electoral participation overall but particularly for African Americans, was born.⁵

Reconstruction seemed a failure. Yet its ‘unfinished revolution’ (Foner 2002) planted the seeds for eventual more far-reaching changes in America’s citizenry. In the Restored South, what came to be called Jim Crow laws mandated supposedly separate but equal

⁴Valelly (2004, 1-2) draws attention to the exceptionalism of this assault by arguing that no other social group has ever entered the electorate of an established democracy only to then be “extruded” by nominally democratic means—another, little recognized facet of American exceptionalism. See also the discussion in Chapter 3 for more on this point.

⁵To illustrate how complete this disenfranchisement was, by 1940, only three percent of southern African Americans were registered to vote (Keyssar 2001, 199).

racial segregation, which in reality translated into second class status for African Americans. Denied a vote at the ballot box, African Americans began to vote with their feet around the time of World War I, forsaking the South for greater opportunities in Northern and Western cities. World War II then drew millions into the army and the booming factories outside of the rural South, intensifying the exodus. The most obvious consequence of this “Great Migration” was demographic: by the 1970s, approximately half of all African Americans had come to live outside of the South, relative to ten percent in 1915 when the migration had begun (Wilkerson 2010, 10). Another consequence was to arguably push the country toward the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Ibid., 9)—a “second reconstruction” that would take America down a more egalitarian and democratic path (Woodward 1960).

Beginning in the 1950s, African Americans began to push back against their second class status. They were aided by a host of both national and regional organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; by a string of Supreme Court decisions that chipped away at both segregation (such as *Brown v. Board of Education*) and the legal disenfranchisement apparatus (such as *Smith v. Allwright*); by the growing electoral clout of African Americans in the North; and by shifts in public opinion against racial discrimination rooted in the ideological battles fought with both fascism and communism. Growing violence in the South in response to a more activist African American civil rights movement finally prompted the federal government to intervene. First came the modest civil rights acts of the late 1950s and early 1960s and then finally the ground-breaking Voting Rights Act of 1965. The latter tore down the last legal barriers to voting and authorized federal oversight to protect African American political rights. The impact was dramatic: in the South as a whole, roughly one million new voters were registered within a few years after the bill became law, bringing African American registration to a record sixty-two percent (Keyssar 2001, 212). The civil rights movement of the 1960s accordingly saw African Americans brought into the American electorate for good.

These changes in the social, and specifically in the ethnic, heterogeneity of the United States’s citizenry are summarized in Table 1 and shown graphically in Figure 1. Both the table and figure provide estimates of the African American share of the country’s population and theoretical electorate (i.e., the voting age, race and gendered population) for all federal election years from 1860 to 2006.⁶ Figure 1 additionally shows estimates of the African American share of the actual electorate (i.e., of registered voters) from 1966 onwards, the only years for which this data is available.⁷

⁶The theoretical electorate consists of the population that is of the age, race and gender granted the franchise at the time of each election. For example, in 1870, this was all males of age twenty-one and over. By way of contrast, in 1910, it was all white males of age twenty-one and over and all black males of age twenty-one and over who resided outside of the South. Economic characteristics are not used to define the theoretical electorate because economic restrictions on the franchise had effectively been removed by the 1860s, as discussed in Chapter 3 (see, for example, Keyssar 2001, 29). See Appendix C for more information about these estimates.

⁷The United States is the only advanced industrial democracy to require individuals to actively register to vote to join the electorate. This is accordingly the root of the distinction unique to the United States between what I have called the theoretical electorate, all those granted the franchise and hence eligible to vote (who would constitute the electorate in all other advanced industrial democracies), and what I have

United States

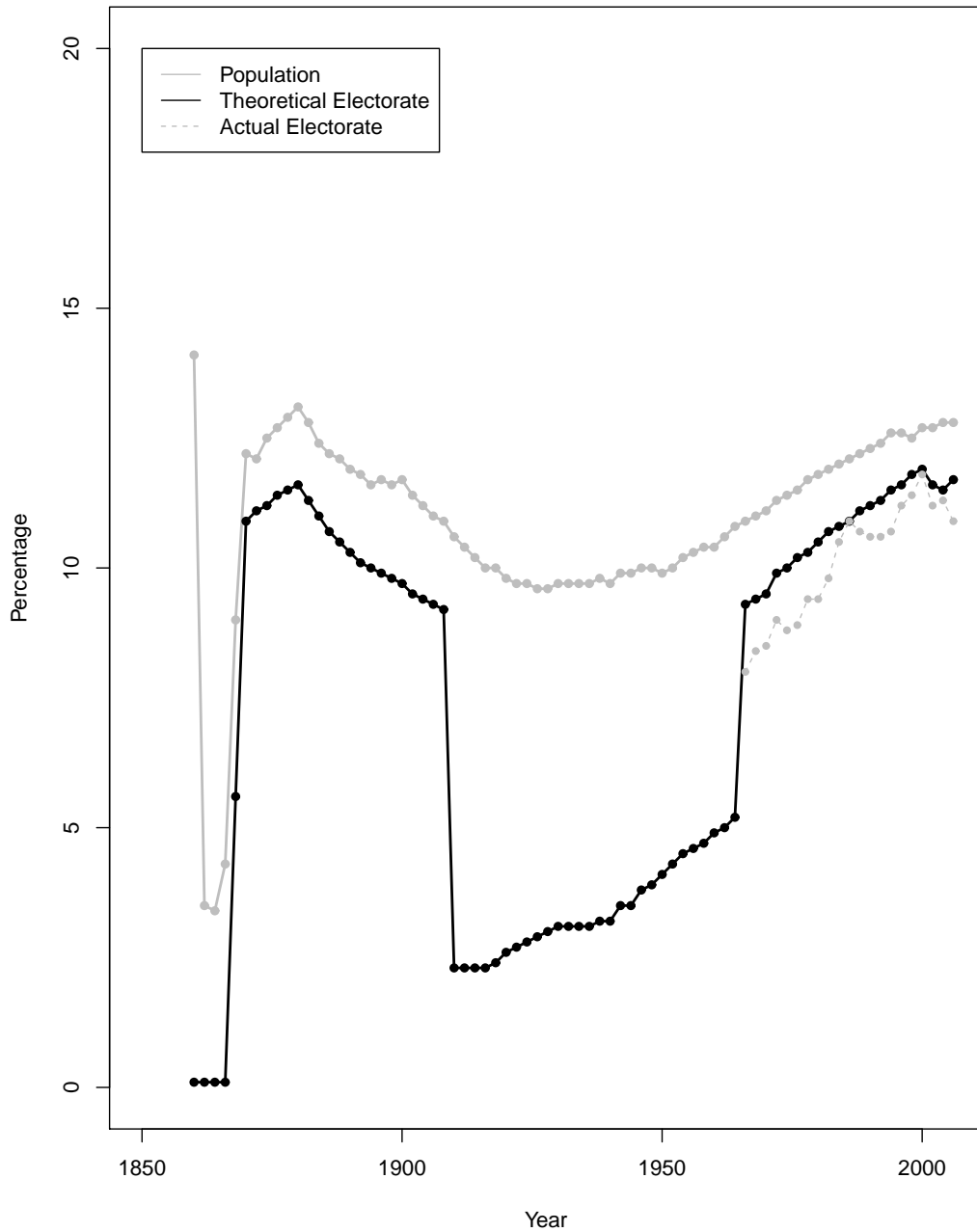


Figure 1: For the United States as a whole, the African American proportion of the population and theoretical electorate (i.e., the voting age, race and gendered population) from 1860 through 2006. The African American proportion of the *actual* electorate (i.e., registered voters) is also shown for the years for which it is available (1966 onwards). Source: see Table 1.

Year	Population, % African American	Electorate, % African American	N
1860	14	0.055	1.0
1870	12	11	1.2
1910	11	2.3	1.0
1960	10	4.9	1.1
1970	11	9.5	1.2
2006	13	12	1.3

Table 1: For selected election years, estimates of the African American share of the United States’s population and theoretical electorate (i.e., the voting age, race and gendered population), as well as the effective number of ethnic groups in the United States’s theoretical electorate (N), all rounded to two significant digits. Source: estimates based on Carter et al. (2006); Gibson and Jung (2002); US Census Bureau (1860–1960, 1965, 1966–2006, 2000b, 2008, 2009a). See Appendix C for more details.

This table and figure show that the African American share of the American population attained an all time high of fourteen percent in 1860; dropped (albeit temporarily) with the secession of the Southern states; and then eventually gradually climbed back up to about thirteen percent today. More importantly, however, the table and figure show that African Americans’ share of the national theoretical electorate has always lagged behind their share of the population, often quite significantly so. Prior to 1868, for example, when African Americans were only enfranchised in five Northern states, they made up less than one tenth of one percent of the American electorate. And while their share of the national electorate peaked at approximately eleven percent at the height of Reconstruction, a time when they were enfranchised everywhere, by 1910, it is estimated to have dropped to a mere two percent as a result of their effective disenfranchisement in the former Confederate states. Even with the exodus of African Americans from South to North and hence from states where they were disenfranchised to states where they were enfranchised during the Great Migration, their share of the national electorate is not estimated to have exceeded six percent prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Further, from the figure, it is clear that African Americans have made up an even smaller percentage of registered voters, i.e., the actual electorate, in recent decades than would be expected based upon their share of the theoretical electorate.

A final statistic presented by Table 1 also captures these changes in the social heterogeneity of the United States: estimates of the effective number of ethnic groups in the theoretical electorate for the same election years, which is calculated by including all non-African

called the actual electorate, a subset of the theoretical electorate consisting of those eligible individuals who have actually registered (the electorate in the United States). Unfortunately, data on the actual electorate (i.e., registered voters) is only available since the Civil Rights movement.

Americans in a single ethnic group.⁸ This statistic shows that when African Americans have been *disenfranchised* in the South, the United States has had effectively one (white) ethnic group. Conversely, when African Americans have been *enfranchised* in the South, the effective number of ethnic groups in the United States has increased, but only to a maximum of approximately 1.3 ethnic groups. The increase is far less than one whole ethnic group because of the small number of African Americans relative to non-African Americans at the national level.

But this aggregate story masks remarkable variation in ethnic heterogeneity at the sub-national level. I specifically focus upon one sub-national unit, the state. Table 2 presents the African American share of the population and theoretical electorate for each of the fifty states for four selected election years. Moreover, for a selection of states that collectively represent the variation in the states' ethnic demographics, Figure 2 graphs both of these statistics for each election year from 1860 through 2006.⁹

What this table and figure show is that while African Americans have been a negligible minority throughout the United States's history in some states such as Vermont, they have at times actually been a *majority* in other states such as South Carolina. For example, with their 1867 enfranchisement, African Americans went from zero to almost sixty percent of the theoretical electorate in South Carolina, their maximum share of a state electorate to date. They also constituted a majority of the theoretical electorate in both Louisiana and Mississippi during the Reconstruction era, and had the Jim Crow system not begun to disenfranchise them in its aftermath, they would have remained a majority in South Carolina until the 1920s and in Mississippi until the 1940s. Additionally, African Americans have in the past constituted close to a majority (more than forty percent) of the theoretical electorate in other Southern states such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Virginia when they have been enfranchised. And at the time of their Civil Rights era re-enfranchisement in 1966, almost one third of the theoretical electorates of states such as South Carolina and Mississippi were African American—a significant minority within striking distance of a plurality. Last but not least is today's small but certainly not negligible African American minority in many Northern states such as Michigan. The Great Migration is responsible for the growth in these states' African American electorates and the concomitant decline of Southern states'. Hence, at the state level, there is substantial variation in ethnic heterogeneity both cross-sectionally (from state to state) and longitudinally (over time within many states).

⁸While this simple approach has obvious drawbacks, as recently as 2000, eighty-one percent of the American population was classified as being racially white. With African Americans, the second largest racial group, making up approximately twelve percent of the population, only approximately seven percent of the population belonged to other racial groups. Even if Hispanics are broken out from the white population and treated as a separate ethnic group, non-Hispanic whites still make up the vast majority of the population: approximately seventy percent. In the country's earlier years, non-Hispanic whites made up an even larger share of the population, increasing the attractiveness of this approach.

⁹The effective number of ethnic groups is not shown at the state level for reasons of space, but interested readers can easily calculate it from the data presented in Table 2. Time series data for all states can be found in Appendix C. This appendix also contains more information about the construction of these estimates.

State	Population (%)				Theoretical Electorate (%)			
	1860	1870	1960	2006	1860	1870	1960	2006
Alabama	45	48	30	26	0.0	48	2.0	24
Alaska	NA	NA	3.0	4.1	NA	NA	5.4	3.0
Arizona	NA	NA	3.3	4.0	NA	NA	3.4	3.5
Arkansas	26	25	22	16	0.0	26	2.0	14
California	1.1	0.76	5.6	6.7	0.0	0.76	5.8	6.3
Colorado	NA	NA	2.3	4.3	NA	NA	2.4	3.7
Connecticut	1.9	1.8	4.2	10	0.0	1.8	3.8	9.2
Delaware	19	18	14	21	0.0	17	13	19
Florida	45	49	18	16	0.0	47	2.0	14
Georgia	44	46	28	30	0.0	45	2.0	28
Hawaii	NA	NA	0.77	2.9	NA	NA	0.91	1.6
Idaho	NA	NA	0.22	0.85	NA	NA	0.26	0.66
Illinois	0.45	1.1	10	15	0.0	1.2	9.4	14
Indiana	0.85	1.5	5.8	9.0	0.0	1.6	5.4	8.2
Iowa	0.16	0.48	0.92	2.5	0.0	0.53	0.84	2.2
Kansas	NA	4.7	4.2	6.0	NA	3.8	3.9	4.9
Kentucky	20	17	7.1	7.7	0.0	15	6.8	6.2
Louisiana	50	50	32	31	0.0	50	2.0	29
Maine	0.21	0.26	0.34	1.0	0.22	0.29	0.34	0.48
Maryland	25	22	17	29	0.0	21	16	28
Massachusetts	0.78	0.96	2.2	6.9	0.76	0.98	2.0	6.0
Michigan	0.91	1.0	9.2	14	0.0	0.99	8.9	13
Minnesota	0.15	0.17	0.65	4.5	0.0	0.21	0.63	3.5
Mississippi	55	54	42	37	0.0	46	2.0	34
Missouri	10	6.9	9.0	11	0.0	5.9	8.4	10
Montana	NA	NA	0.22	0.29	NA	NA	0.24	0.27
Nebraska	NA	0.64	2.1	4.5	NA	0.74	1.9	4.4
Nevada	NA	0.83	4.6	7.9	NA	0.75	4.3	7.5
New Hampshire	0.15	0.18	0.31	1.2	0.15	0.19	0.33	0.99
New Jersey	3.8	3.4	8.4	14	0.0	3.4	11	13
New Mexico	NA	NA	1.8	2.8	NA	NA	1.9	2.5
New York	1.3	1.2	8.4	17	0.0	1.3	8.1	16

Table 2: For selected election years, estimates of the African American share of each state’s population and theoretical electorate (i.e., the voting age, race and gendered population), all rounded to two significant digits. “NA” indicates election years for which the state was not yet a state. Continued on next page. Source: estimates based on Carter et al. (2006) and US Census Bureau (1860–1960, 1948, 1954–1962, 1966–2006, 1968–2000, 1970, 1990, 2000c, 2009c).

State	Population (%)				Theoretical Electorate (%)			
	1860	1870	1960	2006	1860	1870	1960	2006
North Carolina	36	37	24	22	0.0	36	2.0	20
North Dakota	NA	NA	0.12	1.0	NA	NA	0.16	0.21
Ohio	1.6	2.4	8.1	12	0.0	2.4	7.7	11
Oklahoma	NA	NA	6.6	8.0	NA	NA	6.0	7.2
Oregon	0.24	0.38	1.0	1.9	0.0	0.50	0.91	1.4
Pennsylvania	2.0	1.9	7.2	11	0.0	2.0	7.1	9.5
Rhode Island	2.3	2.3	2.1	6.3	2.2	2.4	1.8	5.0
South Carolina	59	59	35	29	0.0	58	2.0	27
South Dakota	NA	NA	0.16	1.0	NA	NA	0.19	0.69
Tennessee	26	26	16	17	0.0	24	2.0	15
Texas	30	31	12	11	0.0	28	2.0	11
Utah	NA	NA	0.46	1.2	NA	NA	0.51	0.86
Vermont	0.23	0.28	0.13	0.81	0.22	0.31	0.17	0.61
Virginia	43	42	20	20	0.0	40	2.0	18
Washington	NA	NA	1.7	3.7	NA	NA	1.6	3.0
West Virginia	NA	4.1	4.8	3.4	NA	4.2	4.5	3.2
Wisconsin	0.15	0.20	1.9	6.0	0.0	0.25	1.6	4.8
Wyoming	NA	NA	0.66	1.2	NA	NA	0.66	0.77

Table 2: Continued from previous page.

2 Party System Fragmentation in the United States

I now turn to the dependent variable, the fragmentation of the party system. I first examine data for the conventional quantitative operationalization of this variable, the effective number of electoral political parties, in federal legislative elections in the United States. However, the drawbacks to this operationalization, which were discussed at length in prior chapters, justify the brevity of my look at this data. More directly on point, I then identify the African American sectarian parties that have emerged to contest federal elections and evaluate the success of these parties.

2.1 The Effective Number of Electoral Parties

Figure 3 plots the effective number of electoral parties for the United States’s lower legislative chamber (the House of Representatives) from 1860 to 2006. This is the same time period for which I explored changes in the ethnic heterogeneity of the United States’s electorate. As before, referring to the number of parties as “effective” and “electoral” indicates that parties are weighed by their vote shares when counting.

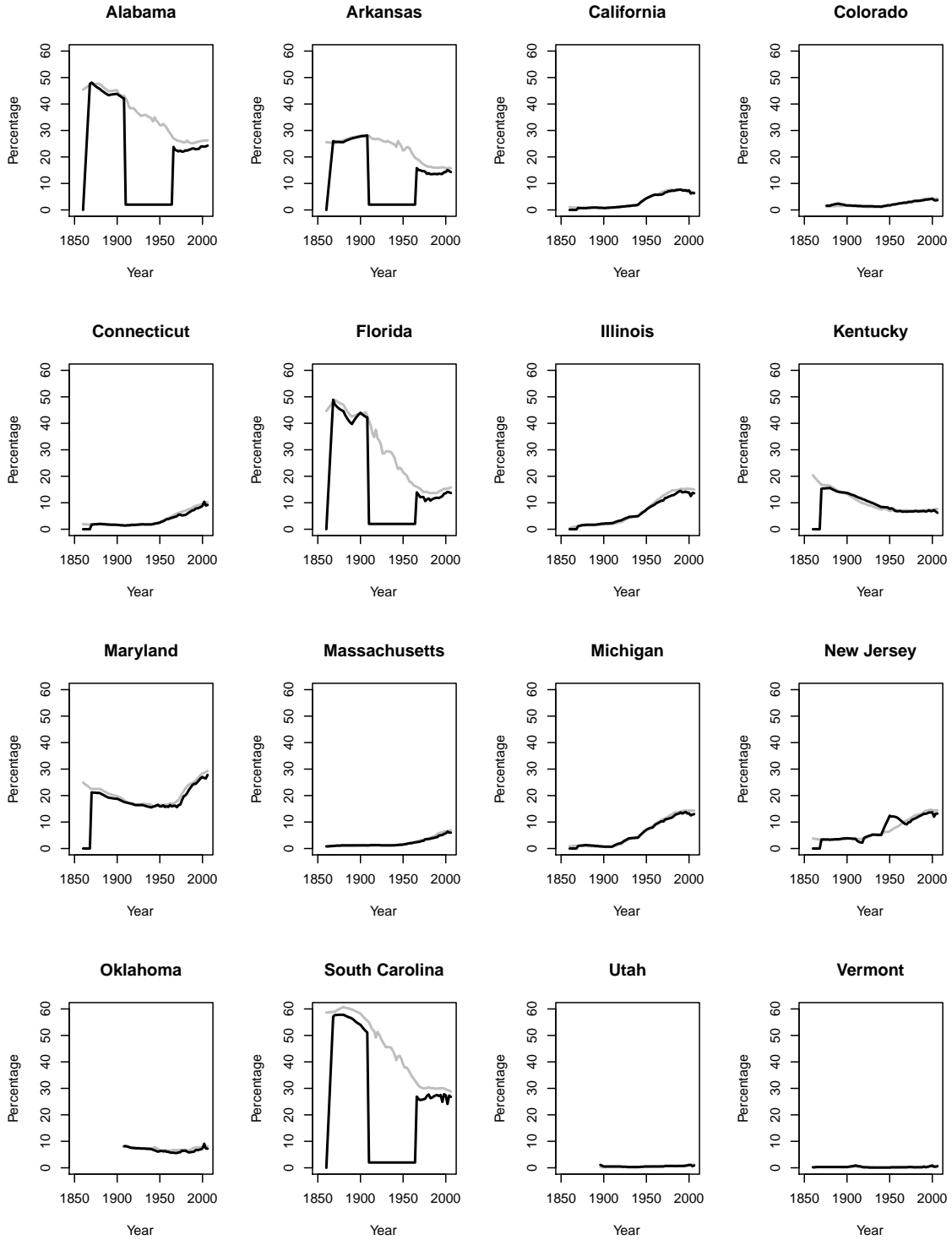


Figure 2: The African American proportion of the population [gray line] and theoretical electorate (i.e., the voting age, race and gendered population) [black line] for selected states from 1860 through 2006. Source: see Table 2.

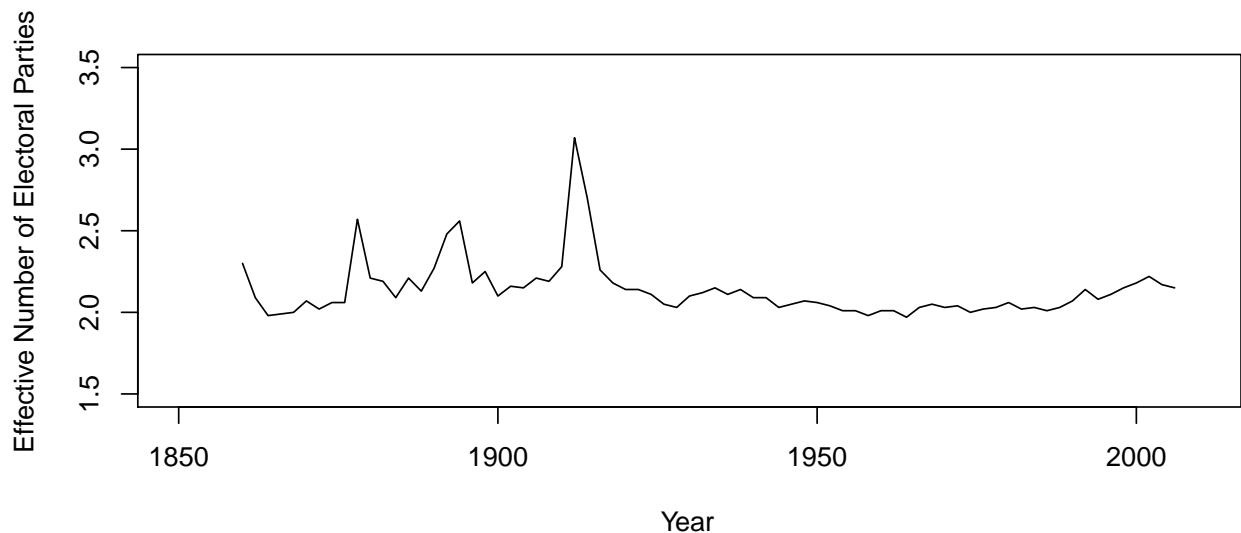


Figure 3: The effective number of electoral political parties in the United States, 1860–2006. Source: based upon Mackie and Rose (1991); Golder (2005); and US House (1920–2006).

This figure shows sharp increases in the effective number of electoral parties from the late 1870s through 1900, commensurate with the increase in ethnic heterogeneity from African American enfranchisement during Reconstruction. However, there is no comparable increase in party system fragmentation following the Civil Rights era re-enfranchisement of African Americans. Also puzzling is the increase instead of the expected decrease in party system fragmentation after 1910, given the decrease in ethnic heterogeneity resulting from African American disenfranchisement in the post-Reconstruction South. Empirical support for the hypothesis accordingly appears mixed. However, as I have argued in earlier chapters, the effective number of electoral parties does not only capture the changes in party system fragmentation that result from the successful entry or exit of African American sectarian parties, the mechanism of interest to this study.¹⁰

2.2 African American Sectarian Parties

As before, an African American sectarian party is operationally defined as a political party that either (i) has an exclusionary message, i.e., a party that targets African Americans to the exclusion of other groups in its propaganda; (ii) identifies itself with African Americans by its name; or (iii) has predominately African American leadership and/or personnel. Further,

¹⁰For example, as students of American politics are well aware, the explanation for the record setting number of parties in 1912 is *not* an African American party both entering the race and performing well at the ballot box; rather, it is the electoral success of Theodore Roosevelt’s new Progressive Party.

also as before, I define such a party to be successful if it managed to attract a majority or close to a majority of African American votes, and as moderately successful if it attracted only a plurality or close to a plurality of the group's votes.

So did African American sectarian parties successfully emerge to contest federal elections in the United States? To answer this question, Table 3 lists all African American sectarian parties that participated in at least one federal election, whether presidential or congressional, from 1860 through 2006. These parties were identified through searches of the secondary literature, election returns and media accounts.¹¹ This table makes it clear that African American parties have entered the political fray at the national level from the 1870s through the 1980s. Interestingly, only one emerged during Reconstruction on the heels of African American enfranchisement, making African Americans a case in point for Ciment's (2000, 22) argument that the Civil War and Reconstruction eras had the least third party activity of all major periods of American politics since the 1820s.¹² More African American parties emerged in the aftermath of Reconstruction, including subsequent to the Southern disenfranchisement of most African Americans. However, the numbers were still not large: an average of 0.55 parties per election in the eighty year period from 1878 through 1958. By way of contrast, a particularly large number appeared in the 1960s and 1970s during the period known as the Second Reconstruction, following African American re-enfranchisement: an average of 1.4 parties per election for the twenty year period from 1960 to 1980. Of course, these and other African American parties also participated in state and local elections, where their electoral

¹¹Not included in the table is the National Liberty Party, which nominated George E. Taylor for president in 1904. This party is omitted because Taylor's name did not appear on any state's ballot and no other candidates were nominated (Kruschke 1991). Two other coding decisions are worth elaborating upon. One is to include the Peace and Freedom party through 1974. Even in 1968, this party was not clearly an African American party. This is reflected in its astronomical success figures for Congressional races from 1970–1974 in Table 3 (discussed below), a function of the party's best electoral performances coming from districts with miniscule African American electorates. I nevertheless chose to include it here given its appearance in prominent studies such as that of Walton (1969, 82–83). The second is the inclusion of the Black and Tans. These were African American factions of the Republican party in the former Confederate states that emerged in the post-Reconstruction era and lasted until the 1960s in some states. They supported African American suffrage and equality more generally, in opposition to the exclusively white (dubbed "Lily White") Republican factions. However, the Republican party ceased to be a competitive force in Southern politics around the turn of the last century, given the disenfranchisement programs of the Redeemers. One influential view of these political organizations is accordingly that they were essentially "patronage farmers and [national] convention functionaries". Most problematic from this perspective is their participation in presidential elections: they ran separate slates of electors but endorsed the national Republican candidates. Another view, however, is that they did play electoral politics, just as any other political party did, running candidates in opposition to other parties, from the Lily Whites to the Democrats (Walton 2000*c*, 189). I again err on the side of inclusion and opt to treat the Black and Tans as independent political parties. Note that their electoral prominence is likely underestimated in Table 3 because their candidates were not always clearly labeled as such. For example, Walton (1975, 77–78) reports that the Black and Tans ran their own Congressional slate of candidates in both 1886 and 1890 in Alabama, but these candidates are not identified in the election results reported by either Congressional Quarterly (1987) or Dubin (1998).

¹²Ciment's (2000, 21) explanation for this is the fact that with the two main parties so ideologically divided over the central issue of American political life, third parties seemed irrelevant.

performance was often even better.¹³ However, both in the interests of space and because of the difficulty in assembling historical state level electoral returns, I do not provide equivalent information about state level elections here.

One general observation about African American party entry at the federal level is that the vast majority have only contested elections in a single state (e.g., the Alabama Colored Republicans), as opposed to running a multi-state, i.e., truly national, campaign (e.g., the Peace and Freedom party in 1968). Second, the states where the vast majority of these parties have appeared are Southern. Third, African American parties have been more likely to contest a federal legislative race than the presidency, the problematic Peace and Freedom Party aside. Fourth and finally, these parties have all been short lived: leaving aside the Black and Tan factions, which existed for decades in most states but only sporadically contested federal elections, the longest lived party has been the Alabama National Democratic Party, which contested six federal elections from 1968 through 1980.

Turning from the elite to the mass level, this table also provides information about how successful these African American parties have been at attracting the support of African American voters. As with the Israeli case, the simplest approach is to compare the parties' vote shares to the African American share of the relevant (i.e., district, state or national) theoretical electorate. Specifically, success is operationalized by dividing a party's vote share by the African American share of the relevant electorate, yielding the proportion of African Americans casting a ballot for the party in question.¹⁴ This approach also yields the most

¹³The National Democratic Party in Alabama is a case in point: many of its candidates were successful at the local level in the early 1970s, and it placed one of the first two African Americans since Reconstruction in the state legislature in 1970 (see, for example, Frye 1980). Other African American parties solely existed at the state and/or local level, including the Black Panther Party; the Lowndes Freedom Association; and the Loyal Democrats of Mississippi. For an overview of these parties, see Kruschke (1991) and Ness and Ciment (2000).

¹⁴As in the Israeli case, this approach rests on the assumption that only African Americans voted for African American parties—an assumption that is generally reasonable, although certainly not always accurate (see, for example, footnote 11). The key here is to define the (theoretical) electorate. In races for the House, this is naturally defined to be the electorate of the congressional district; in races for the Senate, it is the state's electorate. In the presidential race, if the party contested more than one state, the national electorate is the benchmark, but if it only contested a single state, the state's electorate serves as the benchmark instead. There are two exceptions. First, if the African American share of the theoretical electorate is not available, the African American share of the population is used instead (e.g., for Congressional districts prior to the 1940s; the Alabama 5th in 1970; the California 7th in 1968; and the California 36th in 1970). Second, the African American share of the population is also used for Southern states from 1910 to 1964, when most but not all African Americans were disenfranchised. This obviously overestimates the African American electorate and hence underestimates the success of African American parties. For example, if the success of the Independent Afro-American party in 1960 is instead calculated using data in Walton (2000*b*) on the actual African American electorate in Alabama in 1960 (66,000 African Americans registered to vote relative to a white voting age population of 1.85 million, for an electorate that was approximately 3.4 percent African American), the party attracted 7.5% of African American votes instead of less than one percent. Unfortunately, data like this on the exact number of registered African American voters exists for only a few elections and states. The alternative, using my estimate of two percent as the African American share of the electorate (discussed above), would so grossly overestimate sectarian party success, however, that I opt for the underestimate. Mitigating this underestimation is the fact that some of the elections where African

Year	Party	Presidential			Congressional		
		% Votes	% Seats	Success	% Votes	% Seats	Success
1876	Alabama Colored Republicans	–	–	–	28 (H 4)	0	48
1888	Alabama Colored Republicans	–	–	–	38 (H 1)	0	69
1898	Alabama Colored Republicans	NA	NA	NA	15 (H 1)	0	27
1898	Mississippi Colored Republicans	NA	NA	NA	15 (H 3)	0	18
1898	Virginia Colored Republicans	NA	NA	NA	1.3 (H 4)	0	2.1
1906	Virginia Black and Tans	NA	NA	NA	4.1 (H 3)	0	9.5
1920	Florida Black and Tans	19	0	55	26 (S)	0	76
1920	Texas Black and Tans	5.6	0	36	17 (H 8)	0	^a
1920	Virginia Colored Republicans	–	–	–	9.7 (H 3)	0	^a
1928	Mississippi Black and Tans	0.53	0	1.1	–	–	–
1932	Mississippi Black and Tans	1.3	0	2.5	2.5 (H 3)	0	^a
1936	Mississippi Black and Tans	1.7	0	3.4	–	–	–
1936	South Carolina Black and Tans	–	–	–	0.83 (S)	0	1.8
1940	Mississippi Black and Tans	1.6	0	3.2	–	–	–
1944	Mississippi Black and Tans	2.1	0	4.4	–	–	–
1944	South Carolina Black and Tans	0.061	0	0.13	–	–	–
1944	South Carolina Progressive Democrats	–	–	–	3.2 (S)	0	7.6
1946	South Carolina Progressive Democrats	NA	NA	NA	2.4 (H 6)	0	^a

(Continued)

Table 3: Vote and seat shares for African American parties active at the federal level (both presidential and Congressional). If the locus of a single state party is not obvious from its name, the state abbreviation is given in parentheses. The nature of the Congressional race is denoted by “S” for Senate and “H” for House, the latter followed by the district. For a party participating in more than one Congressional race, statistics are for the race in which it performed the best. Success is the party’s vote share as a proportion of the relevant African American electorate (population for 1910–1964 for Southern states). Two dashes indicate that a party did not contest a race and “NA” indicates that there was not a presidential election for it to contest. Continued on next page. Source: election results, CQ (1987), Dubin (1998) and US House (1920–2006); national and state demographic data, my data described above; Congressional district demographic data, Parsons, Beach and Dubin (1986), Parsons, Dubin and Toombs Parsons (1990) and Lublin (1997).

^aCongressional district demographic data unavailable.

(Continued)

Year	Party	Presidential			Congressional		
		% Votes	% Seats	Success	% Votes	% Seats	Success
1948	Mississippi Black and Tans	2.6	0	5.4	–	–	–
1948	South Carolina Progressive Democrats	0.11	0	0.23	–	–	–
1952	Mississippi Black and Tans	1.0	0	2.2	–	–	–
1952	South Carolina Black and Tans	2.9	0	7.7	–	–	–
1956	Mississippi Black and Tans	1.7	0	3.8	–	–	–
1960	Independent Afro-Americans (AL)	0.26	0	0.87	–	–	–
1964	Freedom Now (MI)	–	–	–	0.91 (H 1)	0	1.9
1966	Mississippi Freedom Democrats	NA	NA	NA	24 (H 3)	0	60
1968	National Democratic (AL)	5.2	0	23	23 (H 5)	0	62
1968	Peace and Freedom ^a	0.10	0	1.2	7.5 (CA H 7)	0	42
1970	National Democratic (AL)	NA	NA	NA	24 (H 5)	0	66
1970	Peace and Freedom	NA	NA	NA	2.8 (CA H 36)	0	240 ^b
1972	National Democratic (AL)	3.8	0	17	14 (H 7)	0	43
1972	Peace and Freedom (CA)	0.65	0	10	4.9 (H 19)	0	1900
1972	United Citizens (SC)	0.34	0	1.3	–	–	–
1974	National Democratic (AL)	NA	NA	NA	3.6 (H 1)	0	13
1974	Peace and Freedom (CA)	NA	NA	NA	4.3 (H 2)	0	650
1974	United Citizens (SC)	NA	NA	NA	0.61 (H 1) ^c	0	2.1
1976	National Democratic (AL)	–	–	–	0.63 (H 6)	0	2.3
1980	National Democratic (AL)	–	–	–	0.93 (H 6)	0	3.4

Table 3: Continued from previous page.

^aOfficial election results seem to include votes for the splinter Freedom and Peace party headed by Richard Gregory. Other sources such as CQ (1987, 139) report the two factions separately. In addition to California, the party contested congressional races in Hawaii, New York and Washington in 1968 and in Rhode Island in 1970. It appeared on the presidential ballot in twelve states in 1968: Arizona; California; Colorado; Iowa; Minnesota; New Jersey; New York; Ohio; Pennsylvania; Utah; Virginia; and Washington. The vote share in the table is its aggregate national performance; its best performance in a single state was in California, where it received 0.38 % of the popular presidential vote.

^bFor an explanation for this astronomically large statistic in this election, as well as for this party in the 1972 and 1974 elections, see footnote 11 in the main text.

^cIn an April 1971 special election for this seat resulting from the death of long-time representative L. Mendel Rivers, the United Citizens' candidate Victoria DeLee garnered ten percent of the vote (Walton 2000a), approximately thirty percent of the African American vote in the district.

extensive historical measure of success, given that survey data is not available for much of the period studied.¹⁵ While the resulting estimates are just estimates, they paint a suggestive enough picture to allow us to draw some conclusions about how African American parties fared at the polls among their target constituencies.

What these statistics show is that at times, some African American political parties have been successful at the national level, even though most have not been. It should be noted that this claim rests upon my definition of success, to which some may object: no African American party has ever managed to place its candidate in either the presidency or Congress, a conventional understanding of success. Nevertheless, even if African American parties have never won political office at the national level, some have managed to attract a majority of African American votes, an achievement that deserves recognition.

To elaborate, just as more African American parties emerged to contest elections in the Civil Rights era, it is in this same period that African American parties have been the most successful. In the pre-Civil Rights era, only two African American parties have been successful as I have defined it.¹⁶ One was the Alabama Colored Republicans in the 1888 House race for the Alabama First. The second, more successful party was the Florida Black and Tans in 1920. They captured an estimated fifty-five percent of the African American vote in the Florida presidential ballot and a whopping seventy-five percent of the group's vote in the Senatorial race.¹⁷ In the Civil Rights era, two parties have again been successful, but one has been successful in multiple elections. The Mississippi Freedom Democrats and the National Democratic Party of Alabama both attained success in their House races in the late 1960s and early 1970s: the former earned sixty percent of the African American vote in the 1966 Mississippi House Third race, while the latter had its best showing in the 1970 Alabama House Fifth race, when it obtained two thirds of the African American vote. Moreover, with the caveats noted earlier (see footnote 11), a third party, Peace and Freedom, was also successful in that it came within striking distance of capturing a majority of African American votes in the 1968 California House Seventh race.

Overall, African American parties have been more successful in legislative than presidential races. For example, the National Democratic party attracted sixty-two percent of the African American vote in the 1968 Alabama House Fifth race, but only twenty-three percent of the African American popular presidential vote in Alabama. Also, these parties have been successful for very short periods, usually just one or two elections, even relative to their short life spans.

American parties did appear were accompanied by registration drives that (temporarily) led to a reasonable numbers of African Americans registering, such as the 1920 election in Florida.

¹⁵For example, the American National Election Study only began in 1948, meaning that survey data is available for an even smaller portion of the total period studied than in the Israeli case.

¹⁶However, success is likely underestimated in this period: in Southern elections between 1910 and 1964, the relevant African American theoretical electorate is overestimated for the purposes of calculating success (see footnote 14). If the theoretical electorate for these states and elections is instead taken to be only two percent African American as a result of disenfranchisement, as is assumed in Table 2 and Figure 2, then most of the African Americans parties appearing in this period were successful. The truth is probably somewhere in-between.

¹⁷For more on this episode in Florida's history, known as the "Bloody Election," see Ortiz (2005).

3 Explaining Sectarian Party (Un)Success

The data just presented raises two obvious questions. First, why have African American parties appeared to contest federal elections in some states and years but not in others? Second, how can the appearance and success of African American sectarian parties be reconciled with the United States's majoritarian electoral system? I tackle each question in turn.

3.1 Why Some States and Elections But Not Others?

Let me begin by noting which factors *cannot* explain the observed variation across space and time in the fortunes of African American sectarian parties at the federal level.

As with the Israeli case, one such factor is the political institution that has been the primary focus of the literature to date: the electoral system. This factor can be ruled out as an explanation for why some states and years have seen African American parties contest elections but others have not because effectively equivalent electoral systems have been used by all states throughout the period studied. Obviously, a constant cannot explain variance. For example, all states have selected their electors for the United States's indirect presidential election by winner-take-all popular vote during this period with two relatively recent exceptions: Maine (since 1972) and Nebraska (since 1992). And further, single member districts and a plurality formula have been used by all states to elect their members of Congress with minor exceptions.¹⁸

In contrast to the Israeli case, a second such factor is the other political institution upon which this study has focused: the political regime, or the centralization of policy-making authority. As Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue with respect to the vertical distribution of authority in the United States, the major contrast to be drawn is between the decentralized early years of the republic and the more centralized later years, with 1854 being the dividing line. This leaves the size of the federal prize effectively constant throughout the period I study.¹⁹ Further, turning to the horizontal distribution of authority

¹⁸The most consequential of these exceptions is the dual ballot electoral system that Louisiana has employed since 1978 (1975 for the state legislature), where a second round election consisting of the top two candidates is held if no candidate receives a majority in the first round. Other exceptions are the use of additional ballots until one candidate achieved a majority in Vermont until 1878 and Rhode Island until 1893, and the election of some representatives at large until 1970. All of these minor electoral system features unfortunately perfectly predict the absence of African American parties at the federal level, so they are not included in the quantitative analyses reported below. Of course, prior to 1870 and from the 1930s through the 1960s, states did not re-district to ensure that congressional districts were composed of roughly equivalent populations, but this is another kettle of fish that will be dealt with below. To find greater variation in the electoral systems for the presidency and the legislature, one must look to earlier in the United States's history, such as to the use of some multi-member districts to elect early Congresses. See Dubin (1998) for a good historical overview. There both was and is greater variation in the electoral systems governing the election of *state* legislatures.

¹⁹Chhibber and Kollman (2004, 156) do identify an "ambiguous" period sandwiched between the two major centralizing eras of the Civil War/Reconstruction and the New Deal (i.e., 1876-1932), however. Including a dummy variable for this period in the models discussed below yields an incorrectly signed coefficient that is significant in some models and insignificant in others. The insignificance is a testament to the little

between the various institutional actors within the federal level of government, there have also been no significant formal (i.e., constitutional) changes in how authority is distributed since the 1860s. A reflection of this is the constancy of the index of presidential powers discussed in Chapter 4 for the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰ In other words, the incentives to be the largest party in each house of the federal legislature, as well as to gain control of the presidency, have not substantially changed during the period studied; they have also been the same from state to state.

There is one exception to the argument that the regime type cannot explain when African American sectarian parties have both appeared and been successful, however. This exception concerns the coattails of the president. Because the electoral district in the restrictive presidential electoral system is ultimately the entire country, both voters and elites should be less likely to support the sectarian presidential candidates of groups that do not command at least close to a plurality of the national electorate. In turn, when legislative elections are held concurrently with presidential elections, the presidential race will cast a shadow over the legislative race, which will disadvantage the sectarian parties of such groups (e.g., Cox 1997; Golder 2006; Hicken and Stoll 2011). And African Americans are such a group, as the data I presented earlier demonstrates. Hence, the hypothesis is that African American sectarian parties should both more frequently enter and be more successful at contesting *non-concurrent* legislative races (i.e., those held at the presidential midterm). This proposition is tested below.

The third non-factor is party system openness. Throughout the period of this study, the Democratic and Republican parties have dominated electoral politics in the United States at the federal level. For example, the highest share of the vote going to other parties in House elections (the lower legislative chamber) was twenty-four percent in 1912, but this is an extreme outlier: the median share is only three percent.²¹ While dealignment has occurred in the United States, as it has in all advanced industrial democracies, it has not yet blunted the dominance of the two major parties at the polls. Moreover, the periods of the most extensive third party activity at the Congressional level, which might indicate a more open party system, do not closely correspond to periods of African American sectarian party activity.²²

Fifth and finally, turning from the systemic to the group level, the type of attribute

substantive difference in the overall size of the federal prize from the 1860s onwards. The incorrect sign may reflect the disenfranchisement of African Americans that was also in progress during this period, which should deter entry, and which is not adequately captured by my data on the theoretical electorate.

²⁰There have been informal changes, however, as discussed in Hicken and Stoll (2008). But quantifying these changes is beyond the scope of this project.

²¹These statistics are based on data in Mackie and Rose (1991) and US House (1920–2006).

²²Indeed, if either the lagged or contemporary national third party vote share in House races is included in the models discussed below, the coefficient is incorrectly signed and statistically significant. This means that third party challenges to Republican and Democratic dominance are found to have counterintuitively *discouraged* African American party entry. While the national third party vote in House races seems the most straightforward way of operationalizing party system openness, future research might explore alternatives, including disaggregating the third party vote by state, in light of these findings. However, for the reasons discussed above, this is unlikely to be a fruitful line of inquiry.

defining the new social group is held constant by design in this within-case study: in every state, the object of study is a racial (ethnic) latent group. This factor accordingly can also not play a role in explaining the observed variance.

So which factors should play a role, given the hypotheses I developed in Chapter 2? The first and most obvious factor is the size of the new social group in the electoral districts. The data presented in an earlier section of this chapter showed that the African American share of the states' theoretical electorates has varied greatly, both from state to state and over time. With the electoral district for both a state's presidential electors and its Senators being the state itself, and given the majoritarian electoral systems employed for the United States's federal elections, African American parties are more likely to both appear and be successful in a state's presidential and Senatorial elections when African Americans constitute a large share of the state's electorate in that year. Similarly, the larger the African American share of a state's theoretical electorate, the larger the African American share of the theoretical electorates of at least some House electoral districts, and hence the more likely the entry and the success of African American parties in the state's House elections. Specifically, African Americans constituting approximately a plurality of a state's electorate makes it possible that an African American party could win federal elections in that state. This in turn makes it more likely that voters will support and elites will supply such a party.²³

Yet at the same time, as scholars such as Posner (2005) have argued, political entrepreneurs should have an interest in politicizing minimum winning groups, i.e., groups that are not larger than needed to win. This logic suggests that when African Americans constitute a super majority of a state's electorate, such as in excess of sixty or seventy percent, both elites and voters should be less likely to support an African American party. Combining these two arguments, I accordingly hypothesize that the African American share of the theoretical electorate is non-linearly related to the probability of both the entry and success of African American sectarian parties. Specifically, the relationship should be concave parabolic. The larger the African American share of a state's theoretical electorate, the greater the probability of an African American party both entering and being successful, although once African Americans constitute substantially more than a majority of the

²³Exactly what share of the electorate constitutes a plurality will depend upon which, if any, divisions there are in the non-African American community, i.e., if African Americans face a monolithic white community or one divided by cross-cutting internal cleavages. In the former case (exemplified by the old 'Solid South'), African Americans would need to constitute an outright majority of the electorate, although in the latter case, constituting as little as thirty-five percent of the electorate might ensure victory at the polls. Given the lower rate at which African Americans have historically both registered and turned out to vote relative to white Americans, however, a higher share of the electorate might be necessary for an African American party to be competitive at the polls. For example, in adjudicating redistricting cases under the Voting Rights Act, courts and the Justice Department have at times made the case for African Americans constituting sixty-five percent of the theoretical electorate instead of merely a majority. Conversely, others such as Grofman and Handley (1989) have argued that a mere majority suffices. Siding with the latter scholars, Lublin (1997) additionally provides empirical evidence that a sizeable Latino presence substantially lowers the minimal proportion of African Americans required, although it should be noted that his study, like most in the literature, focuses upon African American descriptive representation instead of African American sectarian parties.

theoretical electorate, this probability should decrease.

And indeed, there is impressionistic evidence in support of this hypothesis from Tables 2 and 3. These tables illustrate that almost all African American parties have appeared in Southern states, as was noted above, which is where African Americans have constituted the largest share of the theoretical electorate. Similarly, all African American parties' successes have also been in Southern states save one, with the exception being the Peace and Freedom party in California's 1968 federal election.²⁴ And for the few African American parties that have contested elections in Northern and Western states, all of these appearances have been subsequent to the Great Migration, which increased these states' African American electorates. Further, these tables illustrate that the bulk of elections contested by African American parties have been in those Southern states with the *largest* African American populations, such as Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina. For example, the average African American share of the theoretical electorate was twenty-five percent in states where an African American party was successful in a federal election (as I have defined success), compared to an average of seven percent in states where one was not. Finally, providing suggestive support for the hypothesized non-linearity, an African American party has only once contested a federal election in a state where African Americans constituted more than a majority of the theoretical electorate.

A second explanatory factor at the group level is the new social group's politicization. For African Americans, this factor has varied over time if less so from state to state. Take first the issue of collective identity, one of the two dimensions of politicization that shape a group's capacity for collective action in the political realm. There have always been internal divisions within the African American community along a variety of lines. Nevertheless, a substantial body of evidence points to a strong African American group consciousness. Slavery, Jim Crow and contemporary racism have combined to create what Dawson (1994) famously described as a belief in a linked fate. Survey evidence of this group consciousness only exists for the last few decades, but scholars have identified many indirect pieces of evidence pointing to its existence as early as Reconstruction (e.g., Valelly 2004). Hence, while there no doubt has been some increase in group consciousness over time, this component of politicization has always been at least minimally present.

Now take the issue of organizational resources and leadership, the second dimension of politicization that shapes the capacity for collective action. Here there has been substantial change over time. The emancipation of African Americans from slavery brought greater education. Reconstruction imparted political skills. Later, the Great Migration out of the South and the urbanization of the South itself brought greater economic resources, with greater political sophistication and institutional resources following. For example, scholars have pointed to the central role played by African American churches, African American colleges, and chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the Civil Rights movement (e.g., McAdam 1982)—institutions that either did not exist at the time of emancipation or existed on a much smaller scale. Accordingly, it

²⁴In making this claim, I ignore the problematic cases of the Peace and Freedom party in California after 1968, as well as in other states, for the reasons discussed in footnote 11.

seems hard to deny that African American politicization has increased over time.

As politicization increases, political entrepreneurs come to expect both greater support at the polls from the masses and greater support prior to election day from other elites. This makes it more likely that they will supply the African American community with a sectarian political party. Accordingly, the hypothesis is that greater politicization will increase the likelihood of an African American sectarian party contesting federal elections. It is also hypothesized to increase the success of these parties.

Last but not least is a systemic factor: the strategy played by existing, catch-all political parties towards African Americans. This factor has also varied greatly over both states and time. In the South, the Republican party initially played an accommodative strategy. To court the votes of this newly enfranchised group during Reconstruction, African Americans were incorporated into the party rank and file and even, if to a far lesser extent, into the party leadership. They also received the party's nomination for both state and federal office and accordingly made up a significant share of the party's parliamentary wing.²⁵ But this accommodative strategy faded into a dismissive-to-adversarial strategy resembling that of the Democrats as Reconstruction ended and disenfranchisement progressed.²⁶ This status quo largely persisted until the Second Reconstruction, when the Democratic party began to play an accommodative strategy. At the national level, the New Deal and the national Democratic party's *volte-face* on civil rights, particularly under Truman, are commonly held to be emblematic elements of this new strategy, one that gradually wooed African Americans from the 'party of Lincoln' (e.g., Walton 1972). However, the individual state Democratic parties varied greatly in exactly when and to what extent they chose to accommodate; many remained obdurate until the 1960s or 1970s. By way of contrast, outside of the South, the Republican party remained minimally accommodationist for much longer. Yet in Northern and Western states, a similar shift in party strategies was well underway by the 1940s, eventually leaving only the Democrats practicing accommodation.

Figure 4 bolsters this qualitative portrait with quantitative data. As in the Israeli case study, I measure the extent of accommodation by the descriptive representation offered to African Americans. For selected states and for all federal election years from 1860 to 2006, this figure shows African American representatives from the two major parties (the Democrats and the Republicans) as a percentage of the total number of lower chamber representatives at both the state and the federal levels. This data was collected from a variety of primary and secondary sources.²⁷ An example of the state-level variation in accommodation

²⁵For example, in 1872, sixty-five percent of South Carolina's state representatives were African American, all of whom were Republican. See any of the state-specific historical accounts of Reconstruction, such as Uzee (1950) for Louisiana, as well as multi-state studies such as that of Foner (1993).

²⁶Elements of dismissiveness can be found in both white Republican factions and Democrats appealing to African Americans' shared interests with "white folks" (see, for example Uzee 1950, 134), and ultimately (arguably) in their push to disenfranchise African Americans. Elements of adversity can be found in campaigns denouncing "Negro domination" and advocating either white supremacy or a white color line, such as the 1898 Democratic "white supremacy" campaign in North Carolina (see, for example, Edmonds 1973, 136–157).

²⁷Given how few third parties have obtained seats in state legislatures, let alone the federal legislature, during the period of study, these figures are effectively equivalent to the African American share of the

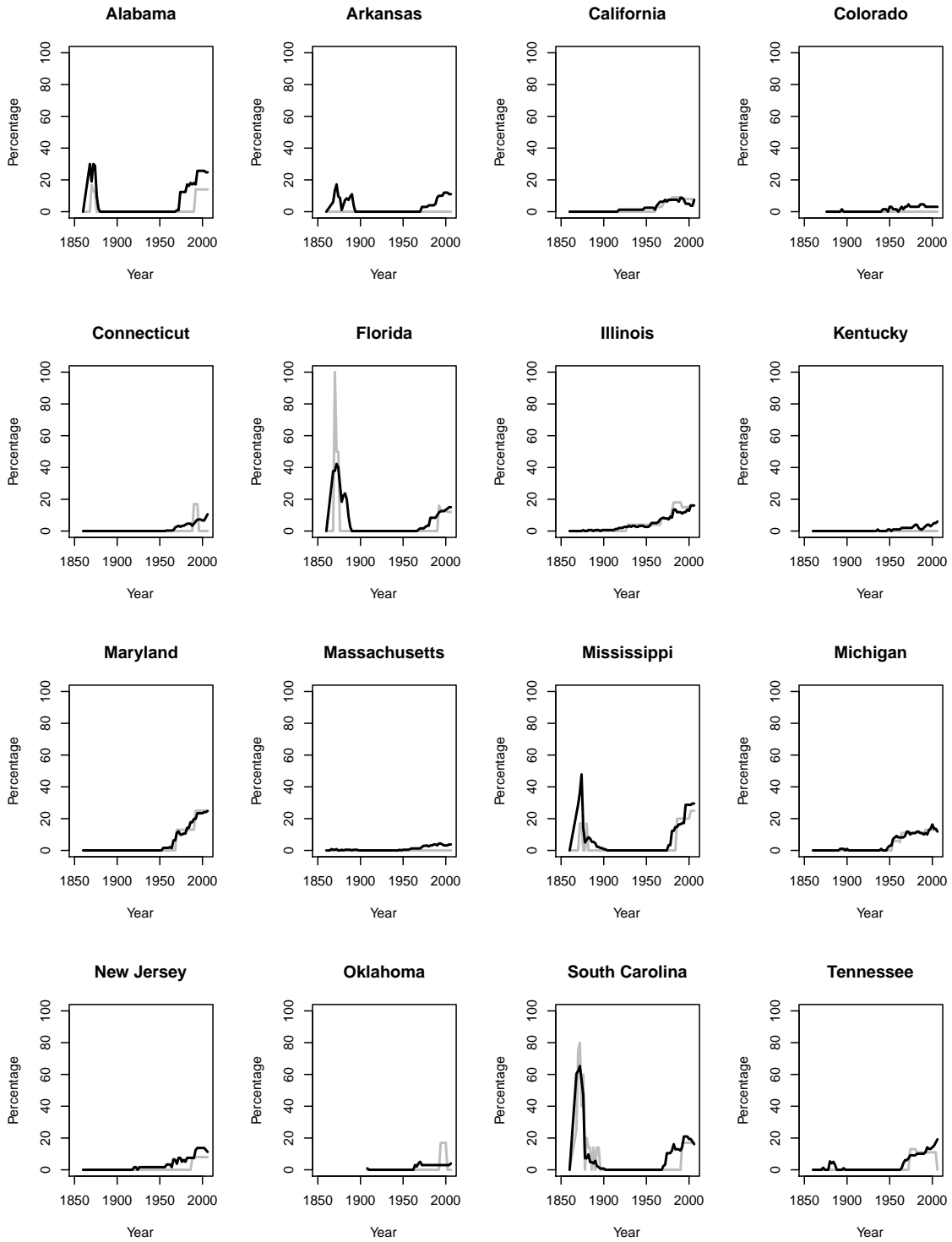


Figure 4: The African American share of major party state [black line] and federal [grey line] representatives (i.e., lower house legislators) for selected states from 1860 through 2006. Source: see text.

that can be seen from this data is that while African Americans were accommodated by the Florida Democratic party as early as 1968 at the state level, it took until 1975 for the Mississippi Democratic party to abandon its dismissive-to-adversarial stance.

The hypothesis is accordingly that the greater the responsiveness of the major existing parties to African Americans, i.e., the more accommodative their strategies vis-à-vis the group, the less likely the entry and success of African American sectarian parties. Table 3 and Figure 4 together provide impressionistic support for this hypothesis. Only one African American party contested a federal election during Reconstruction, and then only at its very end, just as no African American parties have contested federal elections since 1980. In both of these periods, at least one of the major existing parties has played an exceedingly accommodative strategy towards African Americans, in accordance with the hypothesis. Conversely, the period when most African American parties have both appeared and been successful is the years between the two Reconstructions. And it is this period when neither of the two major parties was accommodative towards the group, particularly in the South, again in accordance with the hypothesis.

A formal statistical analysis will shed greater empirical light upon the hypotheses than these informal bivariate assessments, however. Accordingly, I first conduct a logistic regression analysis of African American party entry. It is possible to conduct such an analysis for this within-case study, unlike the Israeli one, because of the United States's federal structure. The unit of analysis is the federal election at the level of the state. The cases are all federal elections in which each state participated in the period from 1860 or statehood, whichever is earliest, to 2006. The dependent variable, African American party entry, is a dummy variable. It is coded one if an African American party contested a federal election (whether for the presidency, the Senate or the House) in a given state and election and zero if one did not. The coding of this variable is based upon Table 3.

In accordance with the hypotheses just developed, there are three independent variables. The first is the African American share of the theoretical electorate for the state and election. To test for the hypothesized non-linearity, the square of this term is also included in the model. The data is as described above. The second is African American politicization. Lacking alternative measures, I operationalize this variable by the election year, given the hypothesis that politicization has increased over time.²⁸ The third and final independent variable is the lag of African American major party state representatives as a proportion of total state representatives, where lagged means the proportion following the previous

major parties' parliamentary wings—equivalent measures to those employed in the previous Israeli case study. When possible, replacements to originally elected members were not counted, but the available data did not always allow for this distinction to be made. The focus is upon the lower chambers of the federal and state legislatures because African American representation in the upper chambers has always, with the exception of Georgia during the Second Reconstruction, either mirrored or lagged behind it. Data for all fifty states can be found in Appendix D, which also contains more information about the data collection process.

²⁸Alternative measures might include a count of key African American community institutions, such as historically black colleges, or the percentage of African Americans attaining more than a high school education. These are promising directions for future research to explore.

election. This data is also as described above. I take the lagged instead of the contemporary proportion because elites' decisions about entry must, by necessity, be made in advance of an election, and the best information they have about the strategies of the existing major parties at the beginning of the current round of competition is what those parties did in the last round.²⁹ Further, accommodation is measured at the state instead of the federal level for two reasons.³⁰ First, accommodation in the federal legislature has always either lagged behind or occurred simultaneously with accommodation in the state legislature, and accommodation in the state legislature *is* accommodation.³¹ Second, because of many states' small numbers of federal representatives, the coarseness of the federal data results in some extreme and unrepresentative values.³²

The results of this analysis are reported in the second column of Table 4. Robust (state-clustered) standard errors appear in parentheses.³³ In this table, all variables have the hypothesized signs. Moreover, all of the terms are statistically significant at conventional or close to conventional levels, with the exception of the square of the African American proportion of the electorate. Below, each variable is discussed in turn.

First, the African American proportion of the theoretical electorate. This variable is estimated to be positively signed and its square is estimated to be negatively signed. Accordingly, as hypothesized, increasing the African American proportion of a state's electorate is predicted to increase the probability of an African American party contesting a federal election in that state, although only up to a point: after the African American share of the

²⁹Using the contemporary proportion instead yields substantively similar and even more significant results. Another alternative is a dummy variable for an African American party having contested a state election within the past decade. Here, too, the sign of the coefficient is as predicted, and even this substantially less precise measure attains close to conventional levels of significance.

³⁰If African American major party federal representatives as a proportion of total federal representatives is employed as an alternative operationalization, however, it yields a substantively similar if less statistically significant coefficient. The reduction in significance is not surprising in light of the coarseness of the federal level data (discussed below in the main text).

³¹An example is that Kentucky has never sent an African American to the federal House, yet both the Kentucky Republican and Democratic parties have sent African Americans to the lower chamber of the Kentucky state legislature—and approximately in proportion to their share of the theoretical electorate. The federal level data accordingly greatly underestimates the accommodation that African Americans have been offered by the two major parties in Kentucky.

³²For example, in the 1870 election, Florida's single representative was an African American Republican, resulting in a federal percentage of one hundred. By way of contrast, only thirty-eight percent of state representatives were African Americans from one of the two major parties. Accordingly, the federal level data clearly overstates the extent of accommodation that the major parties were offering African Americans in Florida in 1870.

³³The use of this robust estimator reflects my belief that correlation from election to election within a state is most likely. However, it is also possible that what happens in one state at a given time influences what happens in another. When alternatively clustering on the election year, all coefficients remain significant at conventional levels, although their significance is reduced. Further, a conditional logistic regression version of the model (i.e., fixed effects logit) yields similar results with one exception: the proportion of the electorate that is African American is no longer statistically significant at conventional levels, although it only narrowly falls short. Finally, correcting for rare events bias in this and the remaining models (King and Zeng 2001; Imai, King and Lau 2007) yields coefficients with similar substantive and statistical significance, although both are sometimes somewhat counterintuitively reduced in Models 2 and 3.

	Model			
	Entry (1)	Success (2)	House En- try (3)	State En- try (4)
Intercept	-32*** (3.8)	-31** (14)	-30** (6.6)	-31** (13)
Proportion Electorate	0.090* (0.050)	0.25** (0.098)	0.14** (0.059)	0.23*** (0.083)
Square of Proportion Electorate	-0.00079 (0.00085)	-0.0030** (0.0014)	-0.0015 (0.00095)	-0.0025** (0.0012)
Lagged Proportion Representatives	-0.097** (0.041)	-0.078* (0.046)	-0.079** (0.032)	-0.16*** (0.060)
Year	0.015*** (0.0019)	0.012* (0.0067)	0.012*** (0.0033)	0.013* (0.0064)
Concurrent Presidential Election			0.37 (0.29)	
<i>N</i>	3348	3346	3348	3478
Log Likelihood	-249	-48	-152	-133

Table 4: Logistic regression analysis of African American party entry (Models 1 and 3) and success (Model 2) in federal elections (House elections only for Model 3), as well as entry in state elections (Model 4). Significance codes are for two-sided tests: 0.01, ***; 0.05, **; 0.10, *.

state's electorate reaches approximately fifty-six percent, further increases in the size of the group are predicted to decrease the probability, *ceteris paribus*. Specifically, for example, for the mean year (1938) and degree of major party accommodation of African Americans (just over two percent of state representatives being both from a major party and African American), increasing a state's theoretical electorate from zero to fifty-six percent African American is predicted to increase the probability of an African American party contesting the state's federal election from less than one percent (0.73%) to eight and a half percent. This is a substantial eleven-fold increase. Increasing the African American share of the theoretical electorate further to fifty-eight percent, the maximum observed, is then predicted to slightly (imperceptibly to two significant digits) decrease the probability of African American party entry. Hence, over the observed range of data, the relationship between the probability of African American party entry and the African American share of the theoretical electorate is both substantively significant and effectively linear. The insignificance of the coefficient on the model's squared electorate term reflects this linearity.³⁴

³⁴As another reflection of this, omitting the square of the African American proportion of the electorate from the model yields a positive and statistically significant coefficient on the remaining first order term. Specifically, a one percentage point increase in the African American share of the theoretical electorate is predicted to multiply the odds of African American party entry by slightly more than one (1.1). To illustrate

Second, African American politicization. The coefficient on this variable is estimated to be both positive and statistically significant. This means that in accordance with the hypothesis, the passing of time, which has increased the politicization of the African American community, is found to have increased the probability of African American party entry. To be precise, holding the other variables at their means,³⁵ the probability of African American party entry is predicted to have risen from one half of one percent in 1870 to slightly more than three percent in 2006—a more than six-fold increase. To further illustrate, consider a state with the optimum African American share of the electorate of fifty-six percent and where existing parties are not playing an accommodatory strategy (i.e., they sent no African Americans to the state legislature in the previous election). In 1870, the predicted probability of an African American party contesting such a state’s federal election is just over four percent, whereas in 2006, the predicted probability is twenty-three percent.

Third and finally, the responsiveness of the existing, major parties. For this variable, the coefficient is estimated to be both negative and statistically significant. Hence, as hypothesized, the more accommodation offered to African Americans by the two major existing parties, the less likely it is that an African American party will emerge to contest a federal election in a state. For example, again holding other variables at their means, when the lagged proportion of a state’s representatives who are both African American and from the two major existing parties rises from zero (the observed minimum, a completely non-accommodatory strategy) to sixty-five (the observed maximum, a very accommodative strategy), the predicted probability of African American party entry declines from slightly more than one and a half percent to effectively zero percent. But a better illustration of the substantive significance of this variable comes from holding other variables at the observed values most favorable to African American party entry.³⁶ In this situation, when the two major existing parties play a completely non-accommodative strategy (i.e., none of their state representatives from the previous election are African American), the probability of African American party entry is twenty-three percent—a non-trivial probability. By way of contrast, playing the observed maximally accommodative strategy (sixty-five percent African American) is predicted to effectively eliminate the probability of African American party entry. Accordingly, the responsiveness of the existing, major parties to African Americans clearly has a substantively large impact upon African American party entry—in fact, the largest impact of the three variables.

But what about the success of African American parties, as opposed solely to their entry? To quantitatively test the hypotheses regarding this dependent variable, I estimate a similar

further, again holding all other variables at their means, increasing the proportion of African Americans in a state’s theoretical electorate from zero (the observed minimum) to fifty-eight (the observed maximum) is predicted to increase the probability of African American party entry from less than one (0.84%) to fifteen percent.

³⁵That is, the probabilities are calculated for a state with an electorate that is 7.1% African American and where 2.3% of state representatives had been both African American and from a major party after the previous election.

³⁶As alluded to in the above discussion, this is when African Americans constitute fifty-six percent of a state’s theoretical electorate and the election year is 2006.

model to the one just described. The only difference is that the dependent variable is now a dummy variable for an African American party being successful, as I have defined it, in a state's federal election. That is, the dependent variable is coded one if an African American party managed to attract close to a majority of the votes of the African American electorate in one of the federal races it contested and zero otherwise.³⁷ These codings are based upon Table 3.

The third column of Table 4 presents the results for this model. Given the rarity of African American party success, too much should not be made of these results.³⁸ Yet they provide at least suggestive support for the hypothesis that the same factors that shape sectarian party entry also shape sectarian party success. Specifically, the table shows that all variables again have the hypothesized signs. Moreover, they have either equal or greater significance, both statistically and substantively, as in the model of African American party entry. The one difference is that the square of the African American proportion of the electorate is now statistically significant at conventional levels. Accordingly, as hypothesized, the same three factors of the African American share of the theoretical electorate, African American politicization and existing parties' accommodation of African Americans appear to shape the success of African American sectarian political parties.

Last and not least, I test for the coattails of presidential elections, the one way in which I hypothesized that the regime type might affect the likelihood of African American sectarian party entry and success. To do so, I re-estimate the model of African American party entry described above with two changes. First, I include a dummy variable for presidential election years as an additional covariate. Second, the dependent variable of entry is re-defined to only include African American parties that contested elections for the lower legislative chamber (i.e., the House): including entry in presidential but not legislative elections would, by definition, bias the results towards finding a coattails effect.

The results of this model are presented in the fourth column of Table 4. The estimated coefficients on the original variables all have the hypothesized signs as before, and they attain both similar magnitudes and levels of statistical significance. My conclusions about these variables are accordingly not sensitive to whether entry encompasses all federal races or simply races for the lower legislative chamber, the latter being the approach taken elsewhere in this study. Turning to the presidential coattails variable, the table shows that contrary to the hypothesis, a presidential election being held concurrently with a federal legislative election does not decrease the probability of African American sectarian party entry—rather, it increases it. However, this effect is not statistically significant.

³⁷Specifically, an African American party is deemed successful if it managed to attract more than forty percent of the votes of the electoral district's African American electorate. However, for the reasons discussed in footnote 11, the Peace and Freedom party is not classified as successful except in California in 1968. Note that two cases are listwise deleted due to missing data on the success of African American parties: 1920 Virginia and 1946 South Carolina. While data is also missing on the success of African American parties in House elections in 1920 Texas and 1932 Mississippi, I base my coding of success for these states and years on the parties' performances in the presidential race, for which I do have data.

³⁸There are only eight cases of success so defined, whereas there are fifty cases of entry. Nevertheless, see footnote 33 for the basic insensitivity of the results to rare events bias. Note that because of the few cases of African American party success, I do not estimate a conditional logistic version of this model.

3.2 How Does the Electoral System Matter? Or Putting the Case of the United States in Comparative Perspective

This brings me to the issue of how, if at all, the electoral system matters, given that it cannot explain why African American sectarian parties have contested national elections in the United States in some states and years but not others. A casual reading of the literature suggests that restrictive electoral systems, like those employed for both the United States's legislature and presidency, should reduce the likelihood that new latent social groups will be successfully particized. In other words, conventional wisdom holds that restrictive electoral systems constrain the effect of social heterogeneity upon party system fragmentation. Yet the appearance and success of African American sectarian parties seems to provide empirical evidence against this hypothesis. We accordingly need to think carefully about how restrictive electoral systems actually exert their effect.

In Chapter 2, I argued for a more nuanced hypothesis: that restrictive electoral systems only constrain the effect of social heterogeneity when *new social groups are small in the electoral districts*. In this light, we should *not* expect the United States's majoritarian electoral system to serve as a constraint on African Americans' successful particization in all federal elections. It is true that African Americans have always been a small minority of the national electorate, the ultimate electoral district for the presidency. Yet the uneven geographic distribution of African Americans from state and to state and within states has meant that they have been a large group in some legislative electoral districts. As I demonstrated earlier, African Americans have at times been at least a plurality of the theoretical electorates of some states, which serve as the electoral districts for the Senate. The same is true of some House districts. For example, African Americans constituted either a majority or close to a majority of the theoretical electorate in seventeen percent of House districts in 1870 and eleven percent of House districts in 2006.³⁹ This means that African Americans have had the capacity to send their sectarian parties to the House and Senate. Hence, the United States's restrictive electoral system does not preclude the equilibrium success of African American sectarian parties in some legislative races, contrary to the conventional wisdom.

Accordingly, the electoral system in combination with group size can explain the puzzle of why African American sectarian parties have been more likely to successfully contest some federal political offices than others. Specifically, these parties should more frequently contest and enjoy success in elections for the federal legislature than for the presidency, given African Americans' shares of the respective theoretical electorates. And that is what Table 3 empirically demonstrates. If the problematic Peace and Freedom Party is excluded, legislative races are indeed strongly favored for contestation: fifty percent of African American sectarian party appearances have been to solely contest a Congressional race; thirty-five percent to solely contest the presidency; and fifteen percent to contest both. Regarding success, all

³⁹By close to a majority, I mean more than thirty and less than fifty percent. See Appendix C for this data. The 1870 election for the 42nd Congress was the first federal election in which African Americans were enfranchised in all states, and the 2006 election for the 110th Congress is the most recent federal election included in this study.

instances of success have come in Congressional races, save one: the Florida Black and Tans were successful in both their Congressional and presidential runs in 1920.

Yet the electoral system cannot explain the arguably more important puzzle of why African Americans have failed to be successfully partipated in equilibrium at the Congressional level. So why have African Americans only sporadically and usually unsuccessfully contested Congressional elections? The answer, I believe, lies in another political institution: the political regime. As I also argued in Chapter 2, for a new social group's sectarian party to experience success at the ballot box in equilibrium, the group must also be large enough for its party to win enough seats in the legislature to play a governing role. While policy-making authority is not overly centralized in the United States, it is centralized enough that there is still an incentive to be the largest party in each chamber of the national legislature. Yet this is something that an African American sectarian party could never be, given demographic realities. Moreover, with one of the two major parties (first the Democrats and later the Republicans) often playing a dismissive-to-adversarial strategy towards African Americans, both African American political elites and ordinary voters have instead had an incentive to strategically support the more accommodatory of the two major existing parties, even if they sincerely preferred to support a party of their own.

A different level of analysis, state elections, may allow us to further explore the impact of the size of a group relative to a polity's entire electorate. While state legislatures in the United States exercise less policy-making authority than the federal legislature does, they still do exercise policy-making authority. Further, their internal legislative structures are borrowed from the federal legislature.⁴⁰ There is consequently an incentive to be the largest party in both chambers of a state's legislature, just as there is in the federal legislature. But in contrast to the situation at the federal level, African Americans have constituted a significant share (sometimes even a majority) of some states' electorates, as discussed above. It is therefore possible that an African American party could become the largest party in a one or both of a state's legislative chambers, although this possibility was greater in the past than it is today. Similarly, state governorships, the state level equivalent of the presidency, are valuable prizes that African Americans have had a shot at controlling. Accordingly, African American sectarian parties should be more likely to both enter and enjoy success at the state than at the federal level.

To empirically test this hypothesis, I used a dummy variable for African American sectarian party entry in a state election as the dependent variable in a version of the federal elections logit model presented in the second column of Table 4.⁴¹ This state elections model is shown in the fifth column of this table. In accordance with the hypothesis, all of the coefficients in this model save that on the year are of larger substantive magnitude and of greater statistical significance than those in the federal model. Even more telling, while

⁴⁰The one exception is Nebraska, which has had a unicameral legislature since 1936.

⁴¹I identified all of the state elections that African American parties have contested by combing through a variety of secondary sources such as Walton (1972, 1985). Contestation could be for either the governorship or either chamber of the state legislature. I do not estimate a model of state level African American sectarian party success due to the difficulty of obtaining the relevant historical data (e.g., complete state election returns), which makes it impossible to quantify success using my definition of it.

the maximum predicted probability of African American party entry at the federal level is twenty-three percent, at the state level, it is a much greater thirty-eight percent. Anecdotal evidence also supports the hypothesis with respect to success. For example, as was noted earlier, African American parties have on a few occasions managed to place their candidates in state legislatures, something that they have never managed to do at the federal level. Hence, as hypothesized, African American sectarian parties have been more likely to both enter state elections and to be successful in them.

Yet even at the state level, African American sectarian parties have not been an equilibrium phenomenon. The best explanation for this state of affairs is the relatively short time period in which African Americans commanded a plurality to a majority of some states' theoretical electorates. The disappearance of their numerical advantage has largely although not exclusively been a consequence of their dispersion throughout the country in the Great Migration, making this seminal event a double-edged sword. Other factors can contribute to the explanation, however, including the accommodative strategy played by at least one of the two existing parties for significant periods of time (such as since the 1970s); the dominance of these major parties; and the impact of African Americans' lower socioeconomic status upon their capacity for collective action.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I asked how changes in the social heterogeneity of the United States resulting from the enfranchisement and disenfranchisement of African Americans have shaped party system fragmentation in American elections. More specifically, in keeping with the book's focus, I tackled the question of why African American sectarian political parties have emerged to contest federal elections, albeit with varying degrees of success, in some states and election years but not in others.

I argued that four factors—two group-specific and two systemic—should explain this within-case variation. These factors are the size of the group; the group's politicization; the strategy played by existing, catch-all parties towards the group; and the presidential system of government, i.e., the presidential coattails. I also argued that all of other explanatory factors I identified in Chapter 2, from the restrictiveness of the electoral system to the ethnic nature of the group, could not contribute to the explanation because these factors were effectively held constant by the within-case, quasi-experimental research design. This chapter accordingly supplements the prior cross-national quantitative analyses and triangulates the Israeli case study. Using a logistic regression analysis of both African American party entry and success in a state's federal elections from 1860 through 2006, empirical support was found for three of the four hypotheses. Each is discussed in turn below.

First, empirical support was found for the hypothesis that larger new social groups in the electoral districts are more likely to be successfully particized than smaller groups. As long as African Americans did not constitute more than a comfortable majority of a state's theoretical electorate, I found that the greater the African American share of a state's electorate, the more likely it was that an African American party would contest and be successful in a

federal election there, *ceteris paribus*. Hence, this is an explanation for why African American sectarian parties have overwhelmingly emerged and been successful in Southern states: African Americans have often constituted at least a plurality of these state's electorates, even though their presence in this region has declined over time. However, only limited support was found for the hypothesis that larger than minimal winning groups in the electoral districts will not be successfully particized. Once African Americans constituted more than a comfortable majority of a state's electorate, the probability of African American party entry and success were both found to decrease. Yet this decrease was found to be substantively small as well as statistically insignificant, contrary to the hypothesis. Because African Americans have at most constituted just shy of sixty percent of a state's theoretical electorate, a better test would come from a group that is observed to constitute at least a super-majority of the electorate in some electoral districts. This suggests that future research might fruitfully either use a different level of analysis (such as the local level) for the case of African Americans or study a different new social group entirely.

Second, contrary to the hypothesis about the presidential coattails effect, holding presidential elections concurrently with legislative elections was found to increase the probability of the successful particization of African Americans, although the effect was not statistically significant. This finding might reflect the unique orientation of many African American political parties towards presidential elections because of the federal patronage at stake. The Black and Tans, Republican party factions-cum-sectarian political parties, are a case in point: disenfranchised in Southern states by the early twentieth century, Southern African Americans' only effective means of political participation during the first few decades of that century was to trade their votes for the spoils of office during Republican presidential nominating conventions, a bizarre situation made possible by the United States's federal structure. In light of the substantial evidence the literature has assembled that points towards the existence of presidential coattails, African American sectarian parties seem best viewed as an exceptional case rather than the rule.

Third, I found empirical support for the hypothesis that the politicization of a new social group increases the likelihood of its successful particization. Over time, African Americans' organizational capacity for collective action has increased. And controlling for other factors, African American parties were more likely to both appear and be successful with the passing of time. This can help to explain why fewer numbers of African American parties successfully emerged during Reconstruction, immediately on the heels of African Americans' emancipation from slavery, than in the civil rights era, when African Americans had had 100 years to accumulate economic, educational and institutional resources.

Last but not least, empirical support was also found for the hypothesis that the strategy existing parties play towards a new social group shapes the likelihood of the group's successful particization. When at least one of the two major existing parties played an accommodatory strategy towards African Americans, African American sectarian political parties were unlikely to form, and even less likely to be successful. Specifically, the accommodative strategy played by the Republican party during Reconstruction and in its immediate aftermath helps to explain the failure of African Americans to pursue sectarian representation during this

period—despite their majority or near-majority status in many Southern states. By way of contrast, the door to African American sectarian party entry was left open for the first half of the twentieth century by both the Democratic and Republican parties choosing to play effectively non-accommodative strategies, even though African Americans were fleeing the South in the Great Migration. Later, the specific timing of the Democratic party's post-war accommodatory *volte face* with respect to African Americans explains why African American sectarian parties died out when they did by the 1980s.

In this chapter, I also took a closer look at the role played by the United States's restrictive electoral system. I argued that given demographic realities, this factor can explain why African American sectarian parties have more frequently contested and been successful in elections for some political offices (e.g., the House) than others (e.g., the presidency). However, it *cannot* explain the overall failure of African Americans to be successfully partitized in equilibrium in the United States. African Americans have constituted a plurality to a majority of many federal legislative electoral districts, and hence could have sent African American sectarian parties to Washington if they had chosen to do so. Why did they not choose to do so? I argued that the best explanation is the combination of the minority status of African Americans in the national electorate and policy-making authority being reasonably centralized in the United States. Under these circumstances, neither strategically minded elites nor strategically minded voters would support an African American sectarian party in equilibrium. They might nevertheless have an incentive to support one in the short run—an issue that I will explore in the next and final chapter.

Hence, in this chapter, I have again both argued and provided evidence that understanding how social heterogeneity shapes the fragmentation of the party system in democracies requires us to look at factors besides the electoral system. New social groups may successfully form their own sectarian parties even when the electoral system is restrictive. They may also fail to do so for reasons unrelated to the electoral system. Particularly, the size of a new social group in the polity as a whole, not just in the electoral districts, must be considered. All in all, the case of African Americans in the United States illustrates how misleading a focus on the electoral system alone can be: the electoral system lets us explain neither the short term success of African American sectarian parties nor their equilibrium failure.