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One of the axioms of empirical political science is that electoral participation is more prevalent among those who are better off and more educated. Consequent to this axiom is the belief that those who participate more also gain more benefits from the system. Hence it is hardly a surprise when Rosenstone and Hansen (1993, 10) argue that people participate in politics when the benefits of participating outweigh the costs. Under this assumption, we would expect that the overrepresentation of African Americans in the lower socioeconomic stratum would be accompanied by low levels of political participation. The literature on electoral behavior, however, has revealed that when socioeconomic factors and group consciousness are controlled for, poor African Americans tend to participate in politics at levels higher than those of their white counterparts (Shingles 1981; Verba and Nie 1972).

A second factor that helps us to determine what participation means is public opinion data—that is, aggregate information that citizens provide about their reasons for voting for or supporting political candidates. In democratic society there is little else as important

as expressions about citizen preferences. A number of important as-
sumptions inspire our confidence in the importance of public opin-
ion data for clarifying participation. Among these are that informa-
tion is important to good citizenship; amid other entities, organized
political groups and leaders provide much of that information; and
active citizens consume available information and use it to make ra-
tional decisions about their political preferences. Since in U.S. racial-
ized history African Americans have been indelibly marked and have
variously experienced widespread exclusion or status ambivalence,
the group has consistently striven to alter those conditions. In the
singularity of the group's political interest in securing universal in-
clusion, African American political opinion and consequent political
preferences have been easy to characterize. The group's political
opinion is by and large liberal and social-change oriented—express-
ing **a** preference for political leaders who promise to work toward al-
tering conditions of racial exclusion and its concomitant barriers to
socioeconomic advancement.

This chapter traces the evolution of African American electoral par-
ticipation and characterizes the political behavior that it has generated
for this racialized community. First, the chapter examines this com-
munity's behavior relative to the various political parties, the standard
vehicles through which electoral participation is executed. It then ex-
amines the voting behavior of African Americans. This is followed by
case studies examining Black third-party efforts, political behavior dur-
ing Reconstruction, and Jesse Jackson's bid for the presidency.

Some Determinants of Political Behavior

Political Socialization

People develop opinions about political issues through a process
called political socialization. Sources of such information include the
church, family, school, peer groups, and protest demonstrations
(Walton, Jones, and Ford 1997). These sources are referred to as
agents of political socialization. Among African Americans, the
church has been one of the most important such agents. Cone argues
that the "black church was born in protest" (Cone 1997, 94). Even
during the pre–Civil War period, churches encouraged liberation
(Childs 1980). Katherine Tate (1991), in a study of Black participation
in the 1984 and 1988 presidential elections, finds that African Amer-

icans who belonged to political churches were more likely to partici-pate in politics. Aldon Morris reports that mass church involvement in the civil rights movement was inevitable, because the ministers of the movement were trained by those who "stressed human dignity" (Morris 1984, 8). Additionally, he and his colleagues note that "the movement itself was a tool of political socialization."

Walton and Smith describe nontraditional agents of political so-cialization, such as "cultural events and projects." The authors refer to a content analysis of African American popular music conducted by Robert Walker (1976), who found that there was an increase in "message songs" starting in the late 1950s. Walker also found that the apex of such "message music" occurred at the same time that the civil rights movement reached its peak, between 1966 and 1969 (Wal-ton and Smith 2000, 54).

Similarly Walton and Smith (2000) argue that a significant amount of socialization has occurred through the presence of African Ameri-can candidates standing for electoral office since 1960. A particularly important socializing effect has occurred when Blacks have sought the seemingly improbable prize of the American presidency. They then discuss how Representative Shirley Chisholm set this tone when she became the first African American within the two-party structure to pursue the presidency in 1972. The most successful socializing ef-fect generated by a candidate occurred with Jesse Jackson's bid for the presidency in 1984 and 1988. Also notable is Alan Keyes's 1996 run as the first African American in the Republican Party presidential pri-mary, although he reached fewer African Americans voters than Jack-son had.

Socioeconomic Factors and Participation

In addition to the socialization process, socioeconomic factors play a major role in political participation among African Americans. Edu-cation is a major contributing variable, for example. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980, 18) note that because "schooling increases one's capacity for understanding and working with complex, abstract, and intangible subjects, that is, subjects like politics," education increases the likelihood that one will vote. Similarly, income has been found to have an impact on participation. Tate (1993) notes that poor people probably have less time and energy for the "nonessentials" in life, in-cluding political participation. Despite this, the data indicate that

poor Blacks who are conscious of their economic subjugation are more likely to participate in politics, compared with whites.

Political Participation and Croup Consciousness

Because African Americans have most often been treated as a racialized group in the society, some political scientists have reasoned that such a group distinction might also affect political participation. Verba and Nie (1972) were among the first to analyze political participation as it relates to group consciousness. In their explanation of African Americans, the authors find that those who are conscious of being members of an oppressed group are most likely to participate in campaigns and cooperative activities. Shingles (1981) confirmed this correlation and also found that when socioeconomic variables are controlled for, African Americans participate at higher levels than members of other groups. This finding led him to extend the group consciousness thesis by including an analysis of the African American poor. He found "black consciousness" to be a powerful explanatory tool for the participation of the African American poor. For Shingles, poor African Americans who are conscious of group oppression are more inclined to have a cynical perception of government. That cynicism, however, is converted into various types of political efficacy, or empowerment. This "counter" empowerment in turn induces greater political participation.

The findings of Shingles and others are inconsistent with the conventional wisdom about general determinants of political participation. However, the data are persuasive and suggest that there is something unique about political participation among Blacks as compared with other racial groups. Michael Dawson offers a solution to this conundrum. He argues that African Americans believe they have a "linked fate." That is, "a significant number of African Americans believe that what happens to the group as a whole affects their own lives" (Dawson 1994, 76). This group linkage is directly related to the historical struggles of African Americans in the United States. The struggles have played out in such a way that members of the group perceive that neither their life chances nor their ability to influence the allocation of political goods is determined by their individual standing. Hence, their history of economic subjugation and political disfranchisement yields a sense of common fate. The singularity of this expression of linked fate trumps even socioeconomic character-

istics that one might expect would predict variations in behavior (Dawson 1994; Tate 1993).

African American Public Opinion and Partisan Identification

A Liberal Bias in Black Opinion

This notion of linked fate also serves as the basis for the fairly consistent strivings for inclusion and socioeconomic development in African American public opinion. Following Dawson's reasoning, we should expect that African American opinion is likely to deviate considerably from that of whites. And that is the case—African Americans and whites define their political interests in divergent ways and perceive different relationships to public authorities and institutions.

Table 4.1 compares opinion among Blacks and whites on various issues. A variety of issues have been selected, some of which relate to the key concern of Blacks, namely, racial inclusion. Others relate to issues that may be thought of as reflecting a liberal-conservative continuum. Between 1986 and 1992 the greatest differences between the two races appeared on the issue that was of most concern to Blacks— racial policy. Blacks, as one of the groups most vulnerable to downward shifts in the economy, were almost twice as likely as whites to favor a government guarantee of employment opportunity. There was an even greater divergence on a role for government in guaranteeing school desegregation (almost 83 percent of Blacks, compared with about 36 percent of whites). The differences grew wider and wider as the issue of preferential treatment for underrepresentation was introduced. And as the issues became further removed from a direct racial public policy, the gap between the races lessened but remained significant on most measures.

However, opinions diverge considerably between the races when information about alienation from public institutions and feelings of efficacy are taken into account. The different socialization experiences of Blacks vis-a-vis public authorities produce distinct opinions. They are quite skeptical of the government and believe that they have far less ability to influence what it does. This cast of opinion forms a good deal of the basis for the behaviors we observe among African American participants in political affairs.

TABLE 4.1   Public Opinion among Blacks and Whites, 1986–1992 (Percent)

	Whites	*Blacks*
Race Policy		
Government should ensure equal employment opportunity	46.2	89.8
Government should see to school desegregation	35.6	82.9
Increase spending on programs that assist Blacks	17.6	74.6
Government should make special efforts to help Blacks	11.9	39.9
Preferential hiring	15.4	67.7
College quotas	29.7	79.7
Implicit Racial Issues		
Increase support for food stamps	18.0	50.9
Sanctions against South Africa	26.5	45.8
More assistance for welfare	14.7	32.3
Solve underlying problems that give rise to urban unrest	48.3	71.7
Oppose capital punishment	14.4	36.9
Social Spending		
Expand government services	41.5	72.0
Increase Social Security	60.2	82.0
Federal support for education	61.0	81.0
Increase support for Medicare	83.2	93.9
Government assistance to the poor	50.5	81.0
Alienation from Government		
People like me have no say	13.3	28.3
Public officials don't care	15.3	29.0
Distrust government	56.1	74.4
Government run by big interests	66.0	73.3

SOURCE: Adapted from Kinder and Sanders 1996, 30. Reprinted with permission from the University of Chicago Press.

African American Partisan Identification

The sources of participation and the opinions of African Americans translate into certain general characteristics in partisan identification. Since the United States has one of the strongest two-party political systems in the world, political scientists have fairly easily determined how most citizens identify themselves politically—most of the time the population is fairly evenly divided between identifiers with the Democratic and Republican parties. Even when the division is not fairly even, rarely does one party or the other enjoy a long-

TABLE 4.2   **Partisan Identification, by Race, 1952–1996 (Percent)**

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Blacks	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*
1952	62	56	17	35
1956	59	56	22	34
1960	58	55	22	34
1964	82	58	08	32
1968	92	53	03	37
1972	75	49	11	36
1976	84	47	05	37
1980	81	49	08	37
1984	77	44	07	44
1988	81	40	11	46
1992	78	45	08	42
1996	81	48	09	44

SOURCE: **Adapted from Barker et al. 1999, 216. Reprinted with permission from Prentice-Hall.**

term monopoly of partisan supporters in the various local, state, and federal election contests. Between 1952 and 1996, for example, in only three elections (1952, 1956, and 1964) did the white voting partisans give more than 55 percent of their support to one party. African Americans, however, deviate from that general pattern. They tend to identify with one party at a time. Historically, they have given well over 60 percent of their support to just one party for long periods. Table 4.2 compares the two racial groups' party identification between 1952 and 1996. During this 54-year period, selected African Americans identified strongly with the Democratic Party. But that was not always the case. The analysis below shows that this pattern characterized African American partisan identification with the Republican Party at an earlier point in history.

Racially Polarized Voting: An Outcome of Racial Exclusion and In-Group Processes

The racial segmentation of African Americans in public life has often produced racial bloc voting. This is a situation in which large numbers of a racial or ethnic group vote for a particular candidate, or in

which such a group uses its separate social base to form coalitions with other groups. Much objective evidence shows that Black partisan identification and voting occurs in a bloc. But it is equally true that the presence of Black candidates in elections often produces bloc voting on the part of whites against those candidates (Reeves 1997). Both outcomes seem to be consistent with the different realities that the races perceive in public life.

Racially polarized voting, on the other hand, occurs when at least two racial groups vote as a bloc for a set of different candidates. One can think of polarization as occurring when, given a head-to-head contest featuring an African American and a white candidate, the whites vote for other whites and the African Americans vote for other African Americans. In this scenario, Blacks gain most when they control more than a majority of the votes, a condition that obtains for most of the electoral seats held by them. But for Blacks there is a distinct other side to bloc voting. They have often used their votes in a bloc to advance their agenda of racial inclusion. They do this by bundling their votes for the party that seems most amenable to their agenda, hoping to serve as a counterweight in the two-way contest. The group is especially advantaged in this scenario when the competition is especially keen between the two parties. This analysis will show how the latter has been a feature of African American behavior, especially in national contests (Walters 1988).

There are other aspects to racialized voting that lead to especially deleterious effects in the electoral process. Polarized voting can become problematic when it leads to vote dilution. Davidson (1984) states that vote dilution occurs when one group voting as a cohesive bloc, either singly or when combined into districts via election laws, diminishes the opportunity of another group to elect the candidate of their choice. Lani Guinier (1994) invokes James Madison's warning about this phenomenon at the founding of the republic: "if a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure." According to Madison, "the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, of few, or many," is defined as tyranny. Guinier goes on to show that such a "tyranny of the majority" characterizes the status of African Americans in the political process, making them permanent losers in the majority-rule system (Guinier 1994, *3–20).*

A classic case of racially polarized voting and probably one of the most extreme cases occurred with Jesse Jackson's candidacies in the 1984 and 1988 Democratic primaries. According to the CBS News

and the New York *Times* exit polls, in 1984 Jesse Jackson received 77 percent of the African American vote and only 5 percent of the white vote. In 1998 he received 93 percent of the African American vote and roughly 13 percent of the white vote (Plissner and Mitofsky 1988). In this case, even when Jackson sought to portray himself as a candidate with an all-inclusive platform of broad appeal—his "Rainbow Coalition" of diverse interests—he was unable to attract support from the substantial number of whites whose "interests" seemed consistent with the "rainbow." Moreover, he continued to appeal to all sectors of African Americans, even when the Rainbow platform appeared to disadvantage them.

The racially polarizing effect often occurs in two-party contests, even when there is no Black candidate. Walton and Smith (2000) have called this the "one-party" dominant effect among Blacks, who have historically cast the overwhelming majority of their votes for one or the other of the major two parties. During the Reconstruction era, they cast their votes overwhelmingly for the Republican Party, which had been Lincoln's party. Since the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, Blacks have tended toward the Democratic Party. The 2000 election is an illustration. In one of the most controversial elections since the 1876 Hayes-Tilden contest, the polarization of the African American vote was visible. Hardly anywhere was the polarization more visible than in the state on which the outcome of the contest hinged—Florida. An aggregate-level analysis (using ecological regression) of registration data and Florida election returns, by county, provides strong evidence of racially polarized voting. These results show that African Americans overwhelmingly supported Al Gore, with 96 percent of their vote, compared with only 4 percent who supported Bush. Approximately 56 percent of whites, on the other hand, supported George Bush, while roughly 44 percent supported Gore.

Political Behavior in
the Colonial and Slavery Periods

To be sure, African Americans have been disfranchised from the political process for most of their time in America. However, since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 they have made considerable advances. In the words of the southern Baptist preacher, "We ain't where we want to be, we ain't where we ought to be, but thank

God we ain't where we was!" Election rates of African Americans still lag far behind their percentage of the population. African Americans constitute roughly 12 percent of the population but account for only 7 percent of the members of Congress (Davidson and Oleszek 2002, 127). Nevertheless, the past several decades have seen minority enfranchisement translated into the election of significant numbers of minority representatives at the local, state, and national levels. An overview of the evolution of African American political participation is provided below.

Petitions and Protests

African American political behavior began in colonial America, when the population was small, and before there were clear organized political factions. Political expression came from free Blacks located mostly in the New England states, where slavery was less prevalent. In some of these states a small number of Blacks were granted the franchise well before the Civil War. For example, in 1783 a Massachusetts court ruled that Blacks who paid taxes were entitled to the franchise (Aptheker 1951). By 1840 African Americans were granted the right to vote in only a few northeastern states—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts; they could also vote in Rhode Island and New York, but with property qualifications (Wesley 1944). In the state of New York, for example, Blacks were granted suffrage if they owned "at least two-hundred fifty dollars' worth of property" (Walton 1972b, 21).

In the early history of the fledgling colonies, it is not easy to identify political behavior in the classical sense among African Americans, given their small numbers. What we do know is that those who had the franchise sought to exercise it in their perceived interest and that they did so by aligning with other organized interests insofar as these existed. Others who were free but disfranchised also sought to act on the system to attain or restore the right of formal participation. But what is perhaps most remarkable is that the overwhelming tenor of early African American political behavior was defined by the fact that the majority of Blacks were in slavery. That meant that African American political expression was overwhelmingly directed toward the attainment of universal freedom. Hence what was seen in the way of political behavior, even in this early period, was often in the form of protest.

Both slaves and free persons, with or without franchise, first expressed themselves in the form of petitions protesting slavery and demanding racial freedom. Later, those who were free or franchised associated themselves with the inchoate faction that seemed most agreeable to the inclusion of African Americans in the political community. No slave's voice matched that of the poet Phillis Wheatley, who desired liberty despite apparent good treatment by the Boston family that owned her. In 1773 she addressed a poem to the king's secretary of state in the colonies expressing a desire that no one should experience tyranny, not even she, a slave (Fishel and Quarles 1967, 37):

> Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
> Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
> Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
> By feelings heart best understood,
> I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
> Was snatch'd from Afric's happy seat
> What pangs excruciating must molest,
> What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?

Many other slaves who petitioned for freedom joined Wheatley's pliant call. Among them was a group in Boston in 1773 that petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for freedom using the rhetoric of the colonists who declared their own intent to fight against the tyranny (which the petitioners dubbed the equivalent of slavery) of England. The petition by the Blacks was issued on behalf of "our fellow slaves in this province, and by order of their Committee" (Fishel and Quarles 1967, 45). (The entire text of this petition is reprinted in chapter 2.)

Early Federalist Partisan Leanings

Meanwhile, Blacks who had the franchise and voted sought out organized groups and allies that were opposed to slavery. Such groups varied from state to state, but those with whom Blacks were aligned were located in the Northeast and tended to be members of the business classes—merchants and such whose incomes were not derived from a plantation economy. They were the forerunners of the Republican Party with which Blacks aligned after emancipation. In the

early days of partisan factions in the state of New York, for example, free voting Blacks aligned with the Federalists, largely a group of wealthy men who were thought to be opposed to slavery. That group would go through several different names before settling on the National Republicans (distinguished from the Jeffersonian Republicans, who favored maintenance of slavery).

Elsewhere in the Northeast were similar factions, and Blacks gravitated to those that took a position favoring the abolition of slavery. But this was not the only issue that animated Blacks in the colonial period. They were also interested specifically in issues related to the franchise. Recall that the franchise was limited not only for Blacks but also for Americans in general who did not own substantial property. Thus the expansion of the franchise was a major issue on which most of the emerging partisan groups took a position. Blacks tended to associate themselves with those who supported the expansion of the vote. Their reasoning was simple—they could gain additional rights only by supporting the broadening of the electorate for all. To this end, Hanes Walton shows that Blacks supported the Whigs in New Jersey, "anti-masonry, Whigs, and liberals" in Pennsylvania, and the lingering remnants of the Federalists in New York and New England (Walton 1972b, 26–27).

Black Third-Party Efforts: A Case Study

As we have seen, long before African Americans gained the franchise, they sought to influence the fortunes of the race through political action. Since the barriers of slavery militated against routine participation, Blacks often sought alternative routes. One of these was action through a third political party. They sought third-party leverage both through coalitions with whites who organized outside the major parties and through independent Black political parties. The linkages with others remained available at first, because before the Civil War some interests continued to challenge the emerging Democratic and Republican dominance. Sometimes these third parties were especially appealing because they opposed slavery. Such an option was especially attractive if neither of the emerging two dominant parties addressed the race-inclusion agenda. Just as often, independent Black political parties were utilized for the same purpose—when Blacks felt locked out of the routine vehicles for political expression, they sometimes developed their own race-exclusive alternatives. In all cases, the efforts were designed as leverage in a political environment

where there were often outright barriers to full community member-
ship, or societal ambivalence about the exercise of this membership.
The third-party option formed an important and enduring race in-
clusion strategy because of its potential to disrupt or exact benefits
from the two major parties. This strategy has been most visible and
evident in presidential politics (Walters 1988), but, as shown below,
it has also had a significant influence on local politics when other av-
enues were closed.

One of the early efforts of Blacks to choose a third party came in
1840, when some among them were first attracted to the Liberty
Party, an organization that was almost exclusively dedicated to the
abolition of slavery (Walton 1972b, 81). They were on one side of a
split antislavery movement that sought to use the churches for re-
lentless efforts to abolish slavery. The party, like several other anti-
slavery organizations, had little success at the national level. How-
ever, the Liberty Party actually had several national conventions and
fielded a presidential candidate in the 1840 and 1844 elections
(Franklin and Moss 1994, 176). Blacks participated as delegates and
were generally supportive of this essentially antislavery party.

Many Blacks sought to form their own parties during the aboli-
tionist campaign and after the Hayes Compromise of 1876. The first
major effort that referred to itself as a movement rather than as a
party occurred in the 1840s—the Negro Convention Movement (see
chapter 2). This represented the first effort to organize Blacks on a na-
tional scale. The movement conducted conventions, where state-
ments of purpose and the equivalent of racial "platforms" were is-
sued. They constituted virtually all of the important African
American spokesmen of the time, whose energies were dedicated to
putting a racial agenda before the public. Because of the difficulties of
organization even for free Blacks during the period of continuing
slavery, the national project proved very difficult to advance. There-
fore, the movement dispersed a good deal of power and action to
state-based units of the parent body. Inevitably this meant a weaken-
ing of the national program, because varying conditions in the states
hindered concerted action. In the face of the harsh realities of plan-
tation enslavement for most Blacks and because of discrimination
and ambivalence elsewhere, this early effort fell into disuse as the
Civil War approached and the nation was plunged into war.

With both the Republican and Democratic parties moving toward
all-white membership, African Americans had no choice but to seek
alternative parties. In 1890, national organizations such as the Na-
tional Afro-American League (NAAL), later reorganized as the Na-

tional Afro-American Council, encouraged Blacks to participate in third-party activities. Although neither of these organizations was technically a political party in the sense of office seeking, they sometimes mimicked one. For example, the NAAL organized several national conventions and issued "platforms." However, like so many Black organizations, it was focused first and foremost on the fundamental acquisition and protection of equal rights, and it was fairly decentralized in organization. The league had an interest in influencing politicians, to be sure, but possession of rights was a prior condition (Walton 1972a, 49). These efforts appeared to be futile, however, as racially polarized voting defeated Black third-party candidates at every turn. For example, the local Ohio state-organized Negro Protective Party unsuccessfully ran a candidate for governor in the 1897 election (Walton 1972a, 51). The party was unable to win the office or to have much influence on the platforms of other major contenders.

Political Participation during Reconstruction

The end of the Civil War brought about a series of laws, acts, and executive orders aimed at bridging the equality gap between whites and former slaves. After passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, African American men were granted the right to vote for a brief period during Reconstruction. The greatest impact was felt in the South, where over 90 percent of the Black population resided. Between 1869 and 1976, two Blacks were elected to the U.S. Senate and fourteen to the House (see chapter 5).

Although Blacks did not dominate politics throughout the South, white southerners saw them as a threat to their political and economic hegemony. As a result, white southerners began to employ various intimidation methods aimed at discouraging Blacks from participating in the political process. Such methods ranged from mob violence and lynching to economic sanctions. These methods, both violent and nonviolent, were tolerated by the North because both the public and political leaders lost interest in the fate of the freed Blacks or simply grew weary of the struggle.

In 1876 an election compromise abruptly ended Reconstruction. During the presidential election of 1876, white Democrats in the South bolted from their party in support of the Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes. In exchange for the southern white vote,

Hayes agreed to remove northern troops from the South. With the removal of northern troops came the end of Black political participation and political representation in the South. Through intimidation and Jim Crow laws, African Americans in the South were denied the vote for another century. It was only in 1965 that the Voting Rights Act eliminated the blatant disfranchisement of African Americans.

The Republican Party Identification:
The Legacy of Lincoln

According to Dianne Pinderhughes (1987, 113), African Americans tend to support the political party that is "most supportive of racial reform." In 1840, Blacks were faced with the dilemma of supporting a third party or one of the major parties. The Liberty Party was an uncompromising party of abolitionists and their supporters. The two major parties were the Whigs and the Democrats. The philosophy of supporting one of the major parties was that, although they would be supporting "the lesser of two evils . . . [it would] . . . prevent a greater evil." In other words, Blacks could become the "balance of power" between the two major parties, thus gaining respect in politics. Those adopting this philosophy supported the Whigs over the Democrats (Walters 1988).

The conflict over slavery brought a new party alignment. Abolitionists and proslavery factions split the Whig Party. By 1860 the Whigs disappeared and a new party, the Republicans, emerged. The new party came to have the abolition of slavery as a major feature of its platform. African Americans quickly identified with this project and gave strong support to this party, an affiliation that lasted far beyond Reconstruction.

Similarly, the emergence of Abraham Lincoln as the party's standard-bearer gave him a large following among Blacks. After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans barely separated the man from the party, dubbing the organization "the Party of Lincoln." This continued support was well justified, because the party also led the way in Congress by supporting the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the "Civil War Amendments" — the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. In an 1872 speech to a group of Black voters during a convention in New Orleans, the abolitionist orator and Republican appointee Fred-

erick Douglass summed up this partisan affiliation as follows: "The Republican party is the deck, all else is the sea." Walton and Smith (2000) interpret Douglass's remarks to mean that only that party was willing to address the issues that confronted the African American community.

African American Electoral Behavior in Presidential Elections, 1868–1876

African American political behavior at the time thus could be characterized as solidly identified with the Party of Lincoln. Then, as now, the two-party variant in the general population did not fit the alignment of African Americans, who tended to find only one party amenable to their human and welfare rights agenda—universal freedom (Walton and Smith 2000). This early African American behavior can be sketched by looking at voting returns for presidents in the southern states during the Reconstruction years (1868–1876).

Table **4.3** summarizes the popular vote in presidential elections by party in this period, when African Americans first gained the franchise in large numbers in the areas where their population was concentrated. These determinations are based on the success of the Republicans in these states because of the heavy identification of the new Black voters with that party. The overwhelming sentiment in the other southern states was for two third parties, the Southern Democrats and the Constitutional Union. This illustrates the special character of the region vis-à-vis the rest of the nation, which was largely divided between Democrats and Republicans. In 1864 none of these eleven states participated in the election, having seceded from the Union.

By 1868, when seven of these states had returned to the Union, the presence of African American and other Republicans completely shifted the partisan affiliation of the region. These seven states were Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee. Only Georgia and Louisiana did not vote for the Republican candidate, Ulysses Grant. Between 1868 and 1880, only Georgia and Texas never supported a Republican candidate for president. Thus in this small window of opportunity, Black voters had a major role in determining the presidential winners for at least two

TABLE 4.3   Partisan Popular Votes for President in Southern States, 1868–1880 (Percent)

		1868	*1872*	*1876*	*1880*
Alabama	Republican	51	53	40	37
	Democratic	49	47	60	60
	Greenback				3
Arkansas	Republican	54	52	40	39
	Democratic	46	49	60	56
	Greenback				4
Florida	Republican		54	51	46
	Democratic		46	49	54
Georgia	Republican	36	45	28	35
	Democratic	64	55	72	65
Louisiana	Republican	29	56	52	37
	Democratic	71	44	48	62
Mississippi	Republican		64	32	30
	Democratic		36	68	62
North Carolina	Republican	53	57	47	48
	Democratic	47	43	53	51
	Greenback				1
South Carolina	Republican	58	76	50	34
	Democratic	42	24	49	66
Tennessee	Republican	68	48	40	44
	Democratic	32	52	60	53
	Greenback				3
Texas	Republican		41	30	24
	Democratic		59	70	65
	Greenback				11
Virginia	Republican		51	40	40
	Democratic		49	60	60

SOURCE: *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections,* 4th ed., 2001, 655–658. Reprinted with permission.

campaigns, those of 1868 and 1872. Their influence was short lived, as disfranchisement efforts were under way throughout the region as result of the resolution of the 1876 presidential election. Already, however, that year only Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina remained under Republican control (see Table **4.3).**

State-Level Electoral Behavior during Reconstruction

However, voting in local elections was an equally important indicator of the behavior of African Americans. This new class of citizens, only recently slaves and many exercising the franchise for the first time, voted in massive numbers. During Reconstruction, African Americans were especially successful in electing their candidates of choice throughout the South—usually Blacks. During this era these African American voters, almost always from districts where they held the majority, elected not just African American officials but always Republicans. Ultimately Blacks controlled approximately 15 percent of all elected seats in the South.

In the states where the African American proportion was the largest, the Black voters exercised a greater influence. South Carolina, with its majority-Black electorate, sent six representatives to Congress, Alabama sent three, and Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina each sent one representative during Reconstruction. Mississippi alone elected senators, sending two to Washington.

African Americans continued to strive to send their own to office even as the white Democratic Party regained its hegemony. For example, Mississippi's lone Black congressman, John R. Lynch, ran repeatedly after his term ended in 1877, with his vote totals declining in each successive contest against the white Democratic candidate. The historical evidence indicates that the decline in support for Lynch can be directly linked to the growing coercion and intimidation of his Black constituents. In 1868, Black constituents had a far higher voter registration rate than whites (97 percent for Blacks and 81 percent for whites). By 1892, registration rates had diminished dramatically, especially for Blacks, to the extent that the Black vote was of no consequence to election outcomes. Although whites were registered at a rate of 56 percent, less than 6 percent of Blacks remained registered (McMillen 1990, 36).

Reconstruction in South Carolina:
Black over White—A Case Study

During Reconstruction, South Carolina potentially represented the best of all possible worlds for African Americans—it was a majority-Black state that, with the obliteration of slavery, could become Black

ruled. The level of African American participation in electing Blacks to office there exceeded that in all other states. However, it cannot be said that South Carolina, or any other state during Reconstruction, constituted Black rule. South Carolina did nevertheless exhibit a vast array of participation that gives an excellent view of what racial group sentiments were regarding public policy having to do with African American advancement and integration into the larger society.

The pattern of political action on the part of the Black citizenry was organized very early in response to the as yet unimplemented emancipation. Although local whites were seeking to undermine the Union success in the war, Blacks were organizing a race-exclusive political organization, a virtual parallel of the white Democratic Party. In 1865 they organized a statewide convention and appealed to the former Confederates for inclusion in political affairs. Alone they were unsuccessful, requiring the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Union military to implement the emancipation. However, their strategy provided a modal example of the African American struggle for political inclusion. Since they could not extract inclusion from their white counterparts in reasoned discussion, they resorted to the mobilization of the race for political action. They did not do so in order to structure a racialized regime, but rather as the means for getting what they deemed their share of benefits from the political system. In their particular context they had significant bargaining chips. When the Union forces upheld the emancipation directive, Black participants went on to significantly influence the direction of the Reconstruction—helping to rewrite the Constitution and electing their own to office.

The role of Black allies in the form of the Union army and the Freedmen's Bureau was considerable. In February 1865, General William Tecumseh Sherman and the Union forces burned about a third of the city of Columbia, South Carolina. Charleston was abandoned on the same day and was taken over by northern troops. Shortly afterward, the U.S. flag was again seen flying over Fort Sumter. This marked the beginning of the Reconstruction era in South Carolina.

In a case study of Edgefield County, South Carolina, Vernon Burton (1978) states that the Freedmen's Bureau, backed by federal troops, was instrumental in providing protection for Blacks during Reconstruction. In other words, whites were no longer allowed to commit crimes against Blacks without being punished. Burton reports that by 1867, 4,367 Blacks and 2,507 whites were registered to vote in Edgefield County. As a minority, whites felt that their politi-

cal and economic hegemony was threatened and would diminish. Indeed, Burton quotes a Democratic leader, George Tillman, as stating, "Once [you] grant a negro political privileges. .. you instantly advance his social status."

At the outset of Reconstruction, Unionist Benjamin F. Perry served as governor of South Carolina and sought to write a new state constitution. The primary purpose of this new constitution was to repeal that written by ex-Confederate leaders, which included the infamous Black Codes, laws that were passed to relegate Blacks to second-class citizenship. A referendum was held on whether to have a convention to rewrite the state's constitution. Among the 128,056 persons registered to vote, approximately 60 percent were Black (Holt 1977). With roughly 85 percent of Blacks turning out to vote, they were instrumental in voting for a convention (Walton 1972a). Among the 124 delegates elected to rewrite the constitution, seventy-six were Black (Walton 1972a).

The delegates wrote a constitution that eliminated barriers to suffrage for Black men and quickly led to Black political representation. From 1868 to 1876, 255 Blacks were elected to state and federal offices. In the lower house of the state legislature they were able to elect eighty-seven Blacks compared with only forty whites. In 1872 they were able to elect a Black speaker, and by 1874, Blacks also enjoyed a majority in the state senate (Foner 1990).

The actual political behavior of Blacks in this majority-Black state was determined by a variety of factors other than their sheer majority. Their population majority was significantly leavened by the range of allies they developed in the routine processes of politics. South Carolina, like many of the other southern states, had a sizable group of migrants from the North who entered politics. Many of them were Republican businessmen who became a part of the ruling class. They became allied with the Black politicians elected from the Black-dominated constituencies in the southern part of the state ("low-country"). In the working relationship that developed, given the lack of Black interest in a racialized regime and a lack of economic resources, business interests often formulated more of the public policy agenda. And this was not without some cause. The state of South Carolina, like many of the other states disrupted by the war, was enveloped in a significant economic crisis. This was only deepened by the necessity of accommodating a Black class of virtual state wards. Despite the deployment of the Black vote to elect its own candidates whose views were consistent with the racial inclusion agenda, this was not sufficient to overcome economic crisis, efforts of the for-

mer Confederates to undermine the new social order, and the ambivalence from the federal government allies. The early Black success was therefore short-lived, and the election of Rutherford B. Hayes as president in 1876 sealed its fate. A stunning turnabout in fortunes occurred after 1875, when only two new Blacks were elected to Congress from South Carolina. After one Black candidate was elected in 1893, it would be another century before another was. In 1895 South Carolina joined other deep South states in rewriting their constitution for the purpose of disfranchising Black voters.

The Collapse of Reconstruction and
Continued Republican Identification

African Americans remained on the Republican "deck" even after the collapse of Reconstruction with the Hayes Compromise of 1876. Already their political success could be attributed almost entirely to federal intervention. But once the terms of the compromise were in place, Republicans began to move away from policies favorable to Blacks. In fact, the party leadership moved the organization toward a "Lily-White" party with no interest in maintaining its stable of African American supporters in the South. The William McKinley administration (1900) is thought to reflect the moment of complete abandonment of this party's southern constituents, then almost entirely Blacks. McKinley ignored racial issues despite the increase in lynchings and race riots in the region. He also failed to address the issue of disfranchisement. Hence, as Valelly (1993, 31) writes, "the South became a 'sea' of disenfranchisement." Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft followed the lead of Hayes by also adhering to a hands-off policy. With the Republican hands-off policy in effect, many southern states rewrote their constitutions in a successful effort to disfranchise African American voters. Hence, after about 1878 there was little in the way of formal political expression for most African Americans who resided in the now "unreconstructed" South.

The Nadir of Black Participation and
the Black and Tan Party Alternative

There was nevertheless political expression by African Americans in this lowest period, or nadir, of systematic political exclusion. Black

Republicans in the South maintained their loyalty to the party by establishing a race-exclusive satellite organization, the Black and Tan Party. Since Blacks were in effect barred from membership in local southern organizations, a trend developed whereby the party split into two groups, the Black and Tans and the Lily-Whites. The phrase "Black and Tans" was first used by Louisiana newspapers to describe Black members of the Republican Party (Walton 1975). The phrase was also used to refer to the "wide range of skin colors and hues that existed with the Black groupings" (Walton 1975, 46). Despite the popularity of reference to the organization among newspapers and the public, the party regulars never officially recognized it. Nevertheless, it was the means Blacks used for their continuing relationship with the national party hierarchy. The dual relationship remained in place until well into the 1920s.

The Designated "Race Leader" as Conduit for African American Expression

Meanwhile, national African American leadership (race spokesmen) also served as a significant indicator of the political behavior of the racialized community. During this low period of actual voting, the race spokesmen became the most important vehicles for expression about public life. Initially they were the old-line abolitionists, all Republicans, who had the ear of presidents and the Republican Party hierarchy. For a time Frederick Douglass, by then a diplomat and high-level bureaucrat, was the most significant among them. His entrée to the centers of power gave him a powerful voice of protest against the disfranchisement in the South, even as he exacted benefits from a system weighted against his constituency. He played this role supporting and consorting with Republican presidents from the time of Lincoln until his death in 1895.

Douglass was both a striking figure and a powerful spokesman for race interests. Even as a government official he never ceased to be assertive in his outspoken views on the racial condition, denouncing "such developments as the suppression of the Negro vote in the South, the leasing out of convicts as laborers, the crop-lien system, and the prevalence of lynching. He railed against the [anti–civil rights] rulings of the Supreme Court." As an example of how important he was to presidents was the role he played in the 1888 campaign that led to the election of Benjamin Harrison. Douglass was appointed the equivalent of a regional campaign manager, being

"assigned four key states [where] he took the stump night and day despite his seventy years" (Logan and Winston 1982, 185–186).

An Accommodationist interlude:
Booker T. Washington

Douglass was followed by perhaps the single most important race spokesperson in African American history—Booker T. Washington. Although Washington, regarded as a political conservative, did not reflect Douglass's perspective, the two performed essentially the same function. Washington, while arguing that he eschewed formal politics, nevertheless advised every president in his time and virtually controlled the allocation of public benefits to the African American community. His publicly articulated view that African Americans should eschew politics, accept less than full equality with whites, and focus on sustaining their niche of economic southern agricultural economy appealed to many whites. It held out the possibility that there could be peace while a measured program of racial uplift was followed for Blacks. Washington's influence was so important because it served to make a safe world for the southern pursuit of complete political disfranchisement. Even the standard voices of protest (e.g., W.E.B. DuBois and the inchoate NAACP) were stymied by Washington's presence until well beyond World War I (Harlan 1972).

African American Migration and
the Emergence of the New Deal Democratic Coalition

Although the Black and Tans continued, they represented little of the true political behavior of African Americans. The southern region, where the party's constituents remained, was completely off limits for active or even informal political participation by Blacks. African Americans could not vote for Republicans even if any campaigned in the solidly Democratic white South. And protest was met with the draconian state repression or terror. The death knell for the Black and Tan Party came with the election of Herbert Hoover in 1928. During his campaign Hoover had worked diligently to secure the support of the Black and Tans. Immediately after his inauguration, however, he launched a strategy to gain the support of southern whites. In fact, he initiated investigations to remove African American party leaders,

and he pledged full support for the Lily-White Republicans (Walton 1975).

In short, the Lily-White strategy employed by Hoover precipitated a significant enough shift in partisan African American identity to make the national Democratic Party competitive with the GOP. The modest overtures from the national Democratic Party hierarchy that accompanied the reelection of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 brought a sense of hope to the Black community. Among other things the New Deal provided some jobs for poor Blacks and eventually lay the foundation for their new partisan identification and expression.

African Americans also evinced another kind of political expression in response to the disfranchisement in the South. They voted with their feet starting after 1890, beginning a long-term migration from the South to the urban North. They concentrated in racially segregated residential areas in central cities of the industrial North. Moreover, many of these southern migrants became enrolled as voters on arrival in the cities. It was not long before they constituted majority African American districts with the ability to control both local and national electoral offices. The earliest identification they exhibited was with the Party of Lincoln, and their electoral behavior reflected that in the election of their own who were also members of the Republican Party.

Chicago was among the first cities where the political behavior of African Americans became important. It was in this machine-controlled city where the Blacks elected some of their first representatives and exercised considerable influence on some aspects of city politics. In tracking mayoral elections from 1915 to 1939, Pinder-hughes (1987, 73) has shown that the partisan alignment of Blacks in Chicago was solidly Republican before 1930. In only one mayoral contest, that of 1923, did the Democrats draw a majority of the community's support. Otherwise the support for the Republicans was overwhelming among these constituents, averaging about 70 percent. The immigrants settled in what was then the city's second ward and elected their first alderman in 1915, the Republican Oscar De-Priest. It was "very likely that the Negro voters constituted a majority of the second ward" even then, since they were 70 percent of it by 1920 (Gosnell 1935, 74). They used their votes in a bloc to become the first area to end the absence of Blacks in national elected positions. In 1929 this racially compact area sent Oscar DePriest to Congress as a Republican, a seat continuously held by a Black ever since.

A shift in Black partisan identification became discernible in the 1935 Chicago election, and later became a stampede. DePriest was to be the last Black Republican member of Congress for more than fifty years when he was defeated by the Black Democrat Arthur Mitchell that year. (Massachusetts elected Senator Edward Brooke in 1967, and Connecticut elected Congressman Gary Franks in 1991, but neither was from a Black constituency.) Despite the remarkable shift in partisan identification, however, the segregated residential enclave in Chicago continued to select Black candidates for a variety of elective posts, which eventually resulted in multiple Black congressmen in Washington. The community was rapidly evolving from a one-party Republican identity to a one-party Democratic identity.

African American political behavior in Chicago presaged what was to happen in other northern cities with similar population concentrations. Hence a racially compact district in Harlem, New York, elected Adam Clayton Powell in 1945. It is safe to say that by that time the revolution in Black partisan identification had already occurred in local politics in the urban North. The majority partisan sentiment among these urban voters was in favor of the Democrats. Thus when Charles Diggs won a congressional seat in Detroit, Michigan, in 1955, it was a foregone conclusion that he was a Democrat.

As we shall see, the concomitant transformation in presidential politics evolved a bit more slowly, but it was equally certain; here too, the racial community by and large hewed to a single party in the two-party system. It constituted the most substantial change since the era of Republican Party dominance initiated by Lincoln. The shift to Democratic Party identification represented the evolving political preference that Blacks maintain to the present.

The Democratic Party: Post–New Deal Coalition

To be sure, early traces of the African American movement into the Democratic Party can be found in the North during Reconstruction. However, strong inroads into the party were not created until the New Deal era of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The decrease in support for the Republicans owed to what Blacks portrayed as the party's abandonment of its core support for the race against the traditional southern plantation power hierarchy. This abandonment can be traced to 1876, when the Republicans acquiesced in the restoration of citizen rights for the white planter class. Gradually Blacks calculated that the Republican support of states rights for the resolution of such issues as

voting, lynching, segregation, and the white primary were fundamentally inconsistent with core Black interests. Increasingly the Democrats looked like a more favorable option in their support of some of these same core issues. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first president to become fairly astute in nurturing this favorable disposition among Blacks (Hamilton 1973, 291–296).

Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet"

Roosevelt was able to lure African American voters with his social programs, the creation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission, and his appointment of a "Black Cabinet." Roosevelt's Black Cabinet consisted of a group of Black civic leaders who were unofficially appointed as advisers to the president. He appointed such notable Black leaders as Mary McLeod Bethune, Robert Weaver, William Hastie, Eugene Kinckle Jones, John P. Davis, and Walter White as informal advisers to his administration (Perry and Parent 1995). This marked the first time that a U.S. president openly recognized the influence and legitimacy of Blacks on the group level.

These Black leaders were instrumental in beginning the dialogue that would lead to fairer governmental practices along all race lines, specifically where Blacks were concerned. Although recognized as prominent citizens, they held no official power that would permit them to directly affect policy-making decisions. However, they were able to speak in one voice for the rights of other Blacks. Krislov (1967) mentions that the Black Cabinet was often met with criticism, and some of the criticism came from fellow African Americans. Despite this criticism, Blacks continued to support the Democratic Party. Indeed, in 1936 roughly 85 percent of the Black vote went to Roosevelt (see chapter 5).

The Utility of the Black Vote in Two-Party National Competition

The growth in the fortunes of the Democratic Party can be observed by looking at patterns of voting among urban African Americans. The second Roosevelt election became the critical contest in starting this trajectory. By 1936 the visible appointments of Blacks as bureaucrats and as part of an informal cabinet was hardly lost on northern

TABLE 4.4   Percentage of Votes Cast for Roosevelt in Selected Majority-Black City Wards in the Presidential Elections of 1932–1940

Ward	Detroit		Pittsburgh		Baltimore		Chicago	
	5	7	5	3	14	17	2	3
1932	50	54	53	46	49	43	25	21
1936	75	79	77	64	55	47	48	50
1940	79	80	77	72	61	50	51	54

SOURCE : **Adapted from Walters** 1988, 18. **Reprinted with permission from the State University of New York Press.**

Black voters, segregated in their residential enclaves in the inner cities. Moreover, participation levels among these mostly straight-ticket voters were often quite high, giving the Democrats some assurance that the affiliation of local partisans could be translated into broader support.

This broader support was especially sought after in presidential contests because of the stability of the Black vote. It could make the difference when the rest of the electorate was fairly evenly split between the two parties (Glantz 1967, 339). The balancing factor became more critical because the migration of Blacks to central cities greatly accelerated between 1910 and 1930. For example, "the Black population in Michigan went from 17,115 to 169,453; Illinois from 109,049 to 328,927; Indiana from 60,320 to 111,982; and Ohio from 111,452 to 309,304" (Walters 1988, 17).

Partisan support by Blacks for the Democrats in the first three elections involving Roosevelt shows how this kind of balance was evolving. The data in Table 4.4 compare Black majority voting wards — that is, wards in which 50 percent or more of the population is African American — in four cities in the 1932, 1936, and 1940 presidential elections. What one observes is that in Detroit and Pittsburgh a majority of the wards were already voting for Roosevelt by 1932. Even so, the increase from 1932 to 1936 was dramatic — more than 20 percent for each election. In the machine-dominated cities of Chicago and Baltimore, none of the wards cast more than 50 percent of the votes for Roosevelt in 1932, although the two wards in Baltimore came close. Chicago was less Democratic. By 1936, clearly both of these cities had moved considerably toward the Democrats. All of these wards, in all four cities, were solidly Democrat by 1940.

The African American Democratic Bloc in National Politics

The Democrats now appeared to be the party of "racial reform." This trend continued with the Truman administration. Following the lead of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman appealed to the compassion of Congress to enact laws that would level the playing field for African Americans in the workforce. In **1946** President Truman created the Civil Rights Committee as an attempt to address the growing civil unrest of African Americans. Although none of the recommendations became law during the Truman administration, the committee did make several recommendations to curtail racial discrimination. The recommendations included enactment of a civil rights bill; strengthening the civil rights section of the Department of Justice; and special training for police officers in handling civil rights–related disputes. The proposals also sought to end Jim Crow laws and to withhold federal grants-in-aid from public and private agencies that practiced discrimination and segregation (Perry and Parent **1995).**

When Congress failed to pass substantive civil rights legislation, Truman was highly successful in his use of executive orders. In **1948** he laid the cornerstone for policy that would eventually lead to the permanent desegregation of the U.S. armed services. Executive Order **9981** mandated equal treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This executive order came at the end of World War II, a conflict in which Black military service had generated additional support from some legislators as well as the general citizenry. Truman's efforts solidified Black support of the Democratic Party and empowered the group to make further demands for civil justice.

Again, the voting behavior of Blacks in central cities foretold the trend in growing support for Democratic candidates. The strength of these voters was clearly helping to sustain the national majority for the Democratic Party. The increased Black population was tipping the balance in the urban industrial states, where there was intense two-party competition, even as the "Solid South" started to drift (sometimes supporting favorite sons such as Strom Thurmond in **1948).** Table **4.5** lists the proportion Democratic in four key midwestern cities between **1948** and **1956** where the impact of the Black vote was strongest in influencing the total presidential vote for the Democratic Party. Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland consistently exhibit less competitiveness vis-à-vis the general population and clearly influence the outcome of con-

TABLE 4.5   **Percentage of Democratic Voters in Presidential Elections in Selected Midwestern Cities, 1948–1956 (Percent)**

City	All Democratic Voters			Black Democratic Voters		
	1948	*1952*	*1946*	*1946*	*1952*	*1956*
Chicago	58	54	48	70	75	63
Cleveland	65	60	55	61	79	63
Detroit	59	60	62	84	90	84
St. Louis	64	62	61	68	80	75

SOURCE: **Adapted from Glantz 1967, 350. Reprinted with permission from Charles Merrill.**

tests where the level of competition in the general population is highest—Chicago and Cleveland. But everywhere the greater African American loyalty to the Democratic Party is striking.

In 1956, however, there was a temporary national shift in African American support from the Democratic Party, as these voters aligned themselves with Eisenhower. This shift owed to a number of difficulties within the fragile Democratic coalition after the ***Brown v. Board of Education*** Supreme Court case. Once the Court declared the "separate but equal" policy dead, the reaction from white segregationist southerners who wanted to sustain the system was dramatic. Because many of them remained ensconced in the Democratic Party, the former racial moderate candidate Adlai Stevenson had to deal with their wrath. He sought to do so by trying to placate and accommodate this vital party base. What he achieved in the end was massive desertion on the part of northern Blacks, who had also become a vital part of the party's base. Enough Black voters shifted their allegiance to also temporarily interrupt the party's long-running control of the presidency. Figure 4.1 clearly illustrates the increase in Black support for Eisenhower in 1956. Indeed, Black leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell endorsed his candidacy.

The African American Presidential Vote, 1952–2000

A case can be made that Black partisan realignment occurred as early as 1936, but it was certain by 1964. (Ordinarily political scientists argue that realignment is precipitated by one or more critical elections that polarize voters on the issues [Campbell 1966; Key 19551). As Figure 4.1 shows, Black support for the Democratic presidential candi-
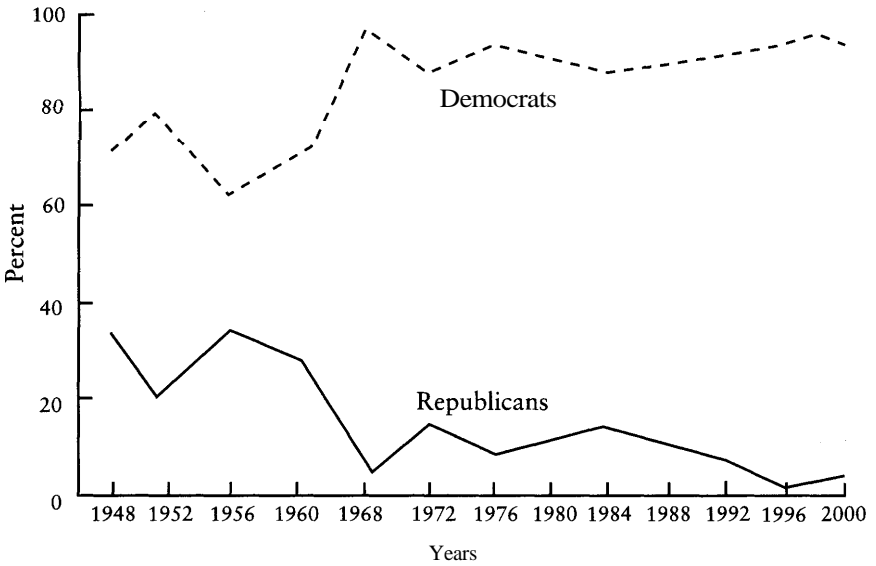
FIGURE 4.1   African American Presidential Vote, by Party, 1948–2000
    NOTE: Data are not available for 1964
    SOURCE: 1948–2000 National Election Study Cumulative Data File

dates greatly increased between 1960 and 1968. The 1964 election perhaps best illustrates the point. Barry Goldwater's position on civil rights and his states' rights platform clearly moved African Americans away from the Republican Party. After the election campaigns of Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson, the distinction between the two parties on racial issues was stark. The Democrats became more racially liberal, while the Republicans, with the support of southern Democrats, became more racially conservative (Scher 1997). Since 1964, Black support for Democratic presidential candidates has not fallen below 80 percent in a single election.

The Republican Party Surge in Presidential Contests

The 1968 election revealed the other side of realignment, the counter to the ascendancy of Blacks in the Democratic Party. What was white dissonance within the Democratic Party in 1964 became a virtual desertion by 1968. Indeed,.the shift had inspired Richard Nixon, the Re-

publican standard-bearer, to devise a "southern strategy" to attract white voters away from the Democratic Party. He did not actually succeed, because of the presence of independent candidate George Wallace (33 percent). However, even with Wallace's strong showing, the Republicans took the South (36 percent), outpolling the Democrats (31 percent) (Stanley and Niemi 2000, 118). The realignment improved the fortunes of the Republicans in presidential elections considerably. They have won six of the nine contests between 1968 and 2000.

Nixon's conservative platform on busing and education as well as his judicial appointments during his early administration ensured that African Americans would continue to identify strongly with the Democrats. According to Ambeau, Perry, and McBride (1995), the Nixon admiriistration represented a retreat from the civil rights advances of the Johnson administration. Two distinct policy actions by Nixon were clear appendages of his cavalier handling of civil rights issues and tend to support the argument that Nixon's administration represented a step backward in the struggle for equality. First, Nixon ordered the Justice Department to step in and slow down school desegregation. This marked the first time that a U.S. president had ordered the Justice Department to intervene in such a capacity since the *Brown* decision. Historically, the Justice Department worked with the proponents of civil rights. Second, Nixon opposed the 1970 extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was due to expire. Although his efforts were unsuccessful, Nixon was perspicacious in his assessment of the benefits the Republican Party would have obtained by weakening the protection of Black voting rights (Perry and Parent 1995). On the other hand, despite his less than favorable civil rights record, Nixon did appoint Blacks to subcabinet positions in his administration, with the highest-ranking position being that of an assistant secretary (Warshaw 1996).

The next administration was marred by the Watergate scandal that unseated Nixon and ushered Vice President Gerald Ford into office. Ford also inherited a general public mood that included some mistrust of the Republican Party. If the general public was suspicious about the politics of the controlling party, Blacks in America had even deeper concerns. The Voting Rights Act, which was a major component of the migration of African Americans into the democratic processes in the United States, was less than ten years old and facing extinction when Ford took office. Like Nixon's, Ford's civil rights record was less than favorable among Blacks and other civil rights advocates. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, in 1975 Ford initially opposed the extension of the Voting Rights Act.

Jimmy Carter: Leveraging the Black Vote in Intense Partisan Competition

With Ford tainted by the Nixon White House scandal, Jimmy Carter was able to prevail in the 1976 election, restoring the Democrats to power after an eight-year hiatus. The return of the Democrats owed a great deal to the strong African American support for Carter in key areas of the country, a fact that perhaps enabled Blacks as a group to determine the partisan victor. This view is consistent with a general theory of how the Black vote can be used as a balancing agent when competition between the two parties is intense. Ronald Walters has calculated how the concentration of Black voters in competitive urban areas and in the South translated into control of electoral votes for Democrats in the 1976 election. According to his analysis, Black voters provided the critical balance of votes for Carter in major northern, border, and southern states (Walters 1988, 36ff). (See Table 4.6.) Indeed, during the campaign Carter made significant alliances with African American politicians and sought the Black vote by evincing a strong interest in some of the core issues associated with that community. The general assessment is that the Carter administration "sustained its commitment to civil rights throughout its duration, unlike the Nixon and Ford administrations, which lapsed into dormancy in civil rights enforcement" (Perry, Ambeau, and McBride 1995, 117).

Party Realignment in Presidential Elections: The Reagan-Bush Victories

Carter's term was to be a mere interlude for the Democrats. The Republicans returned to power in 1980 and remained in the White House for three terms. Clearly, the New Deal coalition that had been heavily oriented to African American core interests had dissolved, with the Republican Party becoming much more successful in presidential contests. In this instance they were able to put together a winning coalition by using something akin to Nixon's southern strategy. They relied on increased support for the GOP among southern whites, to the disadvantage of the strong single-party orientation of African American voters (Kinder and Sanders 1996). It did illustrate, however, that under these conditions, when the intensity of competition decreased, Blacks were less likely to determine the outcome of national contests. Reagan carried the South in both 1980 and 1984,

TABLE 4.6   Presidential Electoral Votes in Selected States, 1976

	Electoral Vote	Black Voting-Age Population (%)
North		
New York	41	12.6
Pennsylvania	27	08.2
Illinoisa	26	12.4
Michigan[a]	21	11.3
New Jersey[a]	17	10.8
Ohio	25	08.9
Region Total	157	
South		
Alabama	9	22.0
Arkansas	6	14.4
Georgia	12	23.7
Louisiana	10	26.4
Mississippi	7	30.5
North Carolina	13	18.8
South Carolina	8	26.1
Texas	26	11.6
Tennessee	10	13.8
Florida	17	10.6
Region Total	118	
Border		
Maryland	10	18.3
Missouri	12	09.3
Region Total	22	
Nationwide		
Total Democratic	297	
Total Republican	240	

[a] States carried by the Republican Party.

SOURCE: Adapted from Walters 1988, 36–37. Reprinted with permission from the State University of New York Press.

winning by a landslide 26 percentage points in the latter. Bush also prevailed in the South in 1988, by 20 percentage points (see Table 4.7).

During these Republican administrations, African Americans perceived that their core agenda issues were placed on the back burner. Ronald Reagan captured the public wave of disenchantment with aggressive government intervention in the social sector of domestic affairs, at the same time that he faced an economic recession. Mean-

TABLE 4.7   Presidential Electoral Votes, Southern Region, 1964–2000

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents[a]
1964	52	48	
1968	31	36	33
1972	29	71	
1976	54	45	
1980	44	52	
1984	37	63	
1988	40	60	
1992	38	45	17
1996	44	46	10
2000	43	55	

a Independent candidates were Wallace in 1968 and Perot in 1992 and 1996.

SOURCES: Data from Stanley and Niemi 2000, 118–119; Walton and Smith 2002, 161.

while, the conservative wing of the Republican Party that Reagan represented also captured control of the party hierarchy. The president thus oversaw the implementation of a conservative agenda that aggressively attacked welfare and civil rights issues associated with African Americans. Needless to say, the partisan identification of Blacks with the Democratic Party only hardened. The Bush administration that succeeded Reagan's was perceived by Blacks to have made little change in the policy trajectory. Indeed, Bush's appointment of the conservative judge, Clarence Thomas, to the Supreme Court (replacing the stalwart liberal Thurgood Marshall), was widely seen as an especially egregious reflection of this policy shift (Barker et al. 1999, 117).

Trading Places: From Clinton to Bush

The White House once again returned to the Democrats in 1992, for two terms. And once again, the African American vote proved to be of strategic importance as a balance in the South, where about 50 percent of this population lived. Bill Clinton received overwhelming support from African American voters everywhere, but their support was especially important in the South. This region was the most intensely competitive of his two campaigns. And while Clinton did not carry the South in either 1992 or 1996, it was his overwhelming sup-

port among Blacks there that counterbalanced whites who remained in the Republican fold. The competition, however, intensified between the two parties (see Table 4.7).

A part of what propelled Blacks to mobilize so intensely for Clinton in 1992 was his promise and the experience of twelve years of Republican rule. With the help of many African American leaders, Bill Clinton campaigned on a promise of diversity and economic reform in a way that appeared to reflect the core issues important to Blacks. This was fortuitous because even the Blacks who achieved middle-class status after the civil rights movement found themselves unable to influence the Republican policymakers. Motivated by three terms of perceived exclusionary Republican policies, approximately one million more African Americans voted in 1992 than in 1988, and Clinton received 82 percent of the Black vote (Perry and Parent 1995). He increased that margin slightly in 1996. Clinton reclaimed the White House for the Democrats and announced that he would build a White House administration that "looks like America" (Warshaw 1996).

Black skepticism of the Republican Party in the 2000 election rose to its highest level since the 1964 election of Lyndon Johnson. In large measure it was driven by the same considerations about reflection of core African American issues in the Republican platform. There was little in the Bush platform that attracted large numbers of Blacks. Meanwhile, measuring Bush against the track record of the Clinton-Gore administration left African Americans little choice but to go with what was deemed a "known" quantity. In this controversial election the African American electorate gave 90 percent of its vote to the Democrats. Ironically, the election outcome hinged on the resolution of disputes in Florida about ballot improprieties in heavily African American and other Democratic districts. But just as important was the level of partisan competition in the balance of the South. This region was less competitive than it had been since the 1988 Bush-Dukakis election (see Table 4.7).

Post–Civil Rights Local Political Behavior

African American Behavior in State and Local Politics

Although national trends are the best indicators of aggregate behavior on the part of African Americans in the post–New Deal era, local behavior clearly remains the base from which it all springs. The

power of the local arena in defining how this population behaves politically remains bound up in the racialized social order. It is of profound consequence that African Americans have more often than not been racially isolated in the political arena. They often live and vote in segregated racial districts, and have most often been formally empowered by electing one of their own to represent them. Most importantly, the continuity of racial discrimination and ambivalence about their citizenship status have led them to align with a single party that espouses support for improving these circumstances. All the consequences of these preconditions for political expression are writ large in the local arena, and hence one finds that, contrary to the conventional wisdom, African American political expression is most intense at the local level.

As noted earlier, when the shift to the Democratic Party began in the Roosevelt era, it first became visible in the local wards and precincts in central cities. When Blacks were able to elect their own at these levels, the shift to the Democratic Party soon reverberated upward to presidential contests. In this sense it is not odd that these voters seemed most animated by the availability of the likes of DePriest, Diggs, Powell, and others in congressional districts. They could combine their votes in these central cities and be assured of a representative whose central mission was to regularize the status of Blacks in American society. Once these representatives were elected, their congressional seats became some of the safest in the nation. This pattern of behavior spread across the country as the disfranchisement in the South ended with the civil rights movement.

African American Voter Registration in the Post–Civil Rights South

What is the evidence regarding the aggregate patterns of behavior for Blacks in state and local politics? Since we already have some sense of the pattern in the North after the Great Migration, the task is to explain how the South completed the picture. In order to do this, we have to expand our focus, as the constituent base in the South was as much rural as urban. The first important point to be made about political behavior among African Americans in the South is that as soon as restrictions were removed, they prepared in great numbers to exercise the franchise. And they had a good deal of ground to make up. After all, in 1940, estimates were that no more than 5 percent of the Black voting-age population in the region was registered to vote.

About the time of the Montgomery bus boycott, barely 25 percent were registered. Despite the intensive mobilization that spread through the region in 1960, there were still spectacular levels of disfranchisement in some states. Mississippi was the worst in this regard, with only 6 percent of eligible Black voters registered. The figure for Alabama was twice that, with only 13 percent registered.

The civil rights mobilization and concomitant federal legislation had a dramatic effect in increasing opportunities for African American participation. The increase in the voter registration numbers was the first indication. Registration in the South rose precipitously on the eve of passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965). In 1964, for example, only Mississippi did not show dramatic progress; the proportion of eligible Blacks registered was still barely over 6 percent. In Alabama the proportion neared 25 percent, and in most of the other former Confederate states it was well above 30 percent. Tennessee and Florida had already topped the 60 percent mark.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act altered the registration rates almost immediately. One of its provisions allowed the placement of federal registrars in states where barriers to registration had not been immediately removed. A mere two years after passage of the act, no southern state had African American registration rates below 50 percent. The evidence is incontrovertible that the federal registrars played a major role in increasing registration rates in the most egregious cases of intimidation and refusal to follow the law. In Mississippi, 61 percent of the new registrants were enrolled by federal registrars, and in Alabama and Louisiana, 48 percent were. In any case, the Black population was eager in its pursuit of voter registration.

African American Turnout in the Mobilized South

The real challenge in evaluating political behavior lies in determining actual participation. Did the southern Blacks vote, and what patterns can be discerned from analysis of voting participation? Once again the conventional wisdom that Blacks, with a low socioeconomic status, will participate less, does not hold. Enfranchised southern Blacks had some of the highest participation levels in the region. A study of rural Black voters in Mississippi discovered that post-1965 voting was exceedingly high across all socioeconomic levels and that such participation seemed much more related to political mobilization in majority-Black districts (Morrison 1987, 174). There is similar
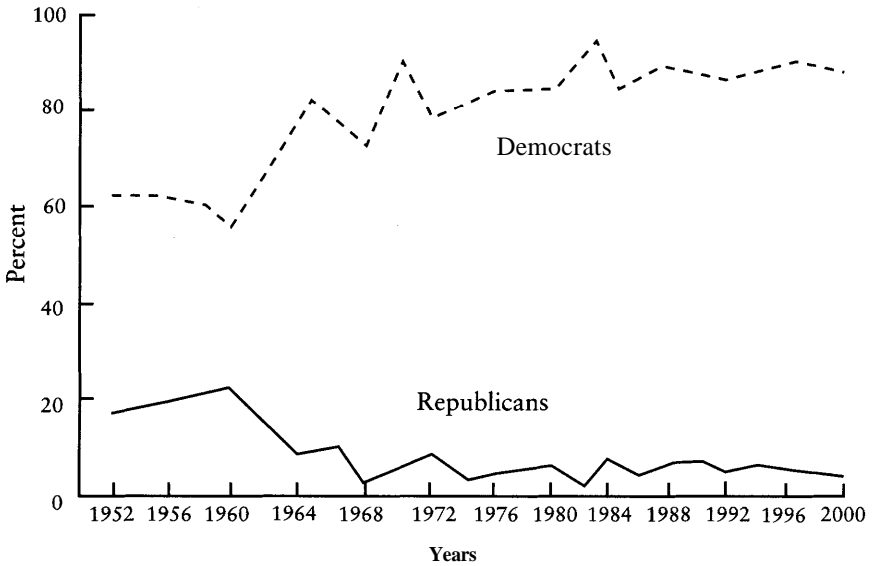
FIGURE 4.2   Party Identification among African Americans, 1952–2000
SOURCE: 1948–2000 National Election Study Cumulative Data File

evidence comparing relative racial turnout in presidential elections between 1952 and 1972—contests just before and just after the height of the mobilization movement in southern cities. Figure 4.2 shows the dramatic upsurge in turnout of Blacks between 1956 and 1968. Once Blacks got the franchise back, they turned out to vote in presidential elections at rates almost double those for whites.

As described earlier, the character of this participation can be seen in the increased election of African Americans for local, state, and national offices and in the support of presidential candidates deemed to be supportive of an agenda of racial inclusion. African Americans who began to identify with the Democratic Party in the late 1930s had turned almost exclusively to that organization by the 1960s. They did so because, in a reversal of roles between the two major parties, the Democratic Party, which had always had a more diverse membership, became more supportive of civil liberties, human rights, and racial inclusion. In the process, African Americans became one of the Democratic Party's fundamental constituent groups.

The foundation of this national support for Democrats, however, rested in the development of local organizations that sponsored

Black candidates in mostly majority-Black districts. The availability of Black candidates became a major by-product of the intense political mobilization in the South. The participation in the South soon matched and then exceeded that achieved by Blacks in the North. Just as the Black migrants to northern cities elected their own to local and congressional posts around World War II, the same pattern characterized the South from about 1967.

Electing Their Own:
Black Representatives for Black Districts

The early pattern of political behavior among Blacks showed them putting significant energy into electing Black candidates when their numbers assured victory. Since voter registration levels were so low, a first order of business was mobilization for registration and subsequent political action. Much of this process was carried out by grassroots community organizers. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Mississippi is a prime example. In 1973 a massive contingent of civil rights workers descended on the state with the express purpose of increasing Black registration. Among their number were hundreds of students, who not only ran registration campaigns and freedom schools but also made remarkable use of the national media to expand the cause to the general population. Perhaps the best signal of what the effort was aiming for was the controversial concept of "Black Power." Although the term was widely interpreted by the media to mean some kind of Black separatism, chief exponent Stokely Carmichael defined it as Blacks using their voting power to win allocations from the system. It was conceptually more related to the group theory of politics, which suggested that political success could be realized only by organizing into a group for the pursuit of interests. In the nature of the racialized circumstances, Carmichael argued that Blacks were relegated to functioning as a racial interest group vis-a-vis other similarly organized interests (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967), and it was essentially this model that Blacks followed.

The result was that the South hewed to a pattern very much like that in the North. Living in racially segregated political districts, they organized largely by race and selected candidates by race at the local level. Coalitions, if they presented themselves, were also used. After all, these new citizens, as noted, maintained a high level of action in the interest of their preferred presidential and statewide candidates.

But the intense action was at the local level. In Atlanta in 1962 Black voters sent Leroy Johnson to the state senate, and a few years later several southern states had elected Black legislators, mayors, city council representatives, and school board members. After 1967 the local Black electorates had been especially successful in seating Black mayors in small towns. Even a cursory review of the extent of Black elected officials (see chapter 5) reveals that the strategy of their constituents was successful—Black people were electing Black officials to represent them all over the South.

With the help of the Supreme Court, malapportionment in legislative districts was undermined in the Reynolds v. *Sims* (1965) and *Wesberry* v. Sanders (1964) cases. With the destruction of gerrymandering and all manner of racial voter dilution schemes, soon southern legislatures and congressional districts saw Black representatives. Black majority congressional districts in Texas (Houston) and Georgia (Atlanta) sent the first Blacks to Congress in almost 100 years. The strategy has successfully been employed in all but the state of Arkansas in the South.

National Black Turnout

Considering these outcomes along with Black electoral participation nationwide, there has been remarkable change and success. Blacks are participating at high levels, especially where they have the opportunity to win with a candidate of their own or a candidate supportive of an agenda for racial inclusion. Nationally, Black voter registration has remained around 60 percent, achieving its highest rate of 66 percent in 1984 when Jesse Jackson was first a candidate. As Table 4.8 shows, in the 1968 election, the Black proportion of the voting electorate was 8 percent. In 1996, the proportion was close to 11 percent—for a group estimated to constitute about 12 percent of the general population (Barker et al. 1999, 235). This growth in Black voter registration levels has resulted in the highest number of Black elected officials and the greatest influence on electoral districts where their numbers give them a balance in or control of the electorate. From 1970 to 1997 the number of African American elected officials, most from majority Black constituencies, increased from 1,400 to nearly 9,000.

Elected African Americans represent districts all over the nation and at all levels. At the national level this influence has been exercised largely within the confines of the Democratic Party in the

TABLE 4.8   Black Voter Registration and Turnout in Presidential Election
Years, 1968–1996 (Percent)

	Registration Rate (%)	Turnout (% of **Total** Population)
1968	66.2	8.0
1972	65.5	8.2
1976	58.5	8.4
1980	60.0	8.9
1984	66.3	10.1
1988	64.0	10.0
1992	63.9	10.0
1996	63.5	10.8

SOURCE: Data from Barker et al. 1999, 235.

House of Representatives. As Table 4.9 shows, African American can-
didates are able to win elections in congressional districts almost ex-
clusively where the majority of their constituents are African Ameri-
can. This success is seen in all areas of the country. Meanwhile, they
win more than 50 percent of the time when African Americans are
the predominant minority group in the district. In 1998, Black ma-
jority or combined Black and other minority districts (sixty-three)
elected Blacks to more than half (thirty-two) of the seats. Majority-
Black electorates controlled twenty-three of those seats. All but Texas
and Arkansas of the former Confederate states had at least one con-
gressional representative from a majority-Black district. In Texas the
lone Black representative represented a Houston district that had re-
cently slipped below a Black majority.

The Black Political Party Revisited

In the long history of the American republic, third-party movements
have consistently failed to prevail in national contests, and they have
rarely succeeded when organized at the regional level. Efforts to form
Black political parties have shared the same fate. However, in the al-
most unique racial isolation of African Americans from routine influ-
ence on the two-party structure, there have been repeated efforts to
form third parties. Perhaps the most visible effort at the national
level was the Black Political Party Convention in Gary, Indiana, in
1972. The prime movers behind this event were the Black mayor of
Gary, Richard Hatcher, Congressman Charles Diggs of Michigan, and

TABLE 4.9   Predominantly Minority Congressional Districts and Black Seats, 1998

Description of District	Number of Districts	Percent of Seats Held by Blacks
Predominantly Minority	**63**	52
Black Majority	**23**	96
Predominantly Minority (South)	22	55
Black Majority (South)	10	100

SOURCE: Data from Stanley and Niemi 2000, 95.

the writer Amiri Baraka. Although the meetings over several days drew some 5,000 delegates and observers, the effort did not succeed in fielding candidates for election or in developing much of a secretariat (Marable 2000, 635–640). However, regionally based African American parties have also continued and have been relatively more successful in changing the agenda and sometimes the structure of one of the two major parties. The examples below include such parties in South Carolina and Mississippi.

The South Carolina Progressive Democratic Party

The most popular third-party efforts came in the form of what Walton (1972a) calls "satellite parties." These were largely state-level organizations that sought to parallel local branches of the two regular but segregated major parties. In most instances the stated aims of these organizations or movements were to break down the solidly Democratic southern parties, from whose primaries Blacks were barred. The South Carolina Progressive Democratic Party (SCPDP) was one of the first such organizations to pose a meaningful challenge to a regular state political party. It was founded in 1944, the same year that the Supreme Court ruled "white primaries" unconstitutional. Also in that year, the SCPDP sent twenty-one citizens to the National Democratic Convention in Chicago to challenge the seating of the regular Democrats representing South Carolina (Walton 1972a, 72). To their dismay, they were not allowed to participate at the convention and were turned away. Undaunted, the SCPDP returned to South Carolina and unsuccessfully ran one of its own members for the U.S. Senate.

Faltering at electoral success, the party changed strategies. During the next two years the SCPDP focused its attention on voter registra-

tion drives. They were able to increase the number of registered voters from a dismal 3,500 in 1944 to a respectable 50,000 by 1947. During its annual convention in 1946, the SCPDP decided to end its status as a formal party and to function instead as a caucus concerned with uplifting the Black community. Not surprisingly, it was pressure from the colossal strength of the two regular parties that caused the South Carolina effort to falter. As Blacks were shifting alignment to the national Democratic Party, such local efforts were seen as a distraction. Hence the decision to dissolve was made primarily at the request of such prominent leaders as Thurgood Marshall and the Reverend James Hinton (head of the statewide conference of the NAACP). They felt that the organization did not possess enough resources to unseat the party regulars (Walton 1972a, 72–75).

United Citizens Party of South Carolina

In 1969 Blacks in South Carolina formed still another organization—the United Citizens Party (UCP). The primary objective of the UCP was to get Black candidates elected. In 1970 and 1972 the party ran a slate of candidates at the local, state, and national levels. They also entered the governor's race in 1970 with a write-in campaign for their candidate. This time, with African Americans almost completely identified with the Democratic Party and with disfranchisement in the South reversed, this Black party had a significant influence both in electing candidates and in changing the structure of the state Democratic Party. The UCP remained a force in electing its candidates in 1970, siphoning off votes from the segregated state organization. The pressure applied by the UCP forced the state Democratic Party organization to appoint an African American as assistant director. Subsequently four UCP candidates for the South Carolina House of Representatives won endorsement by the regular state party. Three of these candidates won in the 1970 general election. Having achieved at least the partial goal of acceptance by the regulars, the UCP disbanded shortly after that election (Legette 2000).

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was organized in the early 1960s in the midst of an intense social movement in the

state where racial exclusion at all levels was most prevalent. White resistance to social change was also perhaps more prevalent and violent there too. The MFDP developed from the combined work of all the major civil rights organizations in the state—the NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The principal target that developed over time was the racial exclusion of African Americans from the state Democratic Party. In light of the abject conditions of Blacks in Mississippi, the organizations formed a confederation, centralizing its attack on the status quo.

Although CORE and the NAACP remained very active, it was SNCC that led a grassroots campaign for local community leadership development in tandem with voter registration (Carson 1981). Given the African American majority voting-age populations in many parts of rural Mississippi, increasing voter registration was deemed the key to overturning the system. However, as long as Blacks were locked out of the Democratic Party, which was the normal vehicle for exercising political rights, voter registration alone was useless.

The MFDP was originally settled on as an organizing tool to demonstrate the potential of the rural vote to Blacks. But it was also used to dramatize the plight of these potential voters to the nation. In 1963 and 1964, a summer was dedicated to voter registration and a mock election was held that fielded candidates for state and congressional offices that Blacks could not contest through the regular Democratic Party. After succeeding in their efforts at precinct and county organization, the MFDP made its boldest move by challenging the seating of the regular state party at the 1964 National Democratic Convention. The regular party made little pretense of being open to Black participation, resolving in its July 1964 convention that "we believe the Southern white man is the truest friend the Negro ever had; we believe in separation of the races in all phases of life" (Southern Exposure 2000, 517).

> A week later, 300 people from all over Mississippi attended the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's state convention in Jackson. Unlike the regular state party, the MFDP pledged their support to the national party, and because of their loyalty, they were convinced they would be allowed to represent Mississippi at the Democratic National convention. They elected **38** delegates and alternates from their number to travel to Atlantic City, with Aaron Henry as chairperson of the delegation and Fannie Lou Hamer as vice-chairperson.

The strength of the MFDP created conflicts for [President] Lyndon Johnson, who virtually controlled the convention but feared a walkout by the entire South if the Freedom Delegation was seated. He assigned Hubert Humphrey, a leader of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, the job of defeating the Freedom Delegation.

Besides putting intense pressure on the members of the Credentials Committee to reject the MFDP cause, the president offered a compromise: the MFDP could have two at-large seats, with the delegates selected by the president, and a pledge from the National Democratic Party never to seat a lily-white delegation again, beginning in **1968.** The regular Mississippi delegation would be seated after taking a [party] loyalty oath. (Southern Exposure 2000, **518–519)**

The challenge was not won, despite a hearing that brought favorable notices from the national audience. The impassioned speech of grassroots leader Fannie Lou Hamer, whose limp betrayed the racial violence perpetrated against her in rural Mississippi, captivated the nation. Her signal rejection of the compromise, however, indicated the decision of the MFDP to reject the Johnson compromise. She expressed the sentiment of many of the delegates in saying that her burdens in racist Mississippi were worth more than two seats (Lee **1999;** Mills **1993)** and the offer of a partial victory, which it rejected.

However, in another four years the MFDP succeeded in unseating the regular delegation at the **1968** convention (Dittmer **1994).** Thereafter the remnants of the MFDP, then dubbed the Loyal Democrats, effectively supplanted the regular state party and the racially integrated organization elected an African American as party chairman—Aaron Henry. Although the MFDP passed from the scene, this movement-cum-political-party was one of the most successful in the history of grassroots political participation. Its aim was the destruction of the segregated party system and the integration of African Americans into the political process, which it accomplished in a mere eight years in the most avowedly racialized political structure in the states. Aaron Henry and a liberal, integrated leadership fully reformed the old party, whose agenda was subsequently heavily influenced by the large and highly mobilized African American electorate. The new Democratic Party oversaw the transformation of the face of political leadership in Mississippi. The state has gone from twenty-eight African American elected officials in **1968** to **803** in **1997,** the largest number in the country.

Democratic Party Conventions:
Black Delegates and Black Presidential Candidates

A major shift in the influence of African Americans within the Democratic Party was indicated in their increased selection as delegates to the national conventions. Such delegates inspired the candidacies of both Shirley Chisholm and Jesse Jackson. The first dramatic increase in their involvement as party delegates happened between presidential campaigns of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. In 1960 there were a mere forty-six Black delegates, but four years later there were 209. By 1972 they constituted 15 percent of the delegates, and their proportion has rarely dropped below that level since. When Jesse Jackson ran the second time in 1988, they were **23** percent of the convention delegates (see Table 4.10). Moreover, these single-party-allegiant Democratic voters have played prominent roles in the outcomes of several presidential elections since 1964, where competition in the South was especially high—those of Johnson, Carter, and Clinton. (See chapter 5.)

Jesse Jackson and the Presidential Primaries

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s generated the most significant wave of African American social activism and political participation since the Reconstruction. Perhaps the zenith of that activism and participation was reached when Jesse Jackson became a serious contender for the American presidency, first in 1984 and again in 1988. Jackson rode the crest of the most successful social movement since the abolition of slavery. As we saw in chapter 2, the movement grew from contentious interactions between grassroots citizens and the racially exclusively state systems throughout the South. Blacks demanded public inclusion and social integration, while the white power structure resisted it. The Black resistance, however, escalated to a comprehensive challenge to the status quo. In the process, the challenge was sustained by significant organized resources, especially college students and decentralized, largely Baptist, church organizations. Leaders emerged within the enormous organized networks of students, ministers, and civil rights groups that then provided the glue for political mobilization. The most successful of these leaders all had an agenda for the elimination of racial exclusion and discrimination. It was from this network that Jesse Jackson sprang as a lieutenant of Martin Luther King Jr. Jackson came to ma-

TABLE 4.10   African American Democratic Party Delegates, 1972–1996

	Number	*Percent*
1972	452	15
1976	323	11
1980	481	14
1984	697	18
1988	962	23
1992	771	18
1996	908	21

SOURCE: Data from Walton and Smith 2000, 147.

turity only after the death of King, but at a moment when the movement was already shifting to another phase.

The new challenge was focused on translating the benefits of social mobilization into political gains. Enormous gains had been made in the passage of statutes restoring the franchise to Blacks in the South, and there seemed to be a national consensus that a public policy agenda that included racial inclusion was desirable. Indeed, the first signs of the successful campaign for Black Power could be discerned as early as 1965, when newly enrolled Black voters elected several of their own to local posts in the South. Around the same time, roughly in 1967, a new wave of political successes of the African American migrants to the cities began. Several large industrial cities elected Black mayors. In almost all cases in the South and the North, these political successes came on the heels of voter registration and mobilization efforts specifically designed to elect Black candidates.

The end result was that by 1984 there was a highly mobilized national Black electorate. Its size and relatively focused agenda spawned Jackson's efforts to seek the presidency using that Black base. By 1988 he had succeeded in organizing the majority of this racial bloc to support his presidential bid in the presidential primaries. Although he did not win the Democratic Party nomination, he probably generated the highest level of mobilization of Blacks for primary participation in U.S. history. Clearly most Blacks saw his candidacy as a sign of political achievement.

The majority of African Americans saw Jesse Jackson's 1984 bid for the presidency as a sign of hope. It occurred in a political environment in which racial progress had slowed, even within their chosen party. Many had taken an economic hit during the Reagan recession, at the same time witnessing an increase in economic disparities be-

tween themselves and whites. Reagan's 1982 budget cuts included reductions in a variety of social welfare policies—job training, health services, food stamps, and guaranteed student loan programs (Tate 1993). With about one-third of African Americans living below poverty level, these cuts potentially had a disproportionate negative impact for them. Although the momentum was still high from the Chicago election of Harold Washington in 1983, many African Americans remained disappointed at the lack of national Democratic support for Washington in that highly visible campaign. Indeed, two potential presidential candidates, Edward Kennedy and Vice President Walter Mondale, endorsed other candidates—Mayor Jayne Byrne and Richard Daley Jr., respectively. Jackson would exploit that voter unhappiness.

Although the climate appeared to be right for an African American bid for the presidency, there were some strong reservations and opposition to Jackson's candidacy. Among Blacks, some high-profile leaders, such as Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Sr., and Andrew Young, endorsed Vice President Mondale. They accepted the view that Jackson was unable to win and was thus a distraction. In addition, they, like many white party cadre, feared that Jackson's candidacy would propel more white voters toward the Republican Party. Many African American leaders also questioned Jackson's lack of political experience compared with other potential Black candidates. They felt that a more attractive candidate was needed to challenge a strong Republican incumbent.

Jackson's efforts were further weakened when an African American reporter of the *Washington Post* leaked information to a colleague claiming that Jackson had referred to Jewish Americans as "Hymies" and referred to New York City as "Hymietown." After initially denying the report, Jackson was forced to apologize to the Jewish community for his comments. This and the other combination of elements led Democratic leaders, both Black and white, to support Walter Mondale for the party's nomination.

Notwithstanding the damage done to his reputation with the Jewish community, Jackson was able to capitalize on his charismatic personality by "making news" (Walters 1988, 170). He operated on a budget roughly a third of those of other Democratic candidates (Tate 1993), yet he made headlines. One such event occurred when he helped in the repatriation of a Black Navy flier, Lt. Robert Goodman Jr., who had been captured and imprisoned by the Syrian government. Later Jackson received favorable coverage of a proposal for a humanitarian immigration policy while in Mexico and in asking the

USSR not to boycott the Los Angeles summer Olympic Games during a visit with the Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin (Walters **1988).** These high-profile acts showed him not only to be capable of making the grand gesture but also of having keen negotiating skills and a command of broad national issues.

Given that there was some clear opposition to Jackson's bid for the presidency, he had to first legitimize his efforts. He began this effort by forming an exploratory committee headed by Mayor Richard Hatcher, whose earlier election to the mayoralty of Gary, Indiana, made him a powerful symbol of the promise of racial mobilization. In doing so, Jackson attempted to convey the message that he or some other Black candidate would compete for the Democratic nomination (Walters **1988).** His aims seemed to be endorsed by the grassroots African American population, if not by the Black hierarchy in the Democratic Party. The nation's most popular Black magazine, *Ebony,* reported that **67.1** percent of its subscribers granted approval to the idea of a Black running for president, and that **61.6** percent approved of Jackson's candidacy (Walters **1988).** Other nationwide polls indicated that Jackson also was popular among white voters (Walters 1988), but clearly the driving force of his candidacy was that he could mobilize his African American base. Meanwhile, voter registration levels among Blacks during the **1984** election season were the highest they had been since the **1968** presidential contest, which succeeded the **1965** Voting Rights Act (Walton and Smith 2000, **168).**

With the stage set for Jackson to compete for the party's nomination, the next step was to mobilize financial support. Like so many other Black politicians before him, Jackson turned to the Black church. As a Baptist minister and consort of Martin Luther King, Jackson had immediate entrée to that vast network of powerful clergymen and their congregations. He received an important endorsement from the Reverend T. J. Jemison, then president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc., which possessed a congregation of some **6.8** million members (Walters **1988).** But even more critical was Jemison's formidable organizing skills, which he had first demonstrated in the successful execution of the bus boycott in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in **1953.** He deployed those skills in the interest of Jackson's campaign, mobilizing Baptist clergy all over the country. Other denominations followed suit. Jemison was able to garner the support of the Reverend J. O. Patterson, primate of the Church of God in Christ, a fast-growing sect of Pentecostal churches. Patterson served as the representative of almost **4** million Black churchgoers, for example.

One of the most notable strategies Jackson adopted in the 1984 campaign was his effort to establish the Rainbow Coalition. Pinderhughes (1988) states that the Rainbow idea was first implemented by Mel King in his campaign for mayor of Boston. According to Walters, "care was taken to assure that the coalition was comprised of three categories of representatives: male and female, ethnic/racial, and issue representation" (1988, 166). Indeed, special efforts were made to include Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Although this type of strategy was probably necessary for a presidential campaign, it did have its downside. According to Pinderhughes (1988), it forced Jackson to deal with a broader set of issues, which made the campaign a much more complex process.

Just how effective was Jackson in generating African American participation for his candidacy in 1984? Although he was a favorite among Black voters, he was unable to garner unanimous support. Among Blacks voting in their state's caucus or primary, approximately 55 percent voted for Jackson (Tate 1993, 138). And even though Jackson campaigned on a "bottom-up" theme, poor people and less-educated Blacks were less likely to support his candidacy. Tate (1993) argues that poor Blacks may have been so hard hit economically during the Reagan administration that they felt compelled to support a candidate who had the potential to win the general election.

Once the dust cleared, Jackson finished third behind Walter Mondale and Gary Hart. However, as the data in Table 4.11 reveals, Jackson make an exceptional showing in a campaign where Mondale, one of the strongest party insiders, was the presumptive nominee. Mondale had been a prime prospect for the presidency for many years, first achieving notice as a senator from Minnesota. He had also been elected as Jimmy Carter's vice president in 1976 and had been selected again for that slot in the failed 1980 contest. Senator Gary Hart, too, was a formidable candidate, actually remaining the front-runner for almost half of the primary season. Yet Jackson carried more than 20 percent of the vote in every primary state in which Blacks constituted more than 20 percent of the population and states that had major cities with substantial Black populations. These were largely southern states and highly urbanized industrial northern states. Under the most competitive circumstance, in which a sitting vice president and an equally attractive candidate from the Senate were seeking the party's nomination, Jesse Jackson was able to significantly mobilize African American voters, placing first in Louisiana and the District of Columbia. He placed second in the highly competitive state of Maryland, where the primary was conducted in May, late in the season.

TABLE 4.11   Jesse Jackson Votes by State in the 1984 Presidential Primaries[a]

State[b]	Votes	Percent	Position	Black Percentage of State Population, 1980
New Hampshire	5,311	5.3	4	0.47
Vermont	5,761	7.8	3	0.23
Alabama	83,787	19.6	4	25.50
Florida	144,263	12.2	3	13.78
Georgia	143,730	21.0	3	26.81
Massachusetts	31,824	5.0	5	3.85
Rhode Island	3,875	8.7	3	2.89
Illinois	348,843	21.0	3	14.65
Connecticut	26,395	12.0	3	6.97
New York	355,541	25.6	3	13.70
Wisconsin	62,524	9.8	3	3.89
Pennsylvania	264,463	16.0	3	8.79
District of Columbia	69,106	67.3	1	70.24
Tennessee	81,418	25.3	3	15.79
Louisiana	136,707	42.9	1	29.45
Indiana	98,190	13.7	3	7.55
Maryland	129,387	25.5	2	22.70
North Carolina	243,945	25.4	3	22.43
Ohio	237,133	16.4	3	9.97
Nebraska	13,495	9.1	3	0.22
Oregon	37,106	9.3	3	1.42
Idaho	3,104	5.7	3	0.29
California	546,693	18.4	3	7.68
Montana	388	1.1	3[c]	0.22
New Jersey	159,788	23.6	3	12.56
New Mexico	22,168	11.8	3	1.77
South Dakota	2,738	5.2	3	0.31
West Virginia	24,697	6.7	3	3.34
Total	3,282,431	**18.2**	3	11.70

[a] Other serious contenders for more than half of the primary season (February through June) were Walter Mondale (38 percent), Gary Hart (35 percent), and George McGovern (2 percent).

[b] States are listed in order of the dates the primaries were held.

[c] Write-ins, where 83 percent of voters expressed no preference.

SOURCES: Data from *Congressional Quarterly Guide to U.S. Elections,* 4th ed., 1994, 372–377; Salzman et al., *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History,* vol. 5, 1996, 3032.

Although Jackson finished third in the 1984 primary, his bid in 1988 appeared to have more favorable circumstances. With improved name recognition and a more issue-oriented campaign, he set his eyes on the Democratic nomination. Jackson's candidacy was aided when one of the potential front-runners, Gary Hart, dropped out of the race. Moreover, the presumptive favorite for the nomination was not a party insider, as Mondale had been in 1984. At the same time, more primaries were being held. The number of states holding Democratic primaries increased from twenty-eight in 1984 to thirty-five in 1988.

Jackson finished second in 1988 behind front-runner Michael Dukakis. Compared with his 1984 campaign, he more than doubled his votes and nearly tripled the number of delegates he received at the national convention. This increase in delegate support may have been a function of the decrease in the threshold necessary to win delegates from 20 percent to 15 percent (Smith 1990, 221). His supporters were very similar to those who supported him in 1984. His strongest consisted of middle-aged and college-educated Blacks, while those without a high school diploma and older Blacks were less inclined to support him.

The data in Table 4.12 illustrate the spectacular increase in the mobilization and participation levels of African Americans between the 1984 and 1988 campaigns. They also indicate a certain degree of success of the Rainbow Coalition concept. In 1988 Jackson carried five southern states and the District of Columbia, all with substantial African American constituents. Even more remarkable was that he held second place in twenty-four states, including all of the major population centers across the country. Again, registration among African Americans was about equal to that of 1984 and 1968. Their turnout on election day was higher still, enabling African Americans to influence outcomes far beyond their numbers. At the same time, Jackson's Rainbow Coalition had clearly gelled. He placed second in twelve states where the African American population was well under 10 percent, meaning that he was obviously attracting others to his platform for racial inclusion and broader social change. Tate (1993, 15) argues that he succeeded in mobilizing new Black voters and interest for presidential contests.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the behavior African Americans have exhibited since the end of slavery. The path dictating their behavior has

TABLE 4.12   Jesse Jackson Votes[a] by State in the 1988 Presidential Primaries

State[b]	Votes	Percent	Position	Black Percentage of State Population, 1980
New Hampshire	9,615	7.8	4	0.47
South Dakota	3,867	5.4	6	0.31
Vermont	13,044	5.7	2	0.23
Alabama	176,764	43.6	1	25.50
Arkansas	85,003	17.1	3	16.31
Florida	254,912	20.0	2	13.78
Georgia	**247,831**	39.8	1	26.81
Kentucky	49,667	15.6	3	9.81
Louisiana	221,532	35.5	1	29.45
Maryland	152,642	28.7	2	22.70
Massachusetts	133,141	18.7	2	3.85
Mississippi	160,651	44.7	1	35.19
Missouri	106,386	20.2	2	10.44
North Carolina	224,177	33.0	2	22.43
Oklahoma	52,417	13.3	4	6.77
Rhode Island	7,445	15.2	2	2.89
Tennessee	119,248	20.7	2	15.79
Texas	433,335	24.5	2	11.98
Virginia	164,709	45.1	1	18.86
Illinois	484,233	32.2	2	14.65
Connecticut	**68,372**	28.3	2	6.97
Wisconsin	285,995	28.2	2	3.89
New York	585,076	37.1	2	13.70
Pennsylvania	411,260	27.3	2	8.79
District of Columbia	68,840	80.0	1	70.24
Indiana	145,021	22.5	2	7.55
Ohio[c]	378,866	27.4	2	9.97
Nebraska	43,380	25.7	2	0.22
West Virginia	45,788	13.5	2	3.34
Oregon	148,207	38.1	2	1.42
Idaho	8,066	15.7	2	0.29
California	1,102,093	35.1	2	7.68
Montana	26,908	22.1	2	0.22
New Jersey	213,705	32.7	2	12.56
New Mexico	52,988	28.1	2	1.77
Total	6,685,699	29.1	2	11.70

[a] Other serious contenders for more than half of the primary season (February through June) were Michael Dukakis (43 percent), Al Gore (14 percent), Richard Gephardt (6 percent), Paul Simon (4 percent), and Gary Hart (2 percent).

[b] States are listed in order of the date the primaries were held.

[c] Jackson slate.

SOURCES: Data from *Congressional Quarterly Guide to U.S. Elections,* 4th ed., 1994, **378–385**; Salzman et al., *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History,* vol. 5, 1996, 3032.

been one of continuing struggle in a racialized environment. This path has sometimes featured resistance to or ambivalence about the inclusion of Blacks in the political process and broader American society, including discriminatory practices toward their exercise of the franchise. However, through struggle and in collaboration with significant allies throughout America, African Americans have achieved the formal legal mechanisms for universal freedom. In practice they have used these mechanisms and a variety of social-change strategies, such as mobilization, to participate in the political system. As the analysis showed, they began to do this with regularity during the colonial period, when they aligned with those who supported inclusion in a relentlessly racialized environment.

That early platform for racial inclusion has constituted the primary political agenda guiding African American political behavior ever since. Its primary effect is that African Americans act mostly as a bloc in electoral politics and consistently select partisan allies for their position on the question of racial inclusion. In the two-party system that has been in place for much of the nation's history, only rarely have both parties been regarded as having optimal positions on racial inclusion. Even long before the Civil War, it has been one or the other, forcing Blacks into a kind of one-party affiliation in an otherwise two-party system.

First Blacks associated with the northern business classes, the partisan forerunners of the Republican Party, because they opposed slavery. At the time of the Civil War they supported the Party of Lincoln, the Republicans, regarded as the architects of the emancipation. Residual support for the Republicans outlasted the party's affirmative efforts for racial inclusion, a relatively short-lived period after the war. That was followed by a long period of virtually complete political exclusion resulting from the breach of the franchise in the South, where most Blacks lived.

With the Great Depression and shifting alignments within the two parties, the Democrats became the party of choice for Blacks. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and a party platform espousing racial inclusion were signal events to the shift. Meanwhile, a major migration that eventually brought nearly half of the African American population to urban centers in the North began to produce political results. Cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York used mobilization strategies in majority-Black electoral districts to elect their own to offices at the congressional and municipal levels. By 1940 most of these officials were wearing the Democratic Party label, a sentiment that continues apace to the present. This political success in the

North was matched in the South after an intense social movement for inclusion through the 1950s and 1960s. It began to bear fruit in the late 1960s, when the first Blacks were elected to local office in small towns and villages in majority-Black southern towns. By the 1970s Blacks were sending their first congressional representative to Washington in 100 years.

Overall, this mobilization produced what may be called a national Black electoral constituency, which Jesse Jackson brought to its highest level of mobilization during his campaigns for the presidency. Voting registration levels among Blacks averaged well over 60 percent, and in some local and congressional districts where they were a voting majority, levels reached or exceeded 80 percent. The proof that this potential was being converted to actual voting lay in the extraordinary increase in the number of elected officials whose election was completely controlled by the turnout of Black voters. Clearly, they largely determined the fortunes of Jesse Jackson in his remarkable presidential primary successes.

Moreover, the bloc voting of Blacks for the Democratic Party has on occasion influenced the outcome of presidential contests since the Voting Rights Act of 1965, notably those of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. The influence of African American political participation remains greatest in those districts and communities where they are able to pool their votes for the selection of one of their own. It is in these instances that their foremost agenda item, racial inclusion, is most consistently manifested. In the general partisan arena, it remains the case that the broader bases of the two parties make racial agenda items more difficult to support. And in any case, historically African Americans have perceived that only one of the parties at a time warranted the group's affiliation.

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