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African American Representation: Political Party Incorporation and Candidate Recruitment in
Georgia and Mississippi

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Abstract

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The lower descriptive political representation of African Americans in the United States raises a very important question: why aren't African Americans running and winning at the same rate as their white counterparts? I hypothesize that political party incorporation and strengthened candidate recruitment of blacks will increase African American descriptive representation. Following the research of Kira Sanbonmatsu (2006) on candidate recruitment of women, I intend to show that party incorporation and candidate recruitment do increase African American representation. The overall importance of descriptive representation in politics demonstrates the vast significance of this study. While many scholars argue that the presence of majority-black districts is the primary determinant of whether African Americans run, my study provides introductory evidence that other factors may be involved in motivating African Americans to run.

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"A society or a community built of different and diverse individuals can actually be stronger and more vibrant by virtue of the combining and harmonizing of its different elements. The acceleration and perfecting of that advancement should now be the task for our future" (Governor William Winter 2010)

Introduction

The passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 was the catalyst for marked increases in participation of African Americans in the political process. As a result, in the United States the number of black elected officials increased substantially. For example, there are currently 44 African American members of Congress as opposed to only six members in 1965 (National Public Radio 2011). Blacks now hold 9 percent of all state legislative seats (National Conference of State Legislators 2009). The United States elected its first African American President in 2008. Nevertheless, observers find that African Americans are still not running and winning at the same rate as their white counterparts (Highton 2004; Swain 1995).

As Barker et al. (1999) note, the number of African American elected officials jumped from 1,469 in 1970 to 8,015 in 1992. Not coincidentally, 1992 was the year when wholesale redistricting occurred throughout the nation and dozens of new majority-black districts were created. The overwhelming majority of black politicians run and serve in majority-black districts, especially in the Southern states. The number of majority-black districts has not increased substantially since the early 1990s, and with this the number of African American elected officials has also stagnated (Table 1).

Table 1: Percent of Total State Legislative Seats Held by African Americans, by Year

Year	Percent of Total Seats
1992	9%
1994	7.50%
1996	8%
2001	8%
2003	8%
2007	8%
2009	9%

(National Conference of State Legislators 2009)

In concluding his article, "White Voters and African American Candidates for Congress" (2004), Highton asserts that there is a great need to "develop and test new explanations for the dominant pattern of black officeholding in America" (17). He points out that African Americans overwhelmingly run in majority-black districts, and rarely appear as candidates in majority-white districts (17). Since majority-white legislative districts in the United States greatly outnumber majority-black districts and no state has a black population over 40 percent, it is fair to assume that to increase black representation, African Americans must begin running in greater numbers *outside* of majority-black districts.

There are several factors that contribute to lower descriptive representation of African Americans: incumbency disadvantage, socioeconomic issues, dearth of African Americans in "pipeline professions" and white voter resistance, among others. Although these factors surely still affect African American descriptive representation in the United States, they do not fully explain the problem. Since the 1960s, African Americans have been actively involved in the political system, are improving, albeit slowly, in socioeconomic status, are now voting at higher rates, and research shows that whites are

increasingly more willing to vote for African American candidates (Bullock and Dunn 1999; Highton 2004).

In this thesis, I look beyond these explanations given for low African American representation and focus on the *emergence* of African American candidates. My research addresses why African Americans are not running at the same rate as their white counterparts, especially outside of majority-black districts. Specifically, I focus on the question: do incorporation within a political party and candidate recruitment affect African Americans' decisions to run for office? I argue that both lack of inclusion within a state Democratic Party and lack of candidate recruitment hurt black descriptive representation. Further, I argue that in states that have greater black incorporation within the Democratic Party, more African Americans will be encouraged to run for office by political elites. My main premise is that greater political party incorporation will lead to better candidate recruitment of African Americans, which will result in higher black descriptive representation.

I provide evidence regarding party incorporation and recruitment through almost 90 in-depth interviews with participants in the political communities of Georgia and Mississippi. I chose Georgia and Mississippi as my two case study states because of their obvious similarities – both have large black populations, are located in the Deep South and are conservative-leaning. Yet, black descriptive representation in the two states differs, especially at the statewide level. While my conclusions are specifically relevant to the political processes of these two states, it is hoped that the methodology and cited factors can be helpful to future work applicable elsewhere.

Chapter One describes the justifications for comparing Georgia and Mississippi. Based on previous research regarding black representation, I attempt to control for four potential factors that could compromise my findings: the size of the black population, geographic location, electorate ideology and the type of primary system. Chapter Two looks at general factors that inhibit black representation, detailing how incumbency, socioeconomic disparity, the paucity of African Americans in pipeline professions and white voter resistance negatively affect the number of African American candidates and their chances of winning. I then focus more specifically on two possible factors that have not been researched extensively but may which also affect the number of African Americans running for and winning office – incorporation in the state Democratic Party and candidate recruitment of African Americans.

The remaining chapters detail my hypotheses and analysis. In Chapter Three, I describe the significance of political parties in this context. Based on Aldrich's (1995) political party theory, I look at how ambitious office-seekers use parties to their advantage, effectively creating an "endogenous institution," where those who join parties are also those who over time shape and change them. From this literature, I develop my first hypothesis on the effects of black incorporation in the Democratic Party. I argue that African Americans in Mississippi are much less included within the party structure than African Americans in Georgia, and find support for this assertion.

My fourth chapter looks at candidate recruitment and how it may affect an individual's decision to run. I focus on political ambition and how it differs between gender and racial groups. I look at why women may need more encouragement than men to run. Using the work of Sanbonmatsu (2006) on female candidate recruitment and how

this affects their decision to run, I develop hypotheses about increasing black

representation by encouragement from political elites. I present the results from my

primary data, providing introductory evidence that candidate recruitment positively

impacts African Americans' decisions to run for office.

　　　　After reporting the results, I review the findings of all chapters, and answer these

questions: how is greater political incorporation better for candidate recruitment? How

does candidate recruitment affect black descriptive representation? I also suggest

potential avenues of research for scholars, focusing on two areas of further examination.

Chapter One: Choice of States

I conducted comparative case studies of incorporation, recruitment practices and the status of African American candidates in two states. In my choice of states, I wanted to control for the most important factors that are identified in the existing research. After reviewing problems that could arise, Mississippi and Georgia appeared to be the best options for my comparative analysis (See Table A.1 in Appendix for detailed demographic information of the two states).

First, Georgia and Mississippi have black populations of significant relative size, crucial because political parties would be materially hampered in efforts to recruit black candidates with too small an eligibility pool. The "eligibility pool" concept comes from an approach developed by Fox and Lawless (2004). In their study, they drew a national sample of 6,800 individuals from the professions that were most prevalent in state legislatures and the 107th Congress (266). They found that "law and business are the top two professions for men, followed by education and politics. For women, the numbers are reversed, with education and politics as the leading two professions, followed by business and law" (275). If a state has a high black population, I assume that there will be a sufficient number of African Americans in these four employment categories for recruitment of candidates.

Of the total United States population, 12.9 percent of its citizens are African American (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Thus, I considered only states with a black population above the national average. The black populations of Mississippi and Georgia

are at the high end of the spectrum, at 37.2 percent and 30.2 percent, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2009).

Second, scholars show notable regional differences in where African Americans run for office and are elected. A report by Bositis (2000) shows that the South was the region with the largest number of black elected officials, followed by the Northeast and Midwest. The Western states have the smallest number of black officials (8). Both Georgia and Mississippi are located in the Deep South and are relatively close to each other, which should adequately control for their location differences.

Third, it is critical to ensure that the electorates' ideologies are relatively homogenous between the two states. It would have compromised the design of my research had I included a liberal and a conservative state, as the difference in ideological character might have skewed the results. African Americans heavily identify themselves as Democrats. According to a recent Pew Center poll, African Americans only make up 2 percent of the Republican Party, but 22 percent of the Democratic Party (2009, 6). It would be plausible to expect that many African Americans are inclined to run in relatively blue (Democratic) states because the states' electorate ideologies would increase their likelihood of success.

Findings from a recent Gallup Poll show that the national average of people that identify themselves as conservatives is 38.8 percent (2009). Both Georgia and Mississippi are more conservative than the nation as a whole. In Mississippi, 48.3 percent of people identify themselves as conservatives, while only 13.9 percent identify themselves as liberals. In Georgia, 40.3 percent view themselves as conservative and 18.4 percent said they were liberals (2009). Although Mississippi is a somewhat more

conservative state, Georgia and Mississippi are still comparable and I do not think this small difference undermines my findings in a meaningful way (See Table A.2 in Appendix for more information on ideology).

Fourth, it is important to control for the type of primary system because it may have an effect on African American representation. According to Moncrief et al., "open primary systems provide more room for individual candidate initiative and less control for the political parties" (2001, 20). Both Georgia and Mississippi have open primary systems, in which any registered voter may vote, regardless of party identification.

There are other states that fit these criteria as well, most notably Alabama. I chose not to look at Alabama in this thesis for two reasons: evidence shows that blacks are more incorporated into their state's politics and the Democratic to Republican power shift just finished in the state, so it would be too premature to study Alabama since it has only had Republican rule at the state level since January 2011. Furthermore, Mississippi presented the most interesting political scenario because it has the largest black population of any state and is the only Deep South state that has a chamber of the General Assembly still controlled by Democrats, yet it has the poorest black representation of any state in the Deep South. That being said, a comparison of Georgia and Alabama may be a better option in the future because of their socioeconomic similarities, their large urban centers (Atlanta and Birmingham, respectively), their electorate ideology and their racial histories.

My dependent variable, the level of political representation of African Americans, varies between the two states. At the state legislature level, Georgia and Mississippi have a similar number of blacks serving (National Conference of State Legislatures 2009). In

Georgia, African Americans occupy 23 percent of the seats in the state legislature, in comparison to 29 percent of the seats in Mississippi (Table 2).

Table 2: African American Representation at the State Legislature Level

	Georgia	Mississippi
Total State Representatives:	180	122
Percent African American:	23% (41)	30.3% (37)
Total State Senators:	56	52
Percent African American:	23% (13)	23.1% (12)
Total Black State Representation:	23%	29%

(Georgia and Mississippi Secretary of State websites 2010)

However, I believe that these numbers merit a closer look. All of Mississippi's black representatives, except for one Senator, represent districts that have an African American population of at least 60 percent (Mississippi Secretary of State website 2010). In contrast, Georgia has 18 African American state legislators that serve in districts that are under 60 percent black (Georgia Secretary of State website 2010). Furthermore, in 2010, 15 African Americans ran in majority-white districts in Georgia, while only three ran in Mississippi in 2007 (Georgia and Mississippi Secretary of State websites 2010).

Mississippi has also had few black candidates run for statewide office (especially after Reconstruction), while Georgia has seen a significantly greater number of attempts at statewide office by African Americans. During Mississippi's last election year, only one African American ran for statewide office; in comparison, eight African Americans ran for statewide office in 2010 in Georgia (Mississippi and Georgia Secretary of State websites 2010).

Although these two states are comparable in several aspects, their pattern of black representation is strikingly different. Georgia has seen many more attempts and successes of African Americans winning in general, and in majority-white districts and at

the statewide level specifically. I attempt to answer why this discrepancy between Georgia and Mississippi exists.

In the following chapter, I first look at general issues found in the literature that decrease African American representation: lack of African Americans in pipeline professions, incumbency disadvantage, socioeconomic disparities and white voter resistance. I then focus on two factors in particular, black incorporation within the state Democratic Party and candidate recruitment processes, and how these two factors work together to affect African American representation.

Chapter Two: Factors that Limit African American Political Representation

Many factors contribute to lower representation of African Americans in the United States. African Americans have traditionally been underrepresented in professions that are most likely to yield candidates: law, business and education (Fox and Lawless 2004, 216). Table 2 shows the small proportion of African American lawyers and professors at national universities. There are also only six (1.2%) African American Chief Executive Officers of Fortune 500 companies (Black Entrepreneur Profiles 2009).

Table 2: Percent Total of Pipeline Professions (Law and Education), by Race

Race	Percent Lawyers	Percent Professors
White	72%	86%
African American	7%	5%
Hispanic	6%	
Asian	15%	

(Chait and Trower 2001; NALP 2010)

However, the proportion of middle- and upper class African Americans that are employed in the three major pipeline professions has increased in the last few decades. For example, "the portion of black households making $75,000 to $99,999…increased nearly fourfold between 1967 and 2003" (Klein 2004). Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) find that the number of blacks practicing law is 18 times what it was in the late 1940s and that "there are 19 times as many African American editors and reporters as there were in 1950, and 33 times as many black engineers" (183).

Second, scholars argue that the incumbency advantage overwhelmingly benefits white males, severely hampering minorities' abilities to be elected to office. Research shows that once elected to office, it is much easier for elected officials to be reelected than for a first-time opponent to replace them. Ansolabehere and Snyder (2002) claim,

"seniority systems create a disincentive for voters to select someone else…as a legislator climbs the seniority rank the voters that legislator represent will benefit" (315). Moreover, the incumbency advantage has actually increased over time. The authors find that "at the beginning of the period (1942 through 1960), the incumbency advantage for all offices is around two percentage points…at the end of the period the average of all offices' incumbency advantages equals eight percentage points – four times the incumbency advantage in the 1940s and 1950s" (319).

Many researchers have focused on how incumbency hinders female representation and find, "incumbency is one of the most critical barriers to increasing the number of women serving in elective office since very high proportions of incumbents who seek re-election are re-elected" (Carroll & Jenkins 2001, 1). Carroll and Jenkins look at the effects of term limits on female representation. Many were hopeful that with the implementation of term-limits would increase female representation, but the authors find no support for this aspiration. In fact, they show that female representation has leveled off since the introduction of term-limits. As they explain:

> The number of women serving in state house seats that became open because incumbents were term-limited *decreased* following both the 1998 and 2000 elections. Across the six states that implemented term limits for state house races in 1998, 47 incumbent women were forced to leave office as a result of term limits while only 43 women won election to the house seats vacated by these women and other term-limited incumbents (8).

Clearly, the existence of more political opportunities is not alone sufficient to increase female representation. Carroll and Jenkins suggest that increasing concerted recruitment efforts will aid in strengthening the number of females that run and therefore win. Although there has been little research conducted on the effect of term limits on African American representation, I am rather confident that one would find a similar relationship

given the fact that both women and blacks entered politics in numbers at approximately

the same time.

Third, African Americans as a group are poorer than other races in the United

States. Recent research shows that 35 percent of African Americans are considered "in

poverty", compared to only 13 percent of the total white population (Kaiser Family

Foundation 2010). Research further shows that "in the modern era, black unemployment

has been consistently and substantially higher than that of whites" (Barker et al. 1999,

40).

Scholars have found that poverty lowers voter participation and civic engagement.

As Rosenstone (1982) states, "economic adversity reduces voter turnout. The

unemployed, the poor and the financially troubled are less likely to vote" (41). He finds

that people making under 20 percent of the median income per year are 9 percent less

likely to vote and people making between 20 and 40 percent of the median income are 5

percent less likely (36). Leighley and Nagler (1992) also show the impact of economic

strain on voter turnout. Looking at 1984 return results, they find that individuals with

higher education and income status tend to be more involved in civic activities, such as

voting, campaigning and organizing (720). Rosenstone explains this relationship well:

> When a person votes, attends political meetings, or works for the candidate he
> forgoes spending scarce resources on other, more personal concerns. When the
> return from attending to an immediate stressful personal problem, such as
> unemployment, is greater than the return from participating in politics, the
> opportunity costs of participation are higher (41).

Most candidates do not arbitrarily resolve to run for elective office. They have usually

come to the decision with some existing interest or involvement in politics (Schlesinger

1966; Kazee 1980; Fox & Lawless 2004). Thus, it is logical to assume that a lack of

ground-level participation in politics due to low socioeconomic status has a negative effect on candidacy for political office.

Even if an individual gets involved in politics and decides to run, he must have the ability and resources to effectively fundraise and campaign. Depending on the state and size of districts, a campaign for a state house seat can cost anywhere between $60,000 to $500,000 (University of Wisconsin System 2008). Given how expensive it is to run for office, if an individual does not have the means to either fund himself or raise enough money in his community, it would be foolish to spend the time running. Since African Americans tend to be less affluent on average, it is logical to assume that many potential candidates do not have the financial capability to run in a state house race, let alone for statewide office.

Finally, researchers point to the unwillingness of white voters to elect African Americans as a deterrent to blacks winning in political races in large numbers. Scholars have repeatedly found that the determining element in whether a black candidate wins an election is whether he is running in a majority-black district (Tate 2003; Lublin 1997). According to Tate (2003), the average black population in districts with a black Democratic representative is 58 percent, as opposed to 14 percent in districts with a white Democratic representative and 9 percent in districts with a white Republican representative (57).

Lublin (1997) finds that African Americans have an 86 percent chance of winning in districts that are at least 55 percent black (121). He does also argue that a majority or significant minority of blacks is not needed for African Americans to be elected and that the percentage of blacks needed to win an election varies according to local

circumstances. But Lublin concludes that the presence of a majority or a significant minority is nonetheless the primary determinant of a black candidate's electoral success (Voss and Lublin 1999).

There are mixed findings on how well African Americans do in districts that do not have a majority black population. While some scholars argue that black candidates can only seldom attract a sufficient number of white voters (Williams 1999; Lublin 1999), others have shown greater African American success in districts with an African American minority. Bullock and Dunn (1999) look at five districts in Florida, Georgia and Texas where blacks were seeking reelection that were redrawn for the 1996 election and that reduced black concentrations below 50 percent. They find that all the black candidates secured reelection and received about one-third of the white vote (1225). Although some argue that incumbency figured prominently in the victories, the data reveal only mixed support for this hypothesis, showing that incumbency is not a consistent determinant in minority-black districts (1235). Epstein and O'Halloran (1999) also find that "minority candidates have a substantial chance of winning elections in districts with a concentrated, but less than 50 percent minority population" (187). They argue that creating as many districts as possible in the range of 45 to 47 percent black voting-age population would maximize the number of African Americans elected to office (188).

Bullock and Dunn (1999) also find that the white crossover vote for a black candidate is much greater than black crossover for a white candidate (1236). They argue that "the white electorate is not monolithically unwilling to vote for African Americans" (1229) and that "by the time the black voting age population of a Southern district

reaches 41 percent, the probability of electing a black exceeds the likelihood of electing a white" (1236).

Highton (2004) finds that "because most black voters are Democrats while white voters are more evenly split between parties, a district that is just 20 percent black, but evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, could have a primary electorate that is about 35 percent black" (15). Moreover, white voters in the South are becoming more conservative and identifying as Republicans in larger numbers. They are less likely to support Democrats than whites in any other region of the country (Highton 2004, 16). This leads to even more inflation of black voters' influence in Democratic primaries in Southern states. Voss (1999) argues that in the South, "black voters hold enough influence in primaries to push qualified candidates into the general election, and white Democrats are loyal enough to elect their party's nominee regardless" (2). The reviewed research is not completely in one direction; nevertheless, it provides strong support for the view that merely being a black candidate in a majority-white district is not fatal to electoral success.

Other researchers point to the types of African Americans that can attract white voters and win outside of majority-black districts. These scholars look at the strategy of deracialization, a concept first developed in the late 1970s by Charles Hamilton (Gillespie 2009). McCormick and Jones (1993) formally define deracialization as an electoral strategy which dictates that African Americans conduct "a campaign in a stylistic fashion that defuses the polarizing effects of race by avoiding explicit reference to race-specific issues, while at the same time emphasizing those issues that are perceived

as racially transcendent, thus mobilizing a broad segment of the electorate for purposes of capturing or maintaining a public office" (1993, 74).

Douglas Wilder's gubernatorial race in 1989 is a prime example of the use of deracialization. In a case study of his election, Jones and Clemmons (1993) argue that Wilder presented himself "as a social moderate and fiscal conservative who represented the 'New Virginia Mainstream' – a major theme of the campaign" (140). They also claim that Wilder never appeared as a black candidate; on the contrary, he focused on issues that appealed to all voters (e.g., economic and educational themes). Wilder became the first elected African American governor and won with the support of a biracial coalition.

The research on deracialization provides additional evidence that with the right strategy and biracial support African Americans *can* win outside of majority-black districts. The question then is: why don't more African Americans run in majority-white districts and for statewide office? I argue that there is another reason for the underrepresentation of blacks: African Americans often lack the belief that they are qualified to run and rarely get the kind of encouragement from political elites to run for office that would sufficiently counteract their doubts. The lack of encouragement then reinforces blacks' negative perceptions of their personal qualifications and of their chances of winning, creating a downward spiral of doubt.

In the following chapters, I compare Georgia and Mississippi and find differing levels of black political incorporation and candidate recruitment of African Americans. I posit that if African Americans are better incorporated in a political party, that party is likelier to do a better job of African American candidate recruitment, and find support for

this premise. I then look at relative levels of black representation and find a correlation

between incorporation and recruitment and increased representation.

Chapter Three: The Importance of Political Party Incorporation for African American Representation

Why Parties Matter

The seminal work of Gibson et al. (1983) looks at factors that possibly contribute to political party strength. They hypothesize that more powerful party organizations are better equipped for electoral success. Gibson and colleagues establish a party's strength by several factors, including organizational complexity, programmatic capacity and importantly, candidate-directed activity. They argue, "this sort [of activity] is beneficial to party organizations not only because it contributes to winning office, but also because it cultivates an important clientele for the party organization" (203).   Furthermore, they claim:

> Party organizational strength influences the electoral success of the party, especially in state and local contests. Strong parties are likely to be more successful at fielding candidates, a necessary prerequisite of winning elections. Candidate service activities – from campaign seminars to money contributions – probably also affect the likelihood of electoral success (216).

Although some research seems to provide evidence that political parties have been in decline since the 1960s, many scholars argue that the importance of parties has not diminished; rather, they have simply transformed in scope. With the development of the direct primary, certainly party leaders have less influence in the selection of the party's candidates. Yet this does not mean that candidates no longer need their party to help them win office. In fact, as Aldrich (1995) explains:

> Party organizations are if anything stronger, better financed and more professional at all levels now…the party provides more support – more money, workers and resources of all kinds – than any other organization for all but a very few candidates (15).

Aldrich further argues that parties are "endogenous institutions," created by political actors in the first place and shaped and maintained by these same actors over time (19). The political party is the main tool for office seekers to accomplish their goals, by giving them access to a myriad of resources, both financial and organizational. Politicians want to win office, and they use the party to coordinate groups of like-minded individuals who share their vision. The party helps to mediate and reduce competition – "there will be more aspirants than offices, and the political party and the two-party system are means of regulating the competition and channeling those ambitions" (22).

Other scholars have also looked at the benefits of political parties for potential candidates. Beard (1928) claims, "like a church or any society, the political party may be used as a social club…the social power of the party organization enables it to entrench itself by drawing into its ranks the best energies and talents of young people" (26). Bibby (1998) argues that political parties perform essential organizational functions. They usually have permanent headquarters that "provide services to a range of candidates and local units" (32); they have professional staff and financial resources; and state parties can also provide technical aid, such as get-out-the-vote services and polling. Finally, "party organizational strength…can have long-term consequences. A strong party structure can provide the infrastructure for candidates and activists to continue competing until political conditions become more favorable" (34).

If parties matter, the history of African Americans in the Democratic Party in the South, even after the Voting Rights Act, is a striking example of the dysfunction between a party and one of its significant constituencies. The relationship between these two groups has been tumultuous, to say the least. White Southern Democrats were unwilling

to include African Americans within the Democratic Party structure because of embedded hostility and overt racism. Perhaps precisely because this resistance was based on emotional foundations, party leaders went very far in trying to deny African American inclusion in the party. The following section provides a brief history and lays the framework for my findings on black incorporation within the Democratic Parties of Georgia and Mississippi.

The History of African American Exclusion from Southern Democratic Parties

Before the 1930s and the passage of New Deal legislation, African Americans, especially in the South, strongly identified with the Republican Party. Yet, President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty, the civil rights movement and the Democratic Party-led passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 all contributed to the African American shift to a strong Democratic Party identification (Black & Black 2002).

Key (1949) explains, "Southern political regionalism derives basically from the influence of the Negro…in the final analysis the peculiarities of southern white politics come from the impact of race" (665). This cleavage between the South and the rest of the United States is supported by the total resistance of Democratic organizations in the South to follow in the national Democratic Party's footsteps in regards to African American participation in the political process. They continued their hard-line exclusionary and segregationist policies.

As Black and Black (1987) assert, "no institution was more central to the old southern politics than the Democratic Party" (232). To maintain their dominance, Southern Democrats forcefully denied African Americans the right to vote, and the right to run:

As members of a private association, southern Democrats were free to establish whatever membership criteria they wished; in state after state, Democrats wanted only whites to vote in the party's nominating primaries to select candidates for the general election. But because Democratic nominees ordinarily faced no serious competition in general elections, the Democratic primaries actually functioned as the sole arena of meaningful choice in state politics…the proposition that southern Democratic parties were simply private organizations with no implicit state functions was so preposterous that only small children believed it (Black and Black 1987, 84).

Key (1949) also explains, "in no area where the Negro has become newly enfranchised has the Democratic Party attempted to assimilate him into the normal party operations" (647). Although African American exclusion in the Democratic Party was rampant throughout the South, Key notes that the Deep South state Democratic parties took the most extreme measures to deny African Americans the right to participate.

The Mississippi Democratic Party's 1964 resolution states, "we believe in the separation of races in all phases of our society" (Nash and Taggart 2006, 11). As the authors state, "in 1964, the members of the party's governing body were white, as were all the party officials. They stood in opposition to everything that civil rights organizations were trying to accomplish" (23). African Americans were barred from participation in the state party's meetings and had no voice at all in the state Democratic party.

Parker (1990) adds that there was a strong and concerted resistance by white political leaders in Mississippi after the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The many methods the legislature and state party used to exclude African Americans from the political process were gerrymandering to prevent black political representation, multimember legislative districts and the creation of at-large elections (35). Further, "beginning in 1966, the state legislature enacted a number of statutes designed to prevent

the election of black candidates including bills that increased the filing requirements for

independent candidates and eliminated elections for certain offices" (35).

Former Governor William Winter describes the reception that the first black

Mississippi state legislator in modern times, Robert Clark, was given by the Democratic

state House of Representatives:

> When he got to Jackson, they changed the desks around so the white
> representatives wouldn't have to sit by him. He was assigned a desk in the corner
> by himself. The Speaker of the House would not recognize him to make a
> motion. He was totally ostracized (Interview March 15th, 2011).

Governor Winter also talks about his first run for governor in 1967 and the tactics his

opponent used against him to garner white support:

> I was already regarded with some question by the segregationists in the state on
> whether I would be strong enough to maintain segregation…I was defeated in that
> race on that issue. I was a segregationist, all of us were segregationists, 99
> percent of white folks in Mississippi were segregationists. But I was not a strong
> enough segregationist, I was not willing to burn the house down to preserve it
> (Interview March 15th, 2011) (See Appendix for 1967 Negative Advertisement).

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was created in response to

the total exclusion of African Americans from the state Democratic Party. Along with

the Council of Federated Organization (COFO), an umbrella organization of the major

civil rights organizations working in Mississippi, the MFDP led an effort to be

recognized at the Democratic Party's 1964 National Convention. As Andrews (1997)

explains:

> The Credentials Committee failed to support the civil rights challenge, and the
> COFO delegation refused to accept the compromise offered by the Democratic
> Party of two at-large seats…the conflict over whether to accept the compromise
> crystallized a long-standing rift within the Mississippi movement between a
> moderate NAACP-led wing and a more radical MFDP- and SNCC-led wing of
> the movement (804).

There was increased tension between the two black wings of the party during the 1967 election. The leaders of the NAACP encouraged candidates to run in the Democratic primaries, while the leader of the MFDP urged his candidates to qualify by petition and run as independents in the general election (Parker 1990, 71). The history of Mississippi's Democratic Party is clearly wracked by disunity not only among its white and black members, but also within the black bloc itself.

The history of African Americans in the Georgia Democratic Party is similar, if not as fraught. In 1944, federal action was taken to abolish the all-white primary in Southern states. This was met with massive resistance by the Georgia state legislature:

> The legislature made a last-ditch effort to salvage the white primary and evade federal judicial oversight…the effect of the bill would have been to allow the Democratic Party to operate entirely without state supervision. One of those who supported the measure was Willis Smith, a representative from Carroll County. He said that "Georgia is in trouble…this is white man's country and we must keep it that way" (McDonald 2003, 55).

Although the white-only primary was eliminated, African Americans did not start voting in significant numbers in Georgia until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Act, too, was strongly opposed by the state Democratic Party and many county Democratic parties. One County Chair stated, "'it is ridiculous to invite our masses of illiterate negroes to our polling places'" (McDonald 2003, 96).

Georgia tried many of the same measures that Mississippi had to deny African Americans the right to vote and run for office, including gerrymandering, at-large elections and converting elected positions to appointed positions. Another voting change "widely adopted was a majority-vote requirement…these changes were adopted not only at a time when black political power was increasing, but often under overtly racial

circumstances – for example, after the near-win of a black candidate by a plurality vote, or after the resignation of a long-term white incumbent" (McDonald 2003, 135).

The reception by state legislatures of a handful of African American state representatives that were elected through a special election in 1965 further exemplifies the resistance of the Democratic Party to include blacks. A large number of state legislators tried to prevent Julian Bond, one of the newly elected black state representatives, from being sworn into office. Bond filed an action to force his seating; it was ultimately decided by the United States Supreme Court, which found for Bond and his right to take the oath of office. Bond explained, "'the hostility from white state legislators…was nearly absolute'" (McDonald 2003, 137).

The contentious and highly adversarial relations between the Georgia and Mississippi Democratic organizations and African Americans improved, erratically, slowly and over a long time. Legislation and changing social values helped to substantially increase African American affiliation with the Democratic Party in Georgia and Mississippi. However, in significant part as a result of this tumultuous history, African Americans did not necessarily also command for themselves within the Southern Democratic Party structure the power that their increased numbers would have suggested.

Many scholars distinguish black political emergence, or the proportion of African Americans serving in government, from political incorporation, which refers to the level of power to affect change that a group has in an institution (Browning et al. 1984). The argument, simply put, is that the mere presence of African Americans in government does not translate into political power. Mills (1956) claims, "no one…can truly be powerful unless he has access to the command of major institutions, for it is over these

institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, truly powerful" (9).

I predict that lack of full incorporation *within* state Democratic parties negatively impacts black descriptive representation, especially in majority-white districts and statewide offices. Furthermore, I believe that because African Americans are more represented in Georgia than in Mississippi, the Georgia state Democratic Party will have better black incorporation compared to the Mississippi Democratic Party. Thus, my first hypothesis follows:

H1*: Blacks are better incorporated within the Georgia state Democratic Party than in the Mississippi state Democratic Party.*

Data Methodology for Hypothesis 1

I used qualitative approaches to analyze the level of black incorporation in the Democratic Party. I employed the same methodology to select interview subjects in Georgia and Mississippi. In total, I conducted 87 interviews in the two states, the great majority of them in person and tape-recorded. They generally lasted about 25 to 45 minutes, though a few interviews lasted at least one hour. Most of the interviews were conducted on the record, although in some instances, I promised anonymity (i.e., using "state legislator" instead of an individual's name). Table 3 provides core information about the breakdown of my interview subjects.

Table 3: Interview Subjects, by Race, Gender and Interview Type

	Georgia	Mississippi
Total Interviews	38	49
Race		
African American	18	22
Non-African American	20	27
Gender		
Men	27	42
Women	11	7
Interview Type		
State Party	2	2
Legislators	34	45
Legislative Staff	1	1
Other	1	3

For this section of my research, I primarily focused on obtaining interviews with officials from the Democratic Party.[1] I sent letters to the Democratic Party Chairmen and Directors of both states. In Georgia, I requested an interview with the Chair of Recruitment for the Democratic Party.[2] I also interviewed the political directors of the House Democratic Caucus for the two states (neither Senate Democratic Caucus had similar organizations). Additionally, I interviewed former Governor William Winter of Mississippi, his colleague, Robert Lazarus, and Congressman John Lewis of Georgia because of their profound knowledge of race relations and their experiences in their state's politics.

I conducted semi-structured interviews. Regardless of the background or occupational status of the individual, I asked many of the same questions of all the interviewees. The format and open-ended questions allowed the respondents the chance to describe in their own words their experiences in the electoral environment.

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[1] I chose not to interview Republican Party or elected officials because there is only one African American Republican in the Georgia state legislature and none in the Mississippi state legislature. Evidence also shows that African Americans heavily identify with the Democratic Party.

[2] The Mississippi Democratic Party does not have a similar position.

In my interviews with party leaders and political consultants, I began by asking general questions about the political party and its functions in the state. I focused on the strength of the party and how (or if) African Americans played a role in the party structure. I inquired about the process of identifying candidates for both state districts and statewide office, specifically focusing on the type of individual they look for when recruiting. I also asked about the general role the Democratic Party played and if it had changed throughout the years. I did not ask specifically about candidate recruitment of African Americans until the end of the interviews (for a sample interview of party officials, see Appendix).

Results for Hypothesis 1: Black Political Party Incorporation

Through my conversations with informed subjects on the role of the Democratic Party,[3] a distinct difference between the Georgia and Mississippi Democratic party structures became quite clear. The Mississippi Democratic Party is widely perceived by Democratic legislators and political elites as ineffective and weak. As Robert Hooks, the House Democratic Caucus political director, explains:

> If you're going to understand the Mississippi process, you have to first understand that there is no Mississippi Democratic Party. There is a legal structure required by law…the law requires that they certify Democratic candidates. So as there are statutes, there is a state committee in place. It is a picture of absurdity. Individually, lots of good people, but when you put them in a room together, it's a mess.

One of the most common observations made about the state Democratic Party is its lack of cohesion and the presence of "fiefdoms" within the executive committee, notably setting off Chairman Jamie Franks (who is white) against Vice-Chairwoman Barbara Blackmon (who is African American). Although one cannot conclusively state that this

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[3] Most interview respondents for this section asked not to be identified by name or position, so I generally use "interview subject" or "respondent" in place of their names.

is race-tinged, one respondent informed me that Blackmon had support from the 2nd

Congressional District, which is majority-black, and Franks had backing from the 1st

Congressional District, which is majority-white. Several respondents talk about the

ceaseless disunity within the party. As one former member of the executive committee

comments:

> After a year, year and a half, I became very disenchanted and I don't think there's a way to fix the current system. There are too many people on the executive committee, that's the primary problem. It's controlled by factions that don't understand what it takes to run and get elected…I just think we need to start over from ground zero. We've had all this infighting for years, we have all these players who think they know everything but really don't have much practical sense in terms of how to run a campaign and win an election. There's a lot of animosity among the members.

Although the state executive committee is about two-thirds African American,

one respondent believes that the reality tells a different story. He claims:

> These positions are basically honorary. The state committee basically votes to give power to the Chairman and his staff, who he selects. The County Chairs generally have more power, and I think that has a majority-white makeup.

He states that although African Americans may be proportionally represented in the state

Democratic Party, they do not hold much power. In the Mississippi Democratic Party,

although African Americans participate in large numbers within the party structure, it

appears that "race still remains the great dividing line" (Interview, March 15th, 2011).

Another central issue that subjects mention is the Party's inability to evolve with

the current reality in Mississippi. It has failed to adapt to the conservative shift in the

South and it is still reaching out to a voter bloc (the white, rural population) that it lost

over a decade ago, while taking black voters for granted. Mr. Hooks, the House political

director, describes the situation well:

> Our political class never evolved. I fight this all the time. I'm 34 and I'm about 30 years younger than the next person who works in Democratic politics and they're still stuck in the old mindset of, treat the black vote as if it is monolithic, as if it's uncomplicated and wink and nod to the white folks. The real schizophrenic part is, they know it really doesn't work. But why in the world would you admit you don't know what to do when people are paying you to tell them what to do?

Several of the state legislators complain about the Party's inflexibility and how little it does to mold itself to the new conditions in Mississippi. Many point out that the Mississippi *Republican* Party is doing a better job of trying to get out the vote in African American communities. Representative Credell Calhoun (MS-68) estimates that about 70 to 80 percent of the Democratic vote in Mississippi is black. Yet, black voter turnout in the state is very low (House Democratic Caucus polling results 2008), harming the Democratic Party's chances of being successful in most districts and at the statewide level. Representative Frances Fredericks (MS-119), among many other legislators, openly criticizes the state Democratic Party for working against its own interests and not intently focusing on voter participation efforts in black communities.

Prevailing attitudes among African American legislators does little to help the situation. As one subject explains:

> Black politicians learned lessons that the white majority taught them well. And that is, it's a power, turf-type battle…black leadership doesn't want to give up power in the areas that it holds power.

One representative believes that several black incumbents encourage "packing" districts – increasing the African American population in majority-black districts because it ensures their ability to stay in power without ever having to run in a competitive race. Another legislator adds, "a lot of my colleagues are more concerned about getting elected rather

than making sure, down the road, that we don't jumble this thing up, that it won't be even more black against white."

In contrast, the Democratic Party of Georgia is markedly more well-structured and cohesive. Several respondents assert that "there is not a lot of division within the party racially." African Americans and Hispanics have very prominent and powerful roles within the party. For example, African Americans hold three of the six leading officer positions in the state party – Nikema Williams is the First Vice Chair; R.J. Hadley is the Vice Chair for Congressional Districts and County Liaison; and Laverne Gaskins is the Secretary. In fact, Mike Berlon, the Chairman of the state Democratic Party, is the only white party officer. His election for the Chairman position was preceded by a close race with Darryl Hicks, an African American (who had previously run for Secretary of State). Although Hicks was unsuccessful in his bid for the Chair, several state legislators, including Senator Jones (GA-10), Representative Wilkerson (GA-33), and Representative Brooks (GA-63), voice their opinion that his loss was not because of race but because of qualifications and how well-known Berlon was within the Democratic Party.

The Georgia Democratic Party's Charter also explicitly favors greater incorporation of African Americans[4]. Rule SC 4.1.3, on the election of state party officers, states:

> Where a racial group constitutes 20 percent or more of the registered voters in the State and where the Chair or the First Vice-Chair are not of that race, one of the additional Vice-Chairs shall be of that race.

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[4] I was unable to obtain the Mississippi Democratic Party's Charter so I do not have a comparison between the two and do not know if Mississippi's Charter has similar rules.

Another rule, on County Chairs, requires party districts to be established in "such a way as to provide for equitable representation for each district and to allow full participation by all segments of the population" (Georgia Democratic Party Charter 2011).

Many state legislators also emphasize the Party's efforts in increasing African American voter participation. Don Weigel, the political director for the House Democratic Caucus in Georgia, explains the efforts of the party to get out the vote in African American communities:

> African American turnout in 2010 was higher than in any other midterm election. It was the efforts of the Democratic National Committee and the state party's coordinated campaign that actually targeted those voters and turned them out. It's not rocket science – if you put money and time into these demographic groups, we can motivate them to support Democrats and turn out and vote for us.

Mr. Weigel states that the coordinated campaign's singular focus was increasing African American turnout because the state Democratic Party understood how important black voters were to the success of the party in Georgia.

The cohesion and relative lack of discord between the races in the Georgia Democratic Party can also be seen in the success of African American candidates. As Mr. Weigel points out, African Americans hold among the most important positions available to Democrats– Kasim Reed is Mayor of Atlanta, Stacey Abrams is the minority leader in the State House of Representatives, and Robert Brown is the minority leader in the State Senate. Senator Emmanuel Jones (GA-10) states, "the state party's role is bringing people together. We're very diverse and we're very inclusive."

After talking with informed subjects about the two Democratic Parties and the level of black incorporation within the parties, extensively reviewing both state party's websites and looking at the racial makeup of their committees, I found support for my

first hypothesis: the Georgia Democratic Party has stronger black incorporation than the

Mississippi Democratic Party. This is an important finding for my next chapter, in which

I first review the literature on political ambition and how existing research shows that

candidate recruitment can affect individuals' decisions to run for office. Turning to my

analysis, I look at candidate recruitment of black state legislators and non-black state

legislators. I argue that while encouragement to run by political elites is less commonly

perceived among black candidates in both states, Georgia has a stronger recruitment

process of African Americans.

Chapter Four: Candidate Recruitment and its Impact on African American Representation

Explaining Political Ambition

In this section, I look at political ambition and how it differs among gender and racial groups. I use the gender and politics literature to create an analogous race theory. It is reasonable to compare women with African Americans given their similar histories of exclusion from the political process in the United States. They are both underrepresented in state and national governing bodies and have only relatively recently become voters, and much more recently have entered political contest in meaningful numbers. More importantly for the purpose of this study, recent studies have also shown that both African Americans and women have comparable self-perceived qualifications (Fox and Lawless 2004).

Fox and Lawless (2004) develop a theory of nascent ambition, or the inclination to consider a candidacy for the first time, by looking at other influences on the decision to run for office, mainly focusing on attitudinal dispositions, personal experiences and demographic characteristics. They theorize that six factors will impact nascent political ambition: strategic considerations (perceptions of electoral success), ideological and political interest, politicized upbringing, minority status, competitive traits and stage in life (2005b, 644-47). Their most important finding for the purpose of this thesis is that race, gender and a sense of efficacy as a candidate play critical roles in nascent ambition (654). They show that highly accomplished women and blacks are significantly less likely to have considered running for office than highly accomplished white men are (653). Expanding on this result, the authors speculate that minority groups may be less

likely to consider running for office because of a lack of models to parallel and because they may be less likely to possess key ingredients that bolster nascent ambition, such as a sense of self-worth (646).

Scholarly research on political ambition in African Americans is incipient. Stone carried out the sole study in 1980, in which she surveyed 119 black officials in Michigan and asked questions about their future political aspirations. She codes the answers into three categories – progressive (desire to run for higher office), static (desire to remain in current office) and discrete (lack of desire to remain in political office) (96). Stone comes to several important conclusions. First, she asserts that officials who consider themselves independents are less politically ambitious than party affiliates (99). Second, Stone suggests that dissatisfaction with holding politically insignificant offices is the underlying motive for both male and female officials to withdraw from office (103). Finally, Stone finds that politicians with progressive ambitions are more likely to be well educated and young (104).

Stone's work is a very valuable resource for looking at contextual factors that affect African Americans' decisions to run for office. However, she does not examine what motivates African Americans to run for office in the first place. As explained by Fox and Lawless (2005b), these types of studies "do not account for the substantial winnowing process that occurs in the candidate emergence process long before potential candidates decide to run for particular offices at particular times" (654).

The Importance of Recruitment to Office for Women

The evidence in the previous section shows that women and African Americans tend to have less nascent political ambition than their white male counterparts. Although

research on other factors that motivate African Americans to run for office is lacking,

scholars have recently begun to look at what may influence women's decisions to run.

Candidate recruitment of women has shown to be a helpful instrument in increasing

females' political ambitions.

The critical argument around the discussion of recruitment is whether candidates

usually emerge on their own or if parties actually do influence their decisions to run for

office (Sanbonmatsu 2006; Maisel et al. 1990). Maisel et al. (1990) describes the two

possibilities well:

> At one extreme is the traditional group-based concept of candidate recruitment. In this case some external force, normally a political party, tries to influence a potential candidate to run for office…At the other extreme is candidate self-selection. In this case a potential candidate "emerges" on his or her own and then considers a run for office (153).

Although research indicates that most politicians generally thought about running for

office before ever being approached by parties or other political or legislative

organizations, these groups tend to also play a role in the decision-making process

(Maisel et al 1990; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Moncrief et al. find that the majority of

politicians did not come up with idea to run entirely on their own (2001, 102). In this

respect, external actors may "shape who runs for office by seeking out and encouraging

candidates to run" (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 27).

The majority of research on candidate recruitment, as explained previously, has

focused on women and their motivations to run for office. Fox and Oxley (2003) look at

how stereotyping affects candidate recruitment (836). They find that "women were less

likely to be recruited to run for prestigious positions. Additionally, the parties have only

been likely to specifically recruit female candidates in years when the likelihood of

women winning is higher because of the electoral issue environment" (836).

In *Where Women Run*, Sanbonmatsu presents a survey of newly elected state legislators, showing that only 32 percent considered themselves pure self-starters who decided on their own to run for office (2006, 37). She conducts interviews with two sets of individuals – party leaders and staff and state legislators – in six states, capturing a diverse range of ideological perspectives and geographical variation (43). As Sanbonmatsu explains, "by recruiting candidates, the party can create ambitious politicians" (46).

Sanbonmatsu provides evidence that recruitment is a strong motivational factor for women. Women are much more likely to run for office when they have been recruited by political parties or encouraged by exogenous actors, such as interest groups or political leaders. For example, in Ohio, 41 percent of women, compared to 23 percent of men, reported that they ran for state legislature because they were recruited (Sanbonmatsu 2006, 150). This is consistent across both major parties – "both Democratic and Republic women were more likely than their male colleagues to run because someone suggested it" (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009, 9).

Moncrief et al. (2001) conducted the only survey I have found regarding encouragement of African Americans to run for political office. They look at party encouragement and nonparty encouragement to run for potential African American and white candidates. They found that black candidates have fewer contacts with party officials than white candidates have and are more likely to be motivated to run by their churches and communities (2001, 108).

This study is an important step in explaining how parties treat African Americans differently. I expand on Moncrief et al.'s findings by doing more in-depth interviews of

African American state legislators. Furthermore, I wanted not only to see whether they were motivated by party leaders and/or elected officials, but also how much that encouragement influenced their decision to run for office.

I believe that this is an essential area to focus on because of its possible implications for black descriptive representation. Based on Sanbonmatsu's work and other related studies, my second hypothesis follows:

H2*: African Americans are less likely to be asked to run by political elites than their non-African American counterparts.*

If African Americans are encouraged by political elites, they will respond in a manner similar to women. I anticipate this comparability between women and African American candidates because research shows that politicians are "strategic in that their willingness to enter the electoral arena is dependent upon their perceptions of success" (Maisel & Stone 1997, 92). As I explained above, these two groups are unlikely to regard themselves as highly qualified and Sanbonmatsu (2006) finds that recruitment is a strong motivational factor for women in their decision to run for office. Thus, I expect that encouragement by politically involved individuals will significantly increase African Americans' perceptions of success. My third hypothesis follows:

H3*: African Americans who are encouraged to run by political elites will be more influenced to run because of this encouragement than non-African Americans that are encouraged to run by political elites.*

Finally, I argue that states with strong political party incorporation will lead to more candidate recruitment of African Americans. As Browning et al. (1984) conclude, "much progress toward political equality has been made since [1960]; however…there remain great differences in the extent of the achievement" (17). If a Democratic party is more politically incorporated, then I assume that it will have a better recruitment process and

will understand its constituents' wants better than a weak and divided Democratic party. Therefore, I predict:

H4*: Georgia will have more candidate recruitment of African Americans than Mississippi.*

Data and Methodology for Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4

For my analysis of candidate recruitment of African Americans in Georgia and Mississippi, I focused on obtaining interviews with Democratic state legislators. I chose to concentrate on state legislators because scholars argue that state office is possibly the most important office for party leaders to recruit for (Norris 1997). Schlesinger (1966) finds that the two types of elective seats for the base offices of states' opportunity structures are state legislative office and local office (i.e., city councilor, mayor, etc.). He claims, "in every state the legislature brings together for a period of between one and seven months a sizeable number of politically-minded men from all parts of the states. It is, therefore, a natural breeding ground for political ambition and a logical base office" (72).

I asked all Democratic state legislators to participate in this project. Although my main focus was African American state legislators, I also wanted to interview a sample of white state legislators to be able to compare the two groups and their experiences as candidates. As I had no control over which state legislators accepted my interview requests, I ended up with a roughly equal number of black and non-black subjects. In total, my response rate for Democratic state legislators was 41 percent in Georgia and 49 percent in Mississippi.

In selecting state legislators, I sought a diverse sampling of individuals with a variety of legislative experience, employment and educational backgrounds. Table 4

gives a more detailed account of the backgrounds of the state legislators I spoke with.

Although my subjects adequately represent the diversity of the state legislature, it is not a

random and representative sample[5].

Table 4: Interview Subjects: Legislator Characteristics

	Mississippi	Georgia
Type of State Legislator		
Senator	42% (19)	32% (11)
Representative	58% (26)	68% (23)
Highest Educational Attainment		
High School Diploma	0% (0)	0% (0)
Bachelor of Arts/Science	67% (30)	50% (17)
Masters (MA)	11% (5)	18% (6)
Juris Doctor (JD)	20% (9)	32% (11)
Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)	2% (1)	0% (0)
Occupation		
Business	49% (22)	44% (15)
Law	20% (9)	32% (11)
Education	11% (5)	15% (5)
Medical	7% (3)	0% (0)
Community Development	13% (6)	9% (3)
Legislative Experience		
Less than 1 year	4% (2)	24% (8)
1-5 years	22% (10)	26% (9)
5-10 years	13% (6)	26% (9)
10+ years	60% (27)	24% (8)

Based on Sanbonmatsu's research design (2006), I began my interviews with the

state legislators with a general question on how they first got into politics and decided to

run for office. After my initial question, I asked whether anyone had encouraged them to

run for political office and how much of an influence that had on their decision. I also

inquired about their consideration of running for statewide office and if they had ever

discussed this possibility with other elected officials or party leaders. Finally, I asked

about African American political representation in general, regardless of the race of the

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[5] For a list of all interview subjects by race, legislative experience and district, see Table
A.3 in Appendix.

state legislator. I asked every state legislator whether African Americans face any

particular barriers as candidates for the legislature or for statewide office. I also asked

them why there are not more African Americans serving in political office in their

respective state. Because my interviews were not formally structured, I was able to ask

more questions and probe further in some instances (for a sample interview of state

legislators, see Appendix).

Using a short questionnaire that I filled in during the interviews, I was able to

quantify the answers to a few survey questions, including whether the state legislators

had been encouraged to run (and by whom), what kind of influence that encouragement

had played in their decision, whether they had thought about running for statewide office,

and if they had ever been approached or encouraged to do so.

Results for Hypothesis 2: Candidate Recruitment, by Race

Table 4.1 presents my findings on party and nonparty encouragement of black and

non-black state legislators. Only 8 (22%) black state legislators that I interviewed in

Georgia and Mississippi were recruited by elected or party officials. In contrast, 20

(48%) non-black state legislators were encouraged to run by political elite members.

Table 4.1: Party and Nonparty Recruitment Contacts, by Race

	Black State Legislators	**Non-Black State Legislators**
Encouragement to Run By:		
Elected Officials	11%	29%
Party Officials	11%	19%
Nonparty Encouragement to Run By:		
Community	46%	16%
Family	19%	5%
No Encouragement	13%	31%
Total	100%	100%

In my interviews, black state legislators much more frequently proffer their community or family as an encouraging factor in their decision to run for office; in fact, 24 (65%) cite community or family. Most of the black state legislators were deeply involved in and part of the leadership of their black communities. When Representative Bob Bryant (GA-160) first moved to Savannah, he was introduced to the heads of all the influential organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce and L.E.A.D Savannah; he quickly became an active member of many of them. Senator Emmanuel Jones (GA-10) also comments on his committed participation in his church and how that increased his visibility within the community.

Other state legislators talk about how they were asked by community members to run for office. Representative Lynmore James (GA-135) presented his district's conflict:

> We were deciding between the two people running, we were trying to pick the better of the two. The better of the two wasn't good enough. So then the group turned to me and asked me if I would run.

Community members also approached Representative John Hines, Sr. (MS-50) before his initial campaign for office. They felt that their then representative, a white male, was not serving their district adequately and they looked to Representative Hines, Sr. to run against him. As Representative Hines, Sr. recalls, "a group of people in the community came to me and asked me if I would consider running for this seat…I had built a base I was not really aware I had." Representative Kimberly Campbell Buck (MS-72) felt that her community simply expected her to run. She explains:

> I went away for undergraduate, graduate and law school and whenever I would be back home, I would see church members and former teachers and friends, and they would all say, 'don't you forget about Jackson.'

Another common thread throughout the interviews with black state legislators was that they were more likely to express a need to serve and give back to their community as a reason for their decision to run. For example, Senator David Jordan (MS-24) explains, "I grew up in the country and I saw how African Americans were treated on the plantation. I've seen African Americans beaten, I've seen them slapped, and I've seen them kicked, and those things just don't leave you…so I decided that I'm going to try and do something about that and the only hook I had was politics."

Other state legislators emphasize their desire to be a leader for the African American population in their state. As Representative Rufus Straughter (MS-51) states, "I felt that we needed, and when I say we, I'm talking about African Americans, we needed more of a voice at the state level, so I ran." Representative George Flaggs, Jr. (MS-55) claims, "I wanted to empower not only the African Americans in the state legislature, but African Americans in the community as well." Representative Lynmore James (GA-135) also notes that he hoped to give a voice to his community that was missing at the state level.

According to Canon (1999), "with the creation of new black influence and black majority districts in 1992, for the first time in history dozens of ambitious black politicians…had a realistic chance of being elected" (96). Many of the more experienced black state legislators in Mississippi provide evidence to support this statement as well. For example, Representative Omeria Scott (MS-80) explains:

> I was one of the people who came into the Mississippi legislature upon a special election after there had been a federal injunction on redistricting here in Mississippi. So my race was in 1992, and I won. There had been some hearings all over the state, and in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, which is about 30 miles south from where I'm from, the redistricting committee came and held a hearing…there

were some people from my area at that hearing that asked for a majority-minority district. So they drew one in the area I live.

Most black state legislators in Mississippi believe that without majority-black districts, African Americans would not be getting elected to the state legislature. Representative Rufus Straughter (MS-51) claims that without a 60 percent African American population in a district, it is nearly impossible for a black individual to be elected. Mr. Hooks, the Mississippi House Democratic Caucus director, emphasizes the belief held of Mississippi African Americans politicians that without at least a 60 percent black population, African Americans can't get elected to office:

> I was talking to Derrick Johnson, the NAACP state President, about a district that had just been created. And he said, "Oh, the district that's majority black but a black won't be able to get elected to?"

No black state legislator in Georgia cites redistricting as their motivation for initially running for office, although I only interviewed one African American in Georgia that had first been elected around 1992, so the absence of redistricting as a reason may just be due to my sample. However, I also asked all subjects what they thought were barriers to African American representation at the state legislature. While almost 100 percent of black state legislators in Mississippi mention that African Americans cannot get elected outside of majority-black districts, only three (20%) black legislators in Georgia argue that majority-black districts were necessary for African American success. They proffer financial obstacles and a general lack of involvement much more often.

White legislators offer very different reasons for why they initially ran for office. As shown in Table 4.1, party and elected officials recruited almost half of them. Representative Brandon Jones (MS-111) claims, "I was recruited pretty heavily for a long

period of time, for several months, by Democrats in the state." Representative Linda

Whittington (MS-34) explains:

> The Democratic officials approached me about running for this seat…once I said
> I'd do it, I had a meeting with the Speaker and some of the House leadership here.
> They gave a fundraiser for me in Jackson.

Representative Scott Holcomb (GA-82) also provides a good example of the

increased recruitment of white officials. He tells that he was at a wedding and had to turn

off his phone at one point because of the barrage of calls he was receiving from the state

Democratic Party and the House Democratic Caucus. Another white state legislator from

Georgia describes his contact with the local and state party officials:

> At the time, the seat became an open seat and the gentleman who had held the
> seat for three years had been appointed to a judgeship…I kind of had decided no
> [to running], but then I had a phone call from a lady who was county
> commissioner and had been on the city council…and she says, 'the time is now,
> your time is now.' Unbeknownst to me, she'd been on the phone all weekend
> with county commissioners, talking to them about it and she'd been given the task
> of calling me and telling me what had been decided.

It is apparent that African Americans in general are less likely to be asked to run

for office by political elite. Instead, they are encouraged more frequently by community

and family members and are driven by a need to give a voice to their respective districts

and states. On the other hand, a large portion of non-black legislators was heavily

recruited by both political cohorts. This confirms the findings of Moncrief el al. (2001),

who conclude that only 16 percent of African Americans are encouraged by state party

officials and 24 percent are recruited by elected officials, while 48 percent of white

candidates are recruited by the state party and 34 percent by elected officials.

Results for Hypothesis 3: Effect of Candidate Recruitment, by Race

.   My third hypothesis, that African Americans who are recruited by political elites will be more influenced to run because of this encouragement than non-African Americans receiving encouragement from political elites, is developed from the literature on women and motivation. As I have mentioned, women and African Americans tend to underrate their self-qualifications compared to white males. A woman or African American that is suitably qualified for political office rarely believes that they actually have the abilities to run and win. Sanbonmatsu (2006) confirms this expectation for women in *Where Women Run*, showing that women benefit from encouragement by political individuals who hold power. These elites legitimize thoughts women had of running for office and make them feel like it was a plausible goal. Based on Sanbonmatsu's findings about women, I predicted the same type of relationship between African Americans and candidate recruitment.

African Americans respond to encouragement by political elites in much the same way that women respond (See Table 4.2). Black state legislators who received encouragement reported that recruitment by elected or party officials either had "a lot" of influence on their decision or were the "sole" influence on their decision. None of the African American state legislators said it had little or no influence. In contrast, over half of the non-black legislators claimed that their decision to run had little to do with encouragement from the political elite.

Table 4.2: Reported Influence of Party Encouragement, by Race

	Black State Legislators	Non-Black State Legislators
Influence of Party/Elected Officials		
"It had no influence on my decision"	0%	0%
"It had a little influence on my decision"	0%	55%
"It had a lot of influence on my decision"	50%	30%
"It was the sole influence on my decision"	50%	15%

This result is confirmed in the interview transcripts with the state legislators who received encouragement. Every black state legislator who had been motivated by political elites to run emphasized how important the recruitment was in their decision-making process. A black state legislator from Georgia explains his situation:

> I had never dreamed of this position. But I have a good friend in the state legislature, he is my mentor. He encouraged me to run and gave me the reassurance that I could actually win this. I think he was 98 percent responsible for my decision to run.

Senator Emanuel Jones (GA-10) took a lot of convincing by political elite members to finally be swayed into running for the state senate. Although his friends and community members had asked him repeatedly to run for office, the real motivation came from conversations with party and elected officials. They finally pushed him into running after he had been "on the fence" for about five years.

In comparison, non-black state legislators who were encouraged by political elites did not cite the motivation as a very influential factor in their decision to run. In fact, most had already decided they were going to run and it simply reinforced this decision. This was usually because they had long known they wanted to be in politics and were just waiting for the right opportunity to run. When the chance finally came, they generally did not need any kind of external motivation. For example, Speaker William McCoy (MS-3) has a long family history of political involvement. Both his grandfather and

father were members of the Mississippi state legislature and he claims, "I had an inborn interest. I always knew I was going to be involved in politics." Another interviewee describes Speaker McCoy's intense passion for the state House:

> His father was a House member, he grew up in the House of Representatives. When he's in his office, when he's in the Capitol building, that's not a government building to him. He is in a temple….If you ever listen to him talk about it, he speaks of the place so reverently. When his father was there, and he was a little boy walking down the halls, the Speaker of the House was a god to him. He has wanted to be Speaker of the House since he was nine years old.

Senator Bill Stone (MS-2) also mentions that he was asked to run by a few individuals that held elected positions at the time, but he had already decided to run long before they had approached him. As he explains, it just "reinforced my decision. It always is nice to get some encouragement though, I guess."

Another good example is Senator Doug Stoner (GA-6), who had serious encouragement from not only Democratic Party officials but also the sitting governor at the time, Roy Barnes. Yet, he argues that they had a very small impact on his decision to run because he knew it was inevitable that he would be involved in politics. Senator Stoner adds on:

> After I got out of college, with my political science degree, I joke with my wife, she knew when she married me, and we dated in college, that I was going to run for office some day, because I was just that involved.

It is interesting to note that 31 percent of non-black state legislators reported that they received no encouragement to run, while only 13 percent of black state legislators made the same statement. It was common during my interviews with non-black state legislators to hear that they just thought a change needed to happen so they decided to run. For example, Representative Brian Thomas (GA-100) explains:

> I literally decided one day, 'I can do better than that' and just decided to run. I was never involved in politics, I never volunteered on a campaign. All I did was vote. Nobody recruited me or asked me if I was interested.

Other state legislators made similar statements of belief that they could do better. On the other hand, not one black state legislator spoke with that kind of confidence. Most had either thought of running and then were persuaded to do so by their communities or had never even considered elective office until someone encouraged them. Similarly, no female state legislator said she had decided to run for office because she thought she could "do better" or for a similarly self-motivated, endogenous reason. This lends support to Fox and Lawless' (2004, 2005a) findings that both women and African Americans perceive themselves less favorably than a white male and often need some kind of external encouragement to run for office.

Results for Hypothesis 4: Party Incorporation and its Effects on Candidate Recruitment of African Americans

The evidence provided above confirms two important hypotheses: 1) African Americans are more incorporated within the Georgia Democratic Party than within the Mississippi Democratic Party; and 2) African Americans are less likely to be encouraged to run by members of the political community than their white counterparts. Based on previous research, I expected that states with more inclusive Democratic parties would be better able to respond to its constituents' needs and would therefore have more active recruitment of its base voting bloc (i.e., African Americans). Table 4.3 provides information showing the level of candidate recruitment of African Americans between Georgia and Mississippi.

Table 4.3: Differences in Party Encouragement, by State

	Black State Legislators - Georgia	Black State Legislators - Mississippi
Party Encouragement to Run		
Elected Officials	20%	5%
Party Officials	27%	0%
Total	47%	5%

There is a stark contrast between the level of encouragement African Americans receive in Georgia compared to Mississippi. Only one African American in Mississippi, Representative Frances Fredericks (D-119), was encouraged by elected officials to run for office and as a widow succeeding her recently deceased husband, is probably not a representative case. Not one state legislator mentioned any helpful conversations with the state Democratic Party; in fact, the only African American legislator that had any contact with the state party was actually *discouraged* from running for office. In comparison, almost half of the African American state legislators I talked to in Georgia had been encouraged or actively recruited by elected or party officials.

The recruitment processes of the two Democratic structures differ substantially. In Mississippi, the system is very informal and lacking in depth. Jere Nash, a Democratic political consultant in Mississippi, attributes this problem to the stronghold the Democrats had historically in the South for so long:

> At least for Democrats, there is no centralized party for recruiting. For Republicans, it's all about that. Several decades ago, they [Democrats] didn't have to do it, because they were winning everything, which is why the Republicans created a strong party organization to compete, but the Democrats never had to. And so they've been playing catch up the whole time and they've done a lousy job of it[6].

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[6] Mr. Nash is the director for a group of lawyers that target and recruit in certain districts. Until 2007, when the Victory PAC (the Speaker's committee, which Robert Hooks directs) was created, it was the only group outside of the state Democratic Party actively recruiting potential candidates.

As Representative Credell Calhoun (MS-68) explains, "Its [the state Democratic Party's recruitment process] is kind of half-hearted and it's not really a serious effort." Although both Mr. Nash's group and the Speaker's PAC have been successful in getting Democrats elected to office, they describe the process as informal and "fly by the seat of your pants." They usually do decide what districts are most important for them and which Republican incumbents are critical to focus on because of the threat to the two committee's interests, but it does not appear to be a particularly calculated, structured system. Mr. Hooks describes a past situation where he was looking for a House candidate in George County, which is a very rural, white district:

> So I go down there, and have a meeting with Democratic officials and two county elected officials, and we just basically went through a list of who can win, who can win this seat as a Democrat, and they came up with three names…I met with all of them.

The Mississippi Democratic Party's apparatus is weak and Mr. Hooks and Mr. Nash seem to be the only two individuals in Mississippi who organize any kind of recruitment efforts. Further, because their groups have limited financial resources, they usually can only focus on a handful of districts every election year.

The treatment of potential African American candidates differs as well and provides evidence for why African Americans believe that they cannot win in a district that has less than a 60 percent black population. Representative Bryant Clark (MS-47) explains the breakdown of districts – "the way it works in Mississippi is that you have African American districts, you have Republican districts and then you have rural white Democratic districts. Traditionally, if you've got a district that's 60 percent [black] or more, it can be considered an African American district." Mr. Hooks adds that unless a

district has close to a 60 percent black population, the Committee would not consider recruiting a black individual.

Because African Americans tend to only run in majority-black districts, which tend to also be "safe seats" for Democrats, recruitment by external organizations is lacking. Therefore, recruitment of black candidates in these districts is haphazard; most of the time the recruitment is done informally by the community. Mr. Nash states, "none of these people ran because a person in Jackson sent somebody down to say, 'you should do this.' So it's all percolated from the bottom up." Representative George Flaggs, Jr. (MS-55) claims that most African American candidates are encouraged by their community leadership or, if leadership is lacking, by random groups of individuals. In fact, the one African American who represents a majority-white district, Senator Eric Powell (MS-4) explains, "I probably came through the back door as far as the Democratic Party in my county." He was actually discouraged by party officials who had found another candidate thought to have a much better chance of winning in the district.

The infrequency of African Americans running for office outside of majority-black districts causes significant issues for African Americans running at the statewide level because they usually have never had to fight a "Republican machine." Mr. Hooks' view:

> The problem African Americans have is that they largely get elected in districts where they've never had to fight a Republican opposition and even though they may be very smart, capable, local politicians, trying to run in a world that's very different than what you think it is, even for a seasoned politician, it's just that you've never had to suffer an onslaught of attacks, you've never had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertisements, probably believing incorrectly that you can win by high black turnout, not appreciating that you really need a big swing vote, or even knowing how to calculate it, trusting the people you would have to listen to, makes it very difficult.

The evidence provided above indicates that although African Americans in Mississippi may be politically represented, they are not recruited at the same rate or in the same way that white state legislators are.

In contrast, the Democratic Party recruitment process in Georgia is better organized. The Recruitment Chair of the state party, Miguel Camacho, and the political director of the House Democratic Caucus, Don Weigel, admit that it needs improvement, but their system is more formal. Both the Mississippi and the Georgia Democratic Party lack financial resources, so they are also unable to properly focus on every district. However, Georgia has a more structured plan to decide which seats to pay attention to. Mr. Weigel explains that the Caucus first does an electoral analysis of every house district and groups the districts into three categories: Strong Democratic seats, Potential Democratic seats and Strong Republican seats. Potential Democratic districts are those that are either open seats or the Republican incumbent has done something to upset his constituents.

After categorizing the districts, Mr. Weigel describes the early stages of the recruitment process:

> We're actually creating a candidate recruitment committee in each district, especially where we have a targeting district, where we have Democratic performance over fifty percent, which means more Democrats win more than lose when they run…we actually will be reaching out to each local district and putting together these committees with a chair and then a group of people will create a list of names of potential people.

Another way that the Georgia Democratic Party looks for candidates is by sponsoring training programs. Both the House Democratic Caucus and the state party invite organizations to areas around Georgia to host programs on how to be a competitive candidate and run an effective campaign. For example, Democracy for America comes

to Georgia often and hosts weekend programs to teach potential candidates how to file

the paperwork to run for office, how to raise funds, how to keep track of contributions,

how to organize fieldwork and how to maintain communications. Mr. Weigel

emphasizes the importance of these programs:

> We let anyone come, and really, the more the merrier. Because you might get someone who is an interested Democrat, but has never been really involved, who comes to a training, gets really organized and decides to either be a candidate or a campaign manager come the next election cycle. So we always want as many people as possible…I've set the personal goal of doing one training every quarter in 2011, and then at least one every month in 2012.

Representative David Wilkerson (GA-33) explains that the state party and caucus

try "to recruit based on the community that it's recruiting for…they're looking for who

can win in that particular district." Representative Carolyn Hugley (GA-133) also adds

that the Democrats look for qualified candidates, regardless of race. It is most important

recruit a candidate that is well known and respected in the community.

Startlingly, not one of the Georgia interview subjects cite majority-black districts

as a constraint on recruitment, a stark contrast to Mississippi. Several of them mention

that for an African American to win, a district generally needs to have about a 25 to 30

percent black population for African Americans to be competitive as candidates, but this

is significantly lower than the perceived black population threshold in Mississippi, where

even 60 percent in some instances is not considered a comfortable margin.

My data in this chapter confirm my three hypotheses listed earlier. African

Americans are generally less likely to be asked to run for office by party or elected

officials. They were generally approached by community members or decided to run

because of contextual factors, such as the creation of a majority-black district. In

contrast, non-black state legislators in Georgia and Mississippi were often recruited by party or elected officials.

I based my second hypothesis on Sanbonmatsu's research on women and candidate recruitment. She finds that women are heavily influenced by encouragement from the political elite. Based on the similarities explained previously, I predicted that African Americans would respond to recruitment in a manner similar to women. My results support this prediction: while white state legislators did not cite encouragement by party or elected officials as a big influence on their decision to run, the majority of black state legislators that were encouraged to run claimed that it was either a significant or the sole influence. These findings build upon Sanbonmatsu's work by showing that African Americans, as do women, respond markedly to candidate recruitment.

My third hypothesis in this chapter joins the evidence from Chapter Three with my findings in Chapter Four. That is, better black incorporation within the state Democratic Party leads to increased candidate recruitment of African Americans. This presents an interesting thread throughout the data. If strengthened black party incorporation results in increased candidate recruitment, I posit that increased candidate recruitment results in increased black representation. I further explore this important finding in the next chapter, concluding with potential areas of future research.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I hypothesized that a lack of political incorporation and candidate recruitment would negatively impact the number of African Americans running for and winning office. To test this hypothesis, I conducted in-depth interviews comparing Georgia and Mississippi. I chose these two states because of the differences between their African American descriptive representation, especially at the statewide level and in majority-white districts. Georgia has a significantly larger number of African Americans running and winning political office, especially outside of majority-black districts. I personally interviewed over 85 members of the political elite in the two states, including Democratic party officials and state legislators.

During my interviews, I asked specific questions on the role of the Democratic Party within each state, the incorporation of African Americans within the party and the presence (or absence) of candidate recruitment. I also inquired of each state legislator their motivations for running for office. I confirmed my hypotheses through my qualitative study. African Americans in Georgia were much more likely to be incorporated within the Georgia Democratic Party than African Americans in the Mississippi Democratic Party. Second, I found that although African Americans are not recruited as heavily as their white counterparts, they are much more likely to be encouraged to run by the political elite in Georgia than in Mississippi. Furthermore, I found that African Americans who were encouraged to run by party or elected officials cited this encouragement as their main or sole influence on their decision to run.

Although African Americans are still descriptively underrepresented in Georgia, my findings show that a Democratic party with strong black incorporation and a structured candidate recruitment process can correlate with increased African American representation. While African Americans are represented in Mississippi, they lack real influence within the party. Their apparent power is illusory, as many of the positions African Americans occupy in the Party hierarchy are honorary. They are essentially a separate political group from white Democrats, as there is obvious division within the Democratic Party of Mississippi. There is a different recruitment process of Caucasians and African Americans – in fact, Democratic officials largely take African American candidates for granted because majority-black districts are safe seats for Democrats and there is rarely a Republican opponent in these districts.

In contrast, blacks are much more incorporated within the Democratic Party of Georgia. African Americans hold prominent and powerful positions within the Party and the Party takes great pains to ensure equitable representation and balanced influence among racial groups. Moreover, party or elected officials recruited almost half of the African American state legislators I interviewed, and not just for majority-black districts. The evidence I present suggest that African Americans in Georgia are much more incorporated within the Democratic Party structure in all aspects, much more effectively recruited, and are thus more likely to run for office, including in majority-white districts.

My research contributes to the existing literature on African American politics in two important ways. First, there is a gap in scholarly work regarding factors that influence African Americans to run for office. Past researchers have focused on redistricting as the main motivation for African Americans to run for office. I provide

evidence that encouragement to run by party or elected officials also influences African Americans to run for office.

Second, African American descriptive representation has stagnated since 1992 and African Americans remain underrepresented in both state and national government. I argue that this may not be due to the inability of African Americans to win outside of majority-black districts but to African Americans' *beliefs* that they cannot win in majority-white districts or at the statewide level. The level of African American descriptive representation is not likely to substantially increase until more blacks begin running and winning outside of majority-black districts. My findings show that black incorporation within the Democratic Party and strengthened candidate recruitment of African Americans increases the number of black candidates running outside of majority-black districts. This has important implications for lessening the disparity between the African American population and their representation.

There is considerable evidence of the importance of descriptive representation. It must be noted that descriptive representation does not imply substantive representative. Substantive representation is what one will actually act for (Pitkin 1967, 110). According to Pitkin, "his actions, or his opinions, or both must correspond to or be in accord with the wishes, needs, or interests of those for whom he acts" (1967, 114). It is often difficult to determine whether someone will substantively represent a certain cohort because of his similar physical appearance, so it is incorrect to say that descriptive representation is equivalent to substantive representation. Regardless, it is assumed that a woman will generally relate better to another woman than to a man, or that an African American will

sympathize better with another African American than a white person will sympathize with a black person, simply because of life experience.

Advice for Future Research

My thesis presents preliminary evidence of factors beyond an incumbency disadvantage, socioeconomic disparities and white voter resistance that play an important role in African American candidate emergence and success. Although I argue that political party incorporation and candidate recruitment can increase African American representation, more research is needed to better validate this conclusion. While I provide a solid framework for the research design, some changes might be made to perhaps produce more well founded results.

Scholars will want to use a larger sample size. Although my response rate for Democratic state legislators was 41 percent in Georgia and 49 percent in Mississippi, higher response rates may well be useful. There is a possibility that my results were skewed because of the subjects that chose to respond to my interview request. Increasing sample size will allay these concerns.

It is also important that future scholars look at more states. Georgia and Mississippi were a good comparison because of their similar African American population, conservative-leanings and geographic proximity. However, there are some important differences between the two states that may have impacted my results. There is a large educational and economic discrepancy between the two states. Georgia is close to the national statistics for high school and college degrees and median income. 78.6 percent of Georgia residents have graduated from high school, 24.3 percent have a college degree and the median income is $50,834. In comparison, Mississippi is much

less educated and poorer: 72.9 percent of Mississippi residents over 25 years of age have a high school diploma, 16.9 percent have graduated from college and the median income is \$37,818 (U.S Census Bureau 2009). Since Mississippi is lagging in education and economic status, it presumably has a smaller middle and upper class. This potentially affects the size of the eligibility pool and the number of possible African American candidates.

Georgia's largest city, Atlanta, has 490,000 residents, while Mississippi's largest city, Jackson, has 180,000 residents (US Census Bureau 2009). Furthermore, Atlanta is a wealthier city and a tourist destination. It is headquarters for many international companies, such as Delta and Coca-Cola. Thus, there are many more good employment opportunities for Atlanta's residents than for Jackson's residents. Atlanta has a history of being much more progressive than other Deep South cities. As Swain (2006) explains, "Atlanta has rarely been considered a place of racial oppression…the city developed the slogan 'too busy to hate'" (89). As noted in Chapter One, a comparison of Georgia and Alabama would be helpful because Birmingham is very similar to Atlanta and would control for any urban effect.

Although I found evidence that recruitment affects African American representation, my findings were most likely inflated due to the sample I interviewed. All the state legislators, of course, *did* decide to run. The black (and possibly white) state legislators that were recruited in Georgia may be unique cases that were sought out by party or elected officials, and not the norm at all. To find the actual level of encouragement by party or elected officials in states, scholars should look at recruitment of blacks compared to whites that do not hold office. It would be informative to replicate

a study similar to Fox and Lawless' Citizen Ambition Study (2004). In this research, the

authors took a sample of 6,800 individuals from the pipeline professions and asked

questions about whether they had ever considered running for political office and whether

they thought they were qualified to do so; they then broke down the answers by gender.

Future scholars can sample a similar set of individuals but categorize them by race

instead to see whether blacks and whites have similar ambitions and if political parties

treat them differently.

Finally, research should focus more on the importance of African Americans

running outside of majority-black districts and how that can potentially help their chances

of winning statewide office. As several interview subjects explained, African Americans

who have only served in majority-black districts generally do not understand how to run

in a hotly contested race. They have not had to raise a substantial amount of money and

have not faced a serious opponent in the general election. Congressman Lewis perfectly

exemplifies the lengths it takes to create a biracial coalition:

> You have to go out and court people. That's what I did. Especially in areas of
> Buckhead [a majority-white neighborhood], and I would go out to Chastain and I
> would greet them when they left, and it would be around 10:30 and I would say,
> 'I'm John Lewis and I need your help.' I would go to the Kroger's in Buckhead
> and I would be there greeting people when they left the store. And people got the
> feeling that this guy really wanted the position. And I was able to get a lot of
> support, because they saw me out there working, day in, day out, late at night and
> early in the morning, going to clubs and on the streets in different parts of metro
> Atlanta. So people have to see you working and that you're going to champion
> their issues.

While Congressman Lewis readily admits that it is more difficult for an African

American to get elected in a majority-white district than for a Caucasian, he emphasizes

the importance of this happening. He argues that in the United States, but especially in

the South, "people have to be about the business of building a community." Whether and to what degree this is happening is a fertile area for further research.

To conclude, although African American representation has stagnated in recent years, there is potential for it to revive in growth. The evidence presented here indicates that black inclusion within the state Democratic Party and strengthened candidate recruitment appear to help increase black representation, especially outside of majority-black districts. If this is indeed the case, then several new issues arise for future work. One of the most important concerns is the need to further develop how black candidates emerge and decide to run for majority-white seats and statewide office.

Appendix

Table A.1: Detailed Demographic Information, by State

	Georgia	Mississippi
Population (2009)	9,829,211	2,951,996
Racial Makeup		
White Persons (2009)	65%	60.50%
Black Persons	30.20%	37.20%
Education		
Bachelor's Degree or higher (age 25+, 2000)	24.30%	16.90%
High school graduates (age 25+, 2000)	78.60%	72.90%
Housing		
Housing Units (2009)	4,063,548	1,282,090
Homeownership rate (2000)	67.50%	72.30%
Households (2000)	3,006,369	1,046,434
Person per household (2000)	2.65	2.63
Median household income (2008)	$50,834	$37,818
Per capita money income (1999)	$21,154	$15,853
Persons below poverty level (2008)	14.70%	20.80%
Business		
Total number of firms (2002)	674,521	187,602
Black-owned firms (2002)	13.40%	13.30%

(U.S. Census Bureau 2009)

Table A.2: Comparison of Racial Composition and Ideology, by Percent Black and Percent Conservative

State	% African American	% Conservative
District of Columbia	54.7	18.1
Mississippi	**37.5**	**50.5**
Louisiana	31.6	46.8
Georgia	**29.9**	**43**
Maryland	28.9	32.2
South Carolina	28.4	45.8
Alabama	26.2	48.3
North Carolina	21.3	41.4
Delaware	20.3	33.3
Virginia	19.6	38.6
Tennessee	16.7	43.6
New York	15.6	30.6
Arkansas	15.6	45
Florida	15.3	39.4
Illinois	14.7	35.9
Michigan	14.1	36.8

New Jersey	13.7	34.6
Ohio	11.7	39.3
Texas	11.5	44.2
Missouri	11.3	43.1
Pennsylvania	10.4	38.1
Connecticut	9.4	31.7
Indiana	8.7	41.1
Kentucky	7.6	42.8
Oklahoma	7.5	44.9
Nevada	7.4	39.2
California	6.2	33.2
Massachusetts	6	29.9
Wisconsin	6	41.5
Kansas	5.7	42.7
Rhode Island	5.6	29.9
Nebraska	4.6	42
Minnesota	4.3	38.2
Colorado	3.9	36.4
Alaska	3.8	41.1
Arizona	3.5	39.3
West Virginia	3.4	41.9
Washington	3.4	33.1
New Mexico	3.1	41.2
Iowa	2.3	42.7
Hawaii	2.3	27.9
Oregon	1.7	34.5
Maine	1.1	35.7
South Dakota	1.1	46.9
New Hampshire	1	37.6
Utah	1	47.3
North Dakota	0.8	46.7
Idaho	0.6	48.5
Wyoming	0.6	47.4
Vermont	0.6	30.7
Montana	0.6	41

(U.S. Census Bureau 2009; Gallup Poll 2009)

Table A.3: State Legislators, by Race, Gender, Election Year and District (Titles are current at the time of interview. An asterisk (*) indicates that the interview was conducted by phone. All other interviews were conducted in the respective state capital.)

GEORGIA

Name	Race	Gender	Election Year	District
Stacey Abrams, House minority	African	Female	2007	Atlanta

leader	American				
Representative Kathy Ashe	White	Female	1991	Atlanta
Representative Glenn Baker	White	Male	2009	Jonesboro
Representative Stephanie Benfield	White	Female	1999	Atlanta
Representative Tyrone Brooks	African American	Male	1981	Atlanta
Representative Bob Bryant	African American	Male	2005	Garden City
Senator Jason Carter	White	Male	2010	Decatur
Representative Stacey Evans	White	Female	2011	Smyrna
Representative Hugh Floyd	White	Male	2003	Norcross
Mike Glanton, former legislator	African American	Male	2007	Ellenwood
Representative Carolyn Hugley	African American	Female	1993	Columbus
Representative Lynmore James	African American	Male	1993	Montezuma
Senator Emanuel Jones	African American	Male	2005	Decatur
Kevin Levitas, former legislator*	White	Male	2006	Atlanta
Representative Rahn Mayo*	African American	Male	2009	Decatur
Representative Elena Parent	White	Female	2011	Atlanta
Representative Sandra Scott	African American	Female	2011	Rex
Senator Doug Stoner	White	Male	2005	Smyrna
Representative Brian Thomas	White	Male	2005	Lilburn
Senator Curt Thompson	White	Male	2005	Tucker
Representative Coach Williams	African American	Male	2003	Avondale Estates
Representative David Wilkerson	White	Male	2011	Austell
Anonymous	African American	Male		
Anonymous*	African American	Male		
Anonymous*	African American	Female		
Anonymous	African American	Female		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Female		

\MISSISSIPPI

Name	Race	Gender	Election Year	District
Senator David Baria	White	Male	2008	Hancock
Senator David Blount	White	Male	2008	Hinds
Representative Cecil Brown	White	Male	2000	Hinds
Representative Kelvin Buck	African American	Male	2004	Benton
Representative Kimberly Campbell Buck	African American	Female	2008	Hinds
Senator Albert Butler	African American	Male	2010	Claiborne
Senator Kelvin Butler	African American	Male	2004	Adams
Representative Credell Calhoun	African American	Male	1980	Hinds
Representative Bryant Clark	African American	Male	2004	Attala
Senator Deborah Dawkins	White	Female	2000	Harrison
Senator Bob Dearing	White	Male	1980	Adams
Representative Dirk Dedeaux	White	Male	1996	Hancock
Senator Tommy Dickerson	White	Male	1993	George
Representative Reecy Dickson	African American	Female	1993	Kemper
Representative George Flaggs, Jr.	African American	Male	1988	Warren
Senator Hillman Frazier	African American	Male	1993	Hinds
Representative Frances Fredericks	African American	Female	1990	Harrison
Representative David Gibbs	African American	Male	1993	Clay
Representative John Hines, Sr.	African American	Male	2001	Washington
Representative Steve Holland	White	Male	1984	Lee
Representative Greg Holloway	African American	Male	2000	Claiborne
Senator John Horhn	African American	Male	1993	Hinds
Senator Robert Jackson	African American	Male	2004	Coahama
Representative Brandon Jones	White	Male	2008	Jackson
Senator Kenneth Wayne Jones	African American	Male	2008	Attala
Senator David Jordan	African American	Male	1993	Holmes
Senator Ezell Lee	White	Male	1992	Harrison
Representative John Mayo	White	Male	2000	Coahoma
William McCoy, Speaker of the House	White	Male	1980	Alcorn
Representative Bobby Moak	White	Male	1984	Amite
Representative Willie Perkins, Jr.	African American	Male	1993	Leflore
Senator Eric Powell	African American	Male	2008	Alcorn
Representative Jimmy Puckett	White	Male	2008	Lowndes
Representative Omeria Scott	African American	Female	1993	Clarke
Senator Willie Simmons	African American	Male	1993	Bolivar
Representative Rufus Straughter	African American	Male	1996	Humphreys
Senator Gray Tollison	White	Male	1996	Lafayette
Representative Greg Ward	White	Male	2000	Benton
Representative Linda Whittington	White	Female	2007	Carroll
Senator J.P. Wilemon, Jr.	White	Male	2004	Itawamba
Anonymous	White	Female		
Anonymous	White	Male		
Anonymous	White	Male		

Figure A.1: LIST OF POLITICAL PARTY INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

GEORGIA

Miguel Camacho, Recruitment Chair of the state Democratic Party
Ashley Collier McBride, Political Director of the state Democratic Party
John Lewis, United States Congressman for the 5th District
Don Weigel, Director of the Democratic House Caucus

MISSISSIPPI (there were three members of the state Democratic Party that wanted to remain anonymous)

Robert Hooks, Director of the Democratic House Caucus (Victory Political Action Committee)
Robert Lazarus, Partner at Watkins Ludlam Winter & Stennis P.A.
Jere Nash, Political Consultant
William Winter, Former Governor of Mississippi

Figure A.2: SAMPLE INTERVIEW OF POLITICAL PARTY OFFICIALS

1. Could you tell me everything the party does for state legislative candidates?
   a. How about for statewide candidates?
2. How is the party involved in candidate recruitment? In about how many races?
   a. How does the recruitment process work?
   b. Where do you look for candidates?
3. How has the state party role changed over time?
   a. Are the party's efforts more organized now than in past years?
4. Has the type of candidate who runs for the state legislature changed over time?
   a. How about the type of candidate who runs for statewide office?
5. What role do African Americans play within the party?
   a. What type of positions do they hold within the executive committee, the party officers or the county committee?
6. Have you noticed anything different about the paths that African Americans and non-African Americans take to the legislature in terms of past experience or occupation?
7. Do you think African Americans face any particular barriers or opportunities as candidates or potential candidates for the legislature? For statewide office?
8. Do you take racial identity into account when slating candidates?
   a. Do you think voters react to candidate race in any way?
9. Do you ever actively encourage a candidate to run for state legislature because of his/her race?
   a. How about for statewide office?
10. Have you seen any changes over time in African Americans' opportunities to run for state legislature? For statewide office?
11. Is there anyone else I should speak with?

Figure A.3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW OF STATE LEGISLATORS

1. How did you first get into politics? How did you decide to run for your seat?
    a. Did anyone encourage you to run? If yes, who?
    b. When you first decided to run, did you discuss your candidacy with any political party leaders or elected officials?
        i. **If Yes:** did they encourage you to run?
    c. How much of an influence did the party leaders and/or elected officials have on your decision to run for office?
2. Have you ever considered running for statewide office?
    a. **If Yes:** have party leaders and/or elected officials encouraged or discouraged you to run for statewide office?
3. Has the type of candidate who runs for the state legislature changed over time?
    a. How about the type of candidate who runs for statewide office?
4. Have you observed any conscious efforts to recruit African Americans for the legislature?
    a. In your view, are African Americans and Caucasians equally likely to be encouraged by **elected officials** for the state legislature? How about for statewide office?
    b. Are they equally likely to be encouraged by **party leaders** for the state legislature? And for statewide office?
5. Do you think African Americans face any particular barriers or obstacles as candidates or potential candidates for the legislature? Or for statewide office?
6. Do you think voters react to candidate race in any way? Or are they indifferent to candidate race?
7. Why do you think there aren't more African Americans serving in the legislature?
8. What is your perception of the state Democratic Party? What role do they play?
    a. What role do African Americans play within the state party?
9. Is there anyone else I should speak with?

Figure A.4: Negative Advertisement – Gubernatorial Race (1967)

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MISSISSIPPI EDITION   MEMPHIS, TENN., THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1967   PAGES 57 TO 72

STOP -

THINK -

CONSIDER

In this photograph from the Memphis Commercial Appeal of August 17, William Winter is shown addressing a crowd at his rally in Charleston, Miss.

—Staff Photo by Vernon Mathews

AWAKE WHITE MISSISSIPPI

Are these front row sitters going to determine the destiny of Mississippi? For the first time in our history we are faced with a large NEGRO MINORITY BLOC VOTE– William Winter's election will insure negro domination of Mississippi elections for generations to come. WHITE MISSISSIPPI AWAKE. Vote on Aug. 29 against William Winter and Negro domination of Mississippi's future.

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