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Title
Political Parties, Minorities and Elected Office: Comparing Opportunities for Inclusion in the U.S. and Britain

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9j40k1m0

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Publication Date
2004-03-01

In light of the long histories of racial violence, discrimination, and organized protest by racial and ethnic minority groups in both the U.S. and across established democracies, it is increasingly imperative to examine how minority groups achieve democratic inclusion, particularly greater voice in the regular channels of the democratic process.[1] The growing literature on minority group politics focuses chiefly at the level of the "grassroots." Previous research asks how racial and ethnic minorities achieve a critical mass, win numerical representation, and realize their policy goals (Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Hero 1992; 1998; Tate 1994; Leighley 2001).

We examine the role of political parties in the process of racial and ethnic minority democratic inclusion in the U.S. and Britain.[2] Comparison between these two democratic systems illuminates some common characteristics that led to increased numerical representation, and exposes other features that are unique to the American case. By examining major parties in the two countries, we isolate the dynamic effects of the political environment and group strategies. How have minorities in these two democracies pressed for more representation, and how have their party systems have responded to such demands? How have minorities been incorporated in the political parties and their national legislatures, and how the political and institutional environment facilitated their inclusion? There are many paths toward democratic inclusion, and this paper focuses on one in particular—the way in which parties play a role in mediating greater representation for minorities in national legislatures.

Scholars have begun to identify factors that facilitate governmental responsiveness to citizens and groups (Powell 2000). We contend that the numerical representation of minorities in legislatures is important to the quality of the democratic process and an important aspect of democratic inclusion. Yet this assumption has been a continuing source of debate among political theorists. In her seminal book, The Concept of Representation, Hannah Pitkin (1967) contends that representation based on issue position, not demographics, produces a more favorable outcome for constituents. Anne Phillips (1995) attacks the traditional view held that political representation was attained by one's vote for candidates and parties offering different sets of issue positions. On the contrary, Phillips argues marginalized groups need to be present at the agenda-setting stage of policy making, in order to raise issues that might otherwise be ignored in legislatures represented only by members of the racial or ethnic majority. Similarly,

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[1] This paper was presented at the University of Notre Dame's conference, "The Politics of Democratic Inclusion," and we would like to thank the participants in this conference. An earlier version of this paper was also presented at the 2001 Western Political Science Association meeting, Long Beach, CA, March 21-24. Finally, we wish to thank Pippa Norris at Harvard University for making her 2001 British Parliamentary Constituency Database, analyzed here, publicly available.

[2] We define political minorities broadly as groups that are subjected to social, political, and economic discrimination in society. A narrow definition of a political minority group is one that has been subjected historically to legally different standards.

Jane Mansbridge (1999) contends that issues raised and acted upon are also shaped by the descriptive composition of legislative body, and not exclusively by its ideological character.

In addition, scholars engaged in empirical research on this question are finding strong support for why descriptive representation is an important component of democratic practices. In communities where Blacks are elected to Congress, Black voters are more likely to be knowledgeable and feel better represented in government (Gay 2002; Tate 2001, 2003). At the presidential level, research shows that turnout among blacks was stimulated by Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign (Tate 1991; 1994). Lawrence Bobo and Frank Gilliam (1990) show that African-American participation rates are higher in communities represented by African-Americans. The mechanism behind this increase in participation appears to be the engagement of the marginalized group through the introduction of a symbolic cue of likely responsiveness to racial concerns. Descriptive representation, therefore, is an important indicator of how inclusive democracies are to racial and ethnic minorities. While many legal barriers to minority political participation and office holding have been dismantled, this project will examine more subtle structural barriers in the nomination process and within political parties.

Political party responsiveness to minority mobilization has received less systematic attention than has the impact of minority mobilization on election and governmental outcomes. We focus on minority efforts to gain power in the top echelons of the party and in the national legislature. A substantial body of research exists on how women have increased their numbers among elected officeholders, both in the U.S. and in comparative perspective. While many scholars point to the importance of the electoral system, others have also pointed out the critical role of political parties in electing women (Caul 1999, 2001; Darcy, Welch, and Clark 1991; Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Recognizing the wealth of the work on gender and politics in the comparative field, we turn our attention to the question of race and ethnicity.

Two theoretical approaches to the question of the role of parties in minority inclusion can be extracted from the broad literature on political change and adaptation. The "Elite Model" views parties as rational actors who alter their environment in a top-down process. The elite model suggests that party leaders promote and field minority candidates in order to attract votes. The "Societal Change Model" theorizes that parties and other political institutions react to new challenges in a bottom-up process. Certainly both processes are evident within the dynamics of party politics. In the case of women's integration and advancement in European political parties, Miki Caul (2001) found evidence for both analytical models. From the societal perspective, in a more permeable party structure, rising support from women and women's groups pressured the party from below to promote women candidates for office. From the elite-led perspective, in a more centralized party organization, women in top party leadership posts encourage greater numerical representation in national legislatures. These two models differ in terms of how they explain the sequence of change, but are not necessarily rival theories.

While substantial evidence now details the process through which women have gained greater influence in party structures and numerical representation, we still expect the process to be analytically different for racial and ethnic minorities. As normative theorists point out, the problem of race and ethnicity in democratic states is quite distinct from that of gender. Certainly in the U.S., for example, the social and political divisions between Whites and Blacks are significantly greater than are those found between men and women. In addition, claims to equality advanced by minorities are often perceived of as more threatening by the majority than are those presented by women. As Anne Phillips (1995) argues, policies aimed toward advancing minority rights and equality threatens the status quo because ultimately minorities are

asking for a greater share of power and autonomy in that society. She notes: "The historical experience of slavery; the continuing and grotesque disparities between black and white Americans in levels of poverty, unemployment, educational qualifications, housing conditions, drug abuse, prison sentences, and infant mortality; the often stark geographic separation between black and white communities--all these combine to create a very different context from the power struggles between men and women" (1997, 95-6). Gender equality demands, in contrast, may be less threatening precisely because they are interpreted as appeals for greater "power sharing," and less disruptive of the status quo. One consequence of the less sharp political divide between men and women in western democracies, therefore, has been the ready adoption of quotas for women as candidates in some western democracies. Quotas for minorities are fiercely resisted on the grounds that they would reify race and ethnicity and their divisions.

Because the politics involved for minorities versus women seeking advancement in political parties are different, we expect that the top-down and societal models that have been successfully used to explain women's political gains will not fully account for the political gains realized by minorities. The key to opening up the party structure to minority groups will depend as well on the political environment in addition to elite behavior and grassroots mobilization. Following on the research of Doug McAdam (1982) and Sidney Tarrow (1983), we argue that the "political opportunity structure" shapes the degree to which efforts from the top or bottom to include minorities in elected office will succeed or fail.

Background: Minority Representation in the Political Parties

Race relations in the U.S. and U.K. have been quite different, and remain unique, even as Great Britain has witnessed since World War II increasing racial diversity. Representing only one percent in 1961, by the 1991 Census approximately five percent of the U.K. population was "non-White," and this proportion is currently estimated to have grown to 10 percent. The largest minority groups in Britain are Afro-Caribbean, African, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi (Saggar 2000). The U.K.'s expanding diversity has been accompanied by new restrictions on immigration, racially-motivated violence against minority residents, and race riots. Despite their strikingly different racial histories, including the long enslavement of Blacks in the U.S., minorities in both countries have organized politically to press for greater political rights. The campaign for Black political empowerment took off in the 1970s in the U.S. as the civil rights movement formally ended (Smith 1981; Tate 1994). British minorities engaged in a similar campaign for greater inclusion in the 1970s in the U.K., a campaign that has since gained additional momentum. Although significantly more muted than campaigns in the U.S., Britain stands out in comparison with other continental European nations for its relatively higher level of ethnically-based mobilization (Nelson 2000; Saggar 2000).

Broad similarities make the U.S. and Britain ripe for comparison on this issue. The two nations share common Western values, historical political trajectories, and levels of socio-economic development. Politically, both hold elections under single-member district systems where the winner of the plurality of votes takes office. In both cases, these electoral rules have yielded two-party systems, although in the British case the persistence of a third party makes it a "two-and-one-half-party system."

Case studies of the politics of minorities in Britain and the U.S. imply that U.S. Blacks are more politically engaged and numerically represented in government (Canon 1999; Tate 1994, 2003; Whitby 1997), while British minorities are less collectively engaged and represented

(Saggar 2000; Nelson 2000). This presents a paradox since racial conflict has been, in a relative sense, less overt in the U.K. Black political empowerment in the U.S. appears largely based on the strength of the racial solidarity and consciousness. Racial group consciousness appears to be the key variable that accounts for Black political empowerment in the U.S.

Minorities in both nations feel slighted by their parties and by the party system. In the U.K., minorities were more likely than Whites to feel that their vote was taken for grant by the major parties. For example, while only 23 percent of the mostly-white respondents in the regular British Election Study disagreed with the statement that "political parties care what people think," 54 to 62 percent of the minorities surveyed in the supplemental minority survey agreed with the statement that the political parties are "only interested in votes." Blacks, and especially those from the Caribbean, are less trusting of politicians and more likely to claim that there is "a lot" of prejudice against minorities in the U.K. In a 1984 survey of African Americans, one-quarter of the respondents felt that the Democratic Party did not work too hard on issues Blacks cared about (Tate 1994, 57). Black Americans' political alienation was a factor that Black civil rights activist Jesse Jackson successfully exploited in his 1984 and 1988 bids for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. The partisan alienation that U.K. citizens of color have expressed in political surveys has not been yet skillfully exploited by their political leaders.

The U.S. Congress better mirrors it population in terms of racial group minorities than does the British House of Commons. Table 1 presents the number and percentage of Black members of the U.S. Congress (MCs) from 1971 to 1999. Of the 38 Black members of the U.S. House of Representatives (including the non-voting D.C. delegate) serving in 1999, all but one belong to the Democratic Party. Taken together Blacks, Latinos, and Asian-American minorities today represent approximately 12 percent of U.S. Congress, the vast proportion of whom serving in the lower House.[3]

Racial and ethnic minorities[4] are severely under-represented in the British House of Commons. Table 2 displays the trends in the percentage of minority members of Parliament (MPs) from 1970 to 2001.   While the racial and ethnic minority proportion of the British population has grown from less than one percent in 1961 to an estimated 10 percent in 2001, the proportion of 'non-white' minorities in parliament has only risen from zero to almost 2 percent over the same period. Of the twelve minority MPs in 2001, all are from the Labour Party. In 1987, minorities achieved a breakthrough in representation: of the 14 minority Labour candidates, 4 were elected. During this period, the Conservatives can only claim one minority MP in 1992. Although the Tories fielded 16 minority candidates in the 2001 election, all but one were candidates in hopeless contests.

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[3] For the U.S., we concentrate on African-Americans in party politics and elected office. Ideally we could add Latinos and Asian-Americans to our analysis. However, this would also greatly expand the scope of the paper, beyond what could be clearly and thoroughly presented within the parameters of one paper. Of the 20 Latino representatives serving in the U.S. Congress, the vast majority are Democrats. The two Cuban-Americans elected to the 107th Congress, however, are Republicans. Seven Asian-Pacific Islanders serve in the 107th Congress, including two U.S. Senators from the State of Hawaii. As in the case of Latino legislators, most Asian-Pacific Islanders are Democrats.

[4] We use the term 'minority' in the British case to include both Black and Asian groups. Although these two groups certainly come to the political arena with different group-based interests and values, it is difficult to examine each group individually for two major reasons. First, the British Census has made little distinction here, reporting statistics in what they term 'white' and 'non-white' groups. (We prefer the term 'minority.') Second, these two groups have forged alliances when lobbying within the Labour Party with the Black and Asian Socialist Society.

Table 1. Black Numerical Representation in the U.S. House and Senate (Black Members of Congress), 1971 to 1999

Year	# Black MCs	%Black MCs
1971	14	2.6%
1973	17	3.2%
1975	18	3.4%
1977	17	3.2%
1979	16	3.0%
1981	18	3.4%
1983	21	3.9%
1985	21	3.9%
1987	23	4.3%
1989	24	4.5%
1991	26	4.9%
1993	40	7.5%
1995	40	7.5%
1997	39	7.3%
1999	38	7.1%

Source: Taken from Tate (2003: Table 2.3). Includes District of Columbia's nonvoting delegate, thus percentages calculated are based on a number of 536.

Previous Approaches to Party Change: The Societal Change Model

The societal change model emphasizes the direct role of citizens in affecting party change. From this perspective, parties are pressured to incorporate new demands by social movements and citizen groups. The party responds, or does not respond, to those challenges at its own peril. At its core, the Societal Change Model views the party as a set of institutions that reflects changes in the environment (Katz and Mair 1992).

Table 2. Minority Numerical Representation in the British House of Commons, 1970-2001

Year	# Minority MPs	%Minority MPs
1970	0	0%
1974	0	0%
1979	0	0%
1983	0	0%
1987	4	0.6%
1992	6	0.9%
1997	10	1.5%
2001	12	1.8%

Source: Compiled by authors.

Ronald Inglehart's (1997) research on political change across advanced industrial societies exemplifies this perspective. He finds considerable evidence of a shift in citizen values, and the emergence of a set of new citizen demands such as women and minority rights, often represented by organized groups. In response, many established parties repositioned themselves ideologically, adopting some of the new issues. In research on women's issues and parties in the U.S., Wolbrecht (2000) finds a similar bottom-up pattern. She concludes that with the rise of the women's movement, the Democrats and Republicans absorbed and channeled demands from their existing constituencies, and shifted their positions on women's rights. Similarly, seminal studies of party transformation in Europe depict parties change in response to shifts in society. Underpinning both Otto Kirchheimer's (1966) catch-all prophecy and Leon Epstein's (1980) theory of a 'contagion from the right' is a common theme in which the attenuation of links between social groups and parties are followed by changes in party behavior, most notably a shift toward pursuit of the median voter in a race for electoral success.

The general societal change model may provide a framework for understanding how political parties respond to public pressure for minority representation. It suggests that increases in minority representation follow changing demographics, values, and demands by activists at the party's grass roots. Increasing minority participation at the grassroots may increase minorities' power, resources, and opportunities to pressure from below for representation in the legislature.

In the U.S. context, the Civil Rights Movement provides strong evidence for the efficacy of organized groups pressing their demands from the bottom-up in Democratic Party system. The roots of the Democrats' move toward more inclusive delegation selection rules certainly lay in the civil rights struggle. At the Democrats' 1964 convention, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), an offshoot of a multi-racial civil rights organization, objected to the all-White delegation representing Mississippi. (The challenge was dramatically conveyed in Fannie Lou Hamer's famous nationally televised speech.) At the convention, the MFDP was

offered two at-large seats and promised future party rules that would prevent the seating of groups that discriminated against minority groups. However, all-White delegations from Mississippi would continue to be sent to the national conventions (although the national party refused to seat them) until 1976.

Because of civil rights issues as well as protest against the Vietnam War, the Democratic Party initiated important reforms that changed the delegation selection process. The McGovern-Fraser Commission specified that convention delegations had to be chosen in a process that was "open, timely, and representative." Ninety percent of pledged delegates must either reflect the results of the state's presidential primary, or delegates must be selected by party caucuses open to all Democrats. To achieve the "representativeness" standard, delegates had to include more minorities, women, and young adults in "reasonable relationship to their proportion in the state." State delegations that discriminated, as in the case of the all-White Mississippi state delegation, would not be seated under the 1968 rule changes. Whereas men dominated state delegations in the past, women have now achieved numerical parity with men as a direct result of the 1968 reforms. The conversion of the Black civil rights movement into organized electoral politics pressured the Democratic Party into increasing Black representation. In 1973, a Black Democratic Caucus had formed that was more radical and influential than the previous Black caucus (Walters 1988, 60-61). Black membership on key standing committees of the party increased on average from 7.7 percent in 1972 to 20 percent in 1984 (Walters 1988, 65). Jesse Jackson's two presidential bids in 1984 and again in 1988 put tremendous pressure on the party, but with little tangible effects. Jackson obtained over 3 million votes in his 1984 the Democratic nomination contest, but all of his political planks fell to defeat by the Mondale-Hart forces at the convention (Barker 1989).

In contrast to the U.S., past research in Britain provides little support for either ethnic minority voting bloc or minority issues (Crewe 1983; Studlar 1986; McAllister and Studlar 1984; Studlar and Layton-Henry 1990). Recent research suggests that indeed ethnicity 'counts', and an ethnic minority identity exists (Anwar 1998). Shamit Saggar (2000) concludes that the "interaction between ethnicity and ideology…best captures the essence of racial and electoral politics in Britain" (237). While there is little evidence of a discrete ethnic agenda, William Nelson (2000) argues that because certain issues are conditioned by ethnic and racial components, minorities in Britain have formed a consciousness of solidarity, albeit indirectly.

At the level of citizen support for parties, national survey data in both the U.S. and Britain demonstrate minority identification with the nation's leftist political parties, the Democratic and Labour parties. Table 3 shows that from 1979 to 1992,[5] during Labour's successive electoral defeats, over 50 percent of minorities identified themselves as Labour supporters or independents leaning towards Labour. With "New Labour's" newfound popularity in 1997, minority identifiers rose to almost 64 percent. During this period, minority identification with the Conservatives has remained well below the support of Whites. Strikingly, the proportion of minority Independents has remained higher than among of Whites. The greater propensity to remain unattached to a party may signal a higher degree of minority dissatisfaction with party politics, and the perceived reluctance of parties across the ideological spectrum to address minority issues.

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[5] Party Identification trends date back to 1979. While a longer time series is desirable, the low proportion of minority respondents in British National Election Study before 1979 makes data analysis unreliable.

Table 3. British Major Party Identification by Race, 1979 to 2001 (in percentages)

	Labour		*Independent*		*Conservative*	
	Minority	White	Minority	White	Minority	White
1979	52.6	38.2	8.8	5.3	22.8	40.7
1983	50.5	30.2	13.1	10.5	12.1	36.7
1987	53.7	29.1	16.9	10.7	19.1	37.8
1992	50.0	32.9	11.2	4.9	30.6	41.4
1997	63.7	44.0	11.9	6.9	11.9	28.1
2001	53.2	41.6	16.7	13.2	8.7	24.1

Sources: British Election Studies
Note: Minority refers to self-identified respondents of Asian, African, and mixed heritage.

The survey data from the U.S. shown in Table 4 show a similar pattern. In the 1950s and early 1960s, about 56 to 66 percent of Blacks identified themselves as Democrats or independents leaning toward the Democratic Party. Largely because of events leading up to and during the 1964 national elections, a full 80 percent of Blacks came to identify with the Democratic Party. This high percentage of Black identification has persisted ever since, in fact. In 2000, 83 percent of Blacks claimed identification with the Democratic Party. Since the 1970s, conservative parties in both countries have rarely won more than 10 percent of the minority vote. In short, high levels of minority attachment to the more leftist party, and the relatively higher level of descriptive representation in the legislature by the leftist parties in both countries provide some support for the bottom-up theory. It appears that minority support in the electorate is reflected in minority inclusion in the legislature.

While a bottom-up process explains how minorities have won political office in the U.S. and U.K., there is still ample evidence favoring an elite or top-down approach. First, in the U.S. the electoral mobilization of minorities did not automatically translate into their representation in the parties and in government. Rather, demand-protest at the level of the political elite in addition to electoral mobilization was key. And second, special legislation and litigation rather than elite capitulation to minority pressure were crucial for minorities to win seats in state and national legislatures. The elite model garners even stronger support in the U.K. case than in the U.S. After all, U.K. minorities met with much success even though their numbers in the population have greatly expanded, and their rate of voter participation nearly matches that of the White British population (Saggar 2000).

We can illustrate the mismatch between minority population and minority seats by examing the demographic composition of the constituents of minority and non-minority MPs. Theories of critical mass suggest that once a minority group reaches a certain numerical threshold, this will alter the status quo. Table 5 compares the characteristics of constituencies represented by minority MPs against constituencies represented by white MPs that have 10 percent or more minority citizens. Overall, minority MP constituencies are socio-economically similar to their white MP counterparts. The citizens in the minority MP constituencies more likely to depend on government programs, nor more likely to be out of work than constituencies represented by white MPs. These constituencies are also as likely as those in districts led by white MPs to vote. As shown in Table 5, matching percentages of constituencies voted in the last election, registering a 53 percent turnout. In short, the differences in the demographic and political characteristics of the constituencies cannot explain how minority MPs got their seats.

Other factors must explain how they came to represent the party; we discuss these factors in our discussion of how elites can promote minority incorporation.

Table 4. U.S. Major Party Identification by Race, 1952-2000 (in percentages)

	Democrats		Independents		Republicans	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
1952	63	56	4	6	17	36
1954	58	56	5	7.5	22	34
1956	56	49	7	9	19	39
1958	56.5	55	5	7	19	35
1960	53	53	11.5	9	22	37
1962	63	53	6	8	16	36
1964	82	59	6	8	8	33
1966	72	53	14	12	11	34.5
1968	91	51	3	11	3	36
1970	85	51	10	13	4	35.5
1972	76	48.5	12	13	11	37
1974	83	48	10	14	4	36
1976	85.5	46	8	15	6	38
1978	82	50	9	14	7.5	33
1980	81	48	7	13.5	8	37
1982	90.5	50	5	11	3	37
1984	76	43	11	10	11	45
1986	84	44	8	11	6	43
1988	80	39	6	12	11.5	48
1990	78.5	47	8	11	12	41
1992	77	45	13	11.5	8	43
1994	81	42	8	10	10	47
1996	81	47	11	8	9	44
1998	84	45	6.5	10.5	7	43
2000	83	44	10	11.5	7	44

Source: American National Election Study 1948-2000 CUMULATIVE DATA FILE (Sapiro et al., 2002). Note: Independent leaners are grouped with their partisans, and the percentages of "apolitical" respondents are not shown.

The Elite-Led Model

From the elite-led perspective, politicians drive political change. Seminal works by Anthony Downs (1957) and William Riker (1965) portray political actors as rational decision-makers who calculate their actions and positions to win elections. Recently John Aldrich (1998) applied this core principle of self-interest to his study of the development of the American party system. He contends that politicians create and maintain parties only because parties are useful vehicles for politicians to further their own individualistic goals and ambitions. Under this logic, in competition with other parties, parties strategize and manipulate their policy stances in order to win elections. Thus, the party itself initiates change, marketing its new ideas to the electorate. By

promoting minorities for office, parties may 'advertise' to potential voters their support for minority issues.

Table 5. 2001 British Constituency Comparison, Average Constituency Demographics

Variable Name	Minority MP Constituency	White MP Minority Pop. 10% or More
Total # Constituencies	12	86
% Constituency Greater London Region	41.6	52.8
Turnout	53.3	53.4
% Labour MP	100.0(12/12)	90.7(78/86)
% Labour Vote	54.9	54.8
% Conservative Vote	22.7	25.5
Party Seat Change from 1997	0	0
White Residents	70.3	78.9
Black Residents	8.7	7.0
Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi Residents	10.1	10.5
Other Non-White Residents	2.9	3.6
Minority Residents (total)	29.7*	21.1
Economically Active Residents	75.4	76.4
Full-Time Work	61.2	63.3
Part-Time Work	13.5	11.6
Single Parent Households	26.8	27.0
Migrants	10.1	11.3
Professional Occupation Households	5.4	7.0
"On the Dole"	15.9	13.6

Note: Data collected from Pippa Norris. British Parliamentary Constituency Database, 1992-2001
*Data for constituency Glasgow Govan include 'white', and 'non-white' totals-- missing entries for ethnic breakdown.   As a result, category averages do not total to zero.

The elite perspective of party change is adopted by Carmines and Stimson's (1989) research on race and political parties in the U.S. They theorize that although many issues compete for recognition, those that become salient are prompted by strategic politicians. The electorate responds to some issues, but to not others, in a manner analogous to natural selection in the biological world. Carmines and Stimson measure party positions over time and find that changes in the popular perceptions of where parties stood on civil rights and race registered only after the parties took polarized positions on civil rights and race. They conclude the following: "The origin of the policy dialogue between politicians and voters must lie, we believe, with the former, who provide definition to a multitude of issue conflicts" (1989, 179).

Recent comparative party literature emphasizes the role of parties as agents of change, and treats parties as coalitions of competing factions rather than as unitary actors (Berman 1997; Wilson 1994; Panebianco 1988). According to these theorists, the key to change lies in the behavior of party leaders and reformers who make deliberate policy choices. Party leaders perceive a need to adopt new issues, and then choose among a variety of tactics and strategies.

Thus, change is not reduced to a stimulus-response dynamic, but rather the outcome of the redistribution of power among contending, intra-party factions.

This process of top-level intra-party interest group lobbying is evident in both the U.S. and Britain. As a consequence of the civil rights and anti-war movements, the Democratic Party had adopted rules to achieve greater diversity at its national conventions. Fairly quickly, however, the Democratic Party began backing away from its new "representativeness" standard. In 1973, new language was inserted that shifted the burden of proving that racial discrimination existed at the state level from the state party to challengers. The draft proposal read, "If a State Party has adopted and implemented an approved Affirmative Action Program, the Party shall not be subject to challenge based solely on delegation composition or primary results" (Walters 1998, 58). This meant that unrepresentative state delegations could be seated at the national convention, as long as minorities or some other group did not successfully object. With women having achieved numerical parity, in fact, the implications of this rule change was effectively that the imbalance in minority representation could continue to exist as long as the state party had adopted an affirmative action plan.

In response, Black Democrats formed a new caucus group, the Black Democratic Caucus (BDC), replacing an older one, in 1973. BDC's threats yielded increases in the numbers of Blacks within the key standing committees of the Democratic party, from an average of 7.7 percent in 1972 to 20 percent in 1984 (Walters 1988, 65). Jesse Jackson challenged the delegation selection rules with limited success in both his 1984 and 1988 bids. His delegates met with a strikingly lack of success in adopting liberal policy planks at the conventions (Tate 1994). However, the Democratic Party responded to these internal lobbying pressures from Blacks by selecting its first Black national chairman in 1992, the late Ronald H. Brown. Democratic leaders made changes, but not necessarily in strategic anticipation to the changing electoral environment. Changes were made as a response to demands placed on the party from its top echelons by Blacks. Thus, top-level efforts combined with simultaneous bottom-up agitation (Black political loyalty combined somewhat later by their overwhelming support for Jackson's presidential bids) forced the Democrats to take concrete steps toward bringing more Blacks into leadership positions within the organization.

In Britain, demands for greater minority representation emerged in the 1970s, and activists targeted their efforts on the Labour Party. Black activists formed the Labour Party Black Section (LPBS) in 1983. Top leaders took charge of the group's goals and strategy, and lobbied Labour through inside channels. Although the LPBS never gained official recognition, organizers never wavered in their loyalty to Labour. In a political compromise during Labour's march toward a centrist ideology in the early 1990s, the new Black and Asian Socialist Society (BASS) gained official recognition in 1993. Most of the former LPSB activists re-directed their efforts toward this new, more pragmatic organization (Shukra 1998). The black sections' efforts focused minority mobilization on electoral channels of participation, and support for Labour, rather than grass-roots protest (Shukra 1998, ch. 5). Neither LPBS nor BASS acted as protest organizations in the larger society. Rather, these groups pressured at the top echelons of the party organization, seeking change through bargaining and coalition formation.

Indeed, the Labour Party made a concerted effort to offer more minority candidates, beginning in 1983. These 'efforts' initially proved more rhetorical than substantive, as most minority candidates were put up in hopeless seats (see Lovenduski and Norris 1995, 104; Anwar 1986). Yet in subsequent elections Labour leaders subtly prodded the local party constituencies in winnable open seats to nominate minority candidates, and minorities eventually won 12

Labour seats. Further, following the image-building success of visible promotions for women (dubbed 'Blair's Babes') in the previous cabinet, after the 2001 victory, Tony Blair appointed two minorities to his government—as Chief Secretary of the Treasury, and the Health Ministry. The Conservative Party has recently tried to improve its image among minority voters by promoting a few minorities to highly visible party offices. Most notably, in the wake of their second loss to Labour in October 2001, Conservative leaders appointed their first Asian vice-Chair. The Conservatives have avoided anything akin to a black section within the party, preferring a more centralized approach, most recently in the form of the 'One Nation Forum', which is designed to recruit minority members and voters. Membership in this forum is by party leader invitation only (Rich 1998). The failure of the Labour party to achieve greater gains in increasing the number of minority MPs, in spite of pressure from organized internal groups, reveals the serious limitations of the elite model.

Applying a New Approach: The Political Opportunity Structure Model

Taken together, the elite and societal models go far in explaining the sequence of change in minority representation. Yet both are inadequate to explain where and when minority inclusion occurred (or did not occur). Previous research on parties and minority candidacies largely ignores the opportunity structure in which events take place (except see Geddes 1998). The Political Opportunity Structure Model describes the political and institutional environment in which actors—either at the elite or mass level—operate within. Although contextual characteristics may not act as agents of change, they do act as intervening variables that make it more likely for a groups or leaders to take strategic action.

We conceptualize the political opportunity structure as the receptivity of the political parties to the demands placed on it either by minority political leaders or by the masses below. It includes changes in the institutional "rules of the game"—formal rules, practices, or norms that act as constraints and incentives within an organization. Sidney Tarrow (1983, 1989, 1994) has applied the political opportunity structure to explain why collective action arises in some instances and not others. Doug McAdam (1999) employs the "political opportunity structure" in his analysis of the rise and decline of the Black civil rights movement. Analytically, an improved political opportunity structure implies a decrease in the power disparity between the group seeking power and the majority in power, and also implies that the cost of keeping the insurgent group in its place has increased (McAdam 1982, 43). McAdam puts it this way:

> [A]ny event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured occasions a shift in political opportunities. Among the events and processes likely to prove disruptive of the political status quo are wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes" (1999, 41).

For example, the delegation selection rules were changed not only because of the efforts of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party leaders, or because of the civil rights movement taking place below the party, but also because of anti-Vietnam war protest and the women's movement. The Democratic Party was effectively forced to respond to minorities because they also needed to respond to the demands placed on it by women and anti-war activists as well. Broad social and political processes are key agents that can improve or restrict the political opportunities of

insurgent groups. Thus, the Cold War enhanced the opportunities for Black civil rights, as the USSR frequently pointed to the second-class citizenship of Blacks in America for propaganda purposes.

Following the contours of the Opportunity Structure approach, we apply three broad categories that condition the receptivity of parties to minority demands: 1) the legal structure; 2) intra-party organization; 3) ideological climate.

Legal Environment

The legal system in the U.S. certainly contributed importantly to Blacks' political gains. The civil rights movement led Democratic Party leaders to make new laws and policies that advanced Blacks politically. Yet, these actions were not independent of the external environment, and indeed, one could argue that they only came about because of the great political pressures the civil rights movement and the threat of litigation created. The affirmative racial gerrymandering that Democrat party officials engaged in either in response to litigation or the threat thereof in part explains how Black Americans made significantly greater strides in winning elective office than minorities in the U.K. have been able to. In 1965 the Voting Rights Act was passed by a nearly all-White Congress (there were five Black members in Congress out of 535 members at that time) because of President Johnson's leadership as his response to the civil rights movement. The judiciary ruled that election systems that are shown to discriminate against minorities are unconstitutional only when minorities can show that they were purposefully created with a racial animus against them. Voting rights activists responded to a more liberal judicial environment by pressing for the modification of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in 1982 (Grofman, Handley, and Niemi 1992; Pinderhughes 1995). The modification expressly prohibited voting procedures that afforded minorities "less opportunities than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice" (Grofman, Handley, and Niemi 1992; Davidson and Grofman 1994). Democrats in Congress were most likely reluctant to amend the Voting Rights Act but nevertheless went along fearing further intra-racial strife and litigation within the party. Republicans also went along with the amendment in 1982 because of the electoral benefits to their party in drawing new minority-majority congressional districts.

In their effort to gain representation in mainstream party politics, minorities in Britain also utilized litigation. Minority litigants brought suit against political parties, claiming barriers to the election of minorities included unclear, *ad hoc* selection rules, and inherent ethnic biases in the selection criteria. The litigants argued that because minorities, in aggregate, lack the resources and connections of the traditional party nominee, they are at a disadvantage in the process. In *Ishaq v McDonagh*, an employment tribunal ruled Labour's selection procedures discriminatory. Likewise, in *Sawyer v Ashan* a tribunal ruled that Race Relations Act, designed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of nationality, applies to candidate selection. Notably, the British cases have not been nearly as extensive in the United States, and the British claims have been framed in terms of equal opportunity employment, rather than political rights.

Intra-Party Organization

The rules and norms within a party certainly shape receptivity to minority demands. Specific to promoting minorities for office, the party's ideology, degree of centralization, and level of candidate nomination may prove most important.

A more leftist ideology appears conducive to minority office-holding. Leftist parties (liberal in American terms) espouse more egalitarian ideologies in general, and traditionally offer more support under-represented groups. In both cases, the Democrats and Labour have more support from minorities in the electorate, and send more minorities to the legislature. These parties' traditional distributive economic policies naturally overlap with minority interests in many ways. In addition, Labour has supported anti-discrimination laws and the expansion of the powers of Britain's Committee for Racial Equality (Messina 1998).

Both the Republican and Conservative Parties espouse ideologies based upon 'merit' and oppose 'special interest' politics. For example, in the 1983 campaign, the British Conservative Party designed a poster to connote its 'colorblind' perspective. The poster's slogan read, "Tories say he's British, Labour says he's black" (Saggar 2000, 200). The Conservatives have alienated many minority voters with anti-immigration campaigns ('race-card politics'), and have been characterized by their "indifference and/or explicit hostility" toward minorities (Messina 1998, 100). Party elites in both the Republican and Conservative parties have been publicly chastised for making anti-minority comments. Certainly this has hurt the party's image with minority voters. In the U.S., Republican Party's Majority Senate Leader Trent Lott made remarks endorsing Strom Thurmond's 1948 Presidential bid as a segregationist. His comments caused a major public furor which led to his resignation as party leader. In a similar scandal, before the June 2001 election Conservative MP John Townend stated immigration was creating "a mongrel race" in Britain (The Guardian 5/1/2001). Although the national party leader, William Hague, promptly forced Townend to retract his statements, Townend was not expelled from the party. Moreover, Hague himself made highly publicized remarks that appeared to have racist overtones. In a speech Hague warned under Labour leadership Britain would become a "foreign land". In another instance, Britain's Commission for Racial Equality drafted and circulated the pledge for candidates from all parties to sign on a voluntary basis. By signing the declaration, candidates promise not to stir up anti-ethnic sentiment during the 2001 election. After having issued an anti-'race-card' declaration, some Tory MPs very publicly stated their opposition to it and refused to sign.

Similar to ideology, the degree of centralization within a party structure may shape minority efforts for inclusion. On the one hand, more decentralized parties, with several levels of organization, may offer more points of access for organized groups to press their claims on the party. On the other hand, a more centralized party might allow party leaders leeway to create openings and enact rules to promote minority candidates-- when the leadership perceives the need to do so. As Paul Frymer notes in an earlier chapter, American parties are "not unified organizations, nor are they clearly hierarchical" (2003, xx). In contrast, British parties, based on the model of accountability in government, are clearly more centralized and cohesive. Therefore, American parties may be more permeable and receptive to demands from below (Societal Change Model), while British parties may be more amenable to top-down efforts led by strategic party leaders (Elite-Led Model).

Certainly the degree of centralization and cohesion within a party is shaped by, and in turn shapes, the level of candidate selection. The rules of candidate nomination are quite different in the U.S. and Britain. Through primary elections, the American nomination system places the impetus on the potential candidate. In contrast, in Britain the local political parties determine nominations (Gallagher and Marsh 1988). The central party organization in London maintains a list of approved candidates, and can veto a nomination, but this right is rarely exercised (at least overtly). In short, although British candidate selection is decentralized, it still

remains within the party, and the central party retains greater control over the process, relative to national party control in the U.S.

Theoretically, there are conflicting expectations as to whether a strong or weak party role might facilitate the nomination of minorities. In primary systems where candidates generally self select, personal resources are essential. The entrepreneurial nature of the process means that an individual candidate's resources are essential. Because minorities as a group are less likely to possess these resources, they are at a disadvantage to potential competitors. The heavy reliance upon large sums of campaign money, especially personal wealth, may preclude many potential minority candidates from entering the nomination race, and from advancing to the general election. With regard to the under-representation of women, research on differences in primary systems within the U.S. states suggests that the weaker the role of the party in the nominating process, the more difficult women find it to run for public office (Caul-Kittilson and Tate 2002).

Minorities in the U.S., however, possess a strong base of constituents on the basis of race and ethnicity than do women on the basis of their gender (Tate 1997). Thus, in contrast to women, minority candidates, while lacking greatly in personal wealth, have political advantages over women in having this ready-to-mobilize constituency. Moreover, the power nomination in the hands of party gatekeepers means that these activists have the power to discriminate against minority candidates. In a study of Conservative Party selectors in the early 1980s, Bochel and Denver (1983) found evidence that selectors perceived minority candidates as an electoral handicap for their party. Furthermore, the Conservative Party has publicly recognized discrimination within the electorate and has sent special instruction to selectors to minimize bias in the selection process. The greater strides made by minorities in the U.S. lend support to the superiority of the open primary system in gaining numerical representation. However, pressure on parties to nominate more women took the form of adopting gender quotas in several European democracies (Caul 2001). Quotas for minorities is presently politically infeasible, and thus, opening up the nominating pressure to control by the electorate is the most likely way minorities are to win greater numerical representation in government.

The two-party system that emerges under majoritarian electoral systems, which characterizes both the American and British party systems, is another factor that impedes minority political incorporation. As Paul Frymer (1999; see also his chapter in this volume) argues, in a two-party system, minority voters lack alternatives to and are therefore made captives of the more liberal party precisely because the parties on the Right (i.e., the Republican Party) do not want their votes. As a consequence, the Labour and Democratic parties do not necessarily have to reward minority voters for their loyalty by offering them more seats. The two-party system does not mean that minority voters are entirely ignored by party leaders. Presidential candidates in the U.S. on the left and right must publicly embrace minority voters because of their expansion in the national electorate. This is vividly demonstrated at recent presidential nominating conventions, and in the conscious efforts of recent presidents to ensure minority representation in their administrations.

Ideological Climate

Causal forces that can improve the political climate for minorities seeking greater representation in political parties and in government, according to McAdam (1999), are wars, demographic and social change, international political realignments or concerted political pressure from outside actors, notably international groups. These shifts in the political opportunity structure

"undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured" (1999: ix).

Demographic changes are critical transformers of the political opportunity structure. As minorities become citizens, they can more effectively seek the end of legal barriers to equal opportunity. As they move closer to the majority's socioeconomic elite, minorities can apply greater pressure on parties for their incorporation and political advancement. Moving up the ranks in the country's economic order is more critical for advancing political change for minorities than increasing their numbers and collective voting strength in the population. Party and political change is not possible without minorities winning first some integration in the socioeconomic order. Economic and social power can expand their opportunities for political change.

The argument that minorities need economic empowerment in advance of political empowerment is not new, but nonetheless represents a break from the societal model insofar as it underscores the fact that parties do not court vote equally or operate as equal opportunity organizations. Groups with social power are more favored than those groups lacking power. Viewing parties in this fashion makes it easier to understand why minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in established democracies and will remain so until and unless they effectively scramble up the socioeconomic ladder.

The Political Opportunity Structure approach also emphasizes the importance of political realignment, and a shifting ideological environment in creating openings for minority empowerment. This is most clearly demonstrated in the American case, where separate-but-equal, made legitimate in the *Plessy* (1896) ruling, was ultimately declared unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown* decision. As a precursor to *Brown*, in *Smith v. Allwright*, the White-only primary system was declared unconstitutional in 1944. These Supreme Court rulings not only transformed electoral arrangements, but also gradually helped in the liberalization of Whites' racial attitudes. These new liberal attitudes on race were politically critical if the numerical underrepresentation of minority groups were to be seen as a real political problem that needed to be addressed. The challenge facing minorities today is that after having realized significant gains in their numbers in the U.S. House, their continued exclusion in the U.S. Senate, for example, is no longer seen as serious problem for American democracy. The liberal racial attitudes of Whites, in fact, have been used to deny charges that Whites still discriminate against candidates of color in the voting booth. Because Americans today are "colorblind," there is little ideological goodwill left in the U.S. toward promoting minority candidates as a matter of principle in the parties or in the courts. The strategy of advancing minority political empowerment as a vehicle of furthering the cause of racial equality is no longer legitimate in the new racially conservative but colorblind environment. Today it is more difficult for minorities in the U.S. to collectively organize and press for further change because of the new colorblind ideology that has become dominant political discourse.

Broad changes in the British electoral landscape have re-shaped party strategy, and have created new opportunities for minority advancement in the near future, particularly on the Left. While British politics was traditionally rooted in social class divisions, class structure has weakened in its ability to structure electoral behavior (Norton 1994; Franklin et al. 1992). A decline in the industrial sector and the subsequent attenuation of the relationship between the Labour and the trade unions has opened up space for new groups of Labour supporters, and new group representatives at the party's top levels. As union representatives have lost favor and power among the party elite, space has opened up for newcomers. Specifically, in the wake of

several embarrassing electoral defeats, Labour's shift toward the ideological center, and its efforts to centralize and 'professionalize' party operations, have shaken up the ideological environment. The 'politics of ideology' that once characterized British politics has the potential to be supplemented with the 'politics of identity' that is more common in the American political arena. It is important to note that Labour's centrist drift has meant that in order to achieve goals, minority groups within Labour must align themselves with centrist factions and make more moderate claims, rather than align with the more leftist sections that controlled the party up to the mid-1980s.

Finally, the salience of minority politics on the national political agenda may be on the rise. Concurrent with the very recent rise in minority MPs in Britain, racial and ethnic issues have risen dramatically in the electoral landscape. Urban disorder in 1980 and in 1981 brought attention to incorporating minorities into the mainstream channels of participation (Geddes 1998). Following several race riots, a 2001 poll demonstrated that increasing percentages of British cite immigration and race relations as important issues as opposed to the economy, education, poverty, or the European Union. In 1996, only three percent highlighted racial issues as the most pressing problems facing the country, and yet by 2001 19 percentage cited such issues (The Guardian 6/22/01).

The diminishing illegitimacy of 'race-card politics' in the U.K. may yield a more conducive environment to the election of minority MPs. Party leaders have an important role here in setting forth the party's strategy in terms of the salience of racial issues. As yet, in British politics anti-race and anti-ethnic minority sentiment still underscore mass electoral behavior to a degree (Saggar 2000). In combating this form of racism, U.K. minorities may ultimately elect to organize more forcefully around their identity as "blacks," and press more aggressively and assuredly for inclusion in spite of the dominant group's denouncement of race-card politics. Thus, cultural interpretations of the validity of empowering minorities through structural reform are as important as the electoral structures are as impediments or facilitators of minority empowerment. Whether groups believe in the legitimacy of political change and the degree to which minorities share a collective consciousness are important political forces separate from the electoral arrangements and the political opportunity structure.

Conclusion

In sum, our review of the party responsiveness to minorities in the U.S. and U.K. finds elements of support for both societal change and elite top-down accounts of party change. While the process of party change in the U.S. fits best the societal change model, efforts in Britain have relied more on elite groups within party politics. In the American case, minority political gains have come about through a demand-protest process at the grassroots level. Localized, decentralized politics shape this process. In the British case, an effort to shore up support from minority groups (especially the more conservative South Asian groups) Labour party leaders want to hasten progress in minority representation, but must drag the local party selection committees along. A similar process characterizes the Conservatives in the post-1997 election defeat. The Conservatives revealed a new initiative in which they will 'train' selection committee members to recognize potential biases in the candidate nomination process. In both parties, minorities have gained the ear of party leaders by forming coalitions—lending their potential support for powerful positions. Certainly the more centralized party structure renders this a more effective strategy than in the U.S.

Neither account, on its own, can fully explain why certain political parties have been more or less receptive at particular points in time; that is, when and why parties will function as mechanisms for democratic inclusion. The fact that American minorities have had to rely much on forces outside the standard political channels for their inclusion and empowerment reveal the inadequacies of the elite and societal-change models. The failure of U.K. minorities to win more seats in parliament speaks volumes about how elites are not merely responsive to changing electoral constituencies.

Through comparison, we highlight some conditions under which minority groups may find inclusion in the democratic system, specifically in terms of finding access in a party system and increasing their numerical representation in the legislature. Certain institutional structures create incentives for under-represented groups to pursue top-down or bottom up strategies in their efforts for democratic inclusion.

For parties to be willing to truly include racial and ethnic minorities, the political opportunity structure must change. Minorities must accumulate a greater share of societal power to better press forward their demands for greater political inclusion. Minorities must have the opportunity to circumvent control at the top through more open electoral procedures. In addition, transformative racial ideologies that challenge the racial status quo are critical stimuli for political change. In short, our analysis of party change in the U.S. and U.K. strongly contests the view that standard democratic processes are enough to ensure that racial and ethnic minorities will eventually become equal and full players in the political process. Minorities can make important political strides, but not automatically, and only, it seems under specific historical conditions.

Future research on minority representation through partisan channels may benefit from a stronger focus on opportunity structure, both in terms of institutional constraints and political environment. The impact of these forces is best isolated through cross-temporal and cross-national comparison. Industrialized democracies, especially in Europe, face new challenges with substantial rises in minority populations. Certainly the efforts of U.S. minorities and parties offer insights into effective (and not so effective) strategies. We must not forget that even in an increasingly candidate-centered political landscape, the political party is still an effective vehicle for minority inclusion. By offering forums for organization and lobbying on racial and ethnic bases, and by heightening the salience of racial issues on the agenda, parties can promote both substantive and descriptive representation.

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