GENERATIONS, REGIONAL COHORTS, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS

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Introduction

The study of African American politics has long occupied the interest of social scientists. Much of the scholarly literature in this area consists of socio-historical analyses of African American resistance and mobilization (Walton 1985; Dawson 1994); and research on the origins, tactics, and successes of the Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984; 1993). Still other studies use individual-level survey data to investigate the correlates of individual-level African American political participation, including socio-demographic variations (Brown 1991; Tate 1994), institutional factors such as religion and media (Harris 1999) and ideological factors (London and Giles 1987; Brown 1991).

It is widely recognized that ethnic and racial identities and beliefs can be powerful motivators for political activism (Lane 1959; Miller et al. 1981), and several empirical studies have suggested that group solidarity and beliefs in a racial "community of fate" – perhaps growing out of the Civil Rights era – are positively associated with voting and other forms of participation among African American adults (London and Giles 1987; Brown 1991; Ellison and London 1992). However, surprisingly few researchers have examined the effects of different strands of racial ideology, among various subgroups within the African American community.

In a provocative essay, Morris and colleagues (1988) raised the possibility that two distinct tendencies, the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement (hereafter CRM and BPM, respectively) may have influenced subsequent political beliefs and actions among specific segments of the African American population. Although several small-scale, qualitative studies have explored the long-term impact of Sixties movements on racial attitudes and politics of African Americans (e.g., Blauner 1989; Fendrich 1992), few if any large-scale, systematic studies have taken up this issue.

This study contributes to the research literature in several ways. First, drawing upon Mannheim's seminal work on generations, "historical-social" consciousness, and generational units, a series of arguments about the possible lingering

political influences of the CRM and BPM is developed. More specifically, I argue that during the years following the heyday of CRM and BPM activity: (1) the imprint of CRM mobilization may be found among southerners, especially those who were young or middle-aged adults during the peak of grassroots mobilization; and (2) the imprint of the BPM may be found among non-southerners, especially those who were adolescents or young adults during the heyday of activism by Black Panthers and similar groups. Hypotheses derived from these arguments are then tested using the baseline (1979-80) National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA). The results, many of which are strikingly consistent with the author's expectations, are discussed in terms of their implications for future theory and research on African American politics.

Theoretical and Empirical Background

Generations and Politics. As Mannheim (1928/1952) and numerous more recent writers have argued, generations are socially (rather than biologically) constructed (e.g., Delli Carpini 1988). In recent sociological usage, the concept of "generation" implies (1) the experience of the same event or sequence of events by a particular cohort of individuals, and (2) the emergence of a distinctive ideological orientation or "historical-social" consciousness among the members of such a cohort (Schuman and Scott 1989: 359-60). According to much of the literature on political socialization, late adolescence and early adulthood are critical stages of personal development in which individuals formulate fundamental values regarding the public sphere (Rintala 1968; Braungart and Braungart 1989). For this reason, early work along these lines focused on political socialization of cohorts of adolescents and young adults, and on the long-term consequences of specific events that occurred during this stage of the life course. More recently, however, there has also been growing attention to the importance of political (re)socialization in adulthood (see the essays in Sigel 1988).

Does the "generational character" created by the events experienced by a particular cohort shape the subsequent political attitudes and behaviors of cohort members? Systematic empirical research has yielded ambiguous results. Studies of cohorts in the general population have yielded only meager evidence of long-term ideological or behavioral effects (see Holsti and Rosenau 1980; Weil 1987). On the other hand, however, several analyses of 1960s activists and other more specific groups do suggest that their social and political experiences left a lasting imprint on political beliefs, activities, and personal lifestyles (see Roberts and Lang 1985; Jennings 1987; Maxwell, Aiken and Demerath 1987; McAdam 1989; Fendrich 1992; Sherkat and Blocker 1997).

Additional research suggests several reasons for the relative dearth of "generational" effects in the overall population. Returning to Mannheim's seminal theoretical discussions, Weil (1987: 321) underscored three important conditions that are required for the emergence of political generations: (1) historical causes of generational consciousness must be sufficiently strong; (2) cohort effects will persist only until overtaken by subsequent events; and, crucially, (3) indicators of cohort effects must be relevant to the events that generated them. Schuman and Scott (1989) have shown that (1) the American public, even within birth cohorts, differs widely in opinions of which historical events have been the most important in the 20th century, and (2) even persons who agree on the importance of a given event often do so for divergent reasons. Indeed, reasons for assigning significance to a specific historical event are often quite idiosyncratic, and depend on the impact of that event upon the personal or family circumstances of the individual. This line of inquiry highlights the complex intersection of history and biography; the patterns identified by Schuman and colleagues (e.g., Schuman and Scott 1989) undermine the formation and stability of generational consciousness within the general population.

However, Mannheim also left open the potential for generational factions or fragments, or the possibility that major historical events could leave their imprint on identifiable subgroups within the overall population – perhaps based on social class, location, ideological receptiveness, or other factors – while leaving other subgroups within the same or neighboring cohorts relatively untouched. He also acknowledged the possibility that "generational units" could develop in tension with, or in opposition to, one another.

One figure briefly presented by Schuman and Scott (1989) suggests the possibility of a generation or generational unit: Briefly, while only a small percentage (5% or less) of US adult respondents agreed on the importance of any major event since 1930 (e.g., even World War II), Schuman and Scott report substantial consensus among a large segment of their African American respondents. Specifically, more than half of their black respondents born between 1916-45 selected the Civil Rights movement as one of the two most important events of the 20th century; however, only much smaller percentages of African Americans born in later years volunteered the Civil Rights movement as one of these major events.

Although this pattern was not explored further by Schuman and Scott (1989), it suggests an important possibility: Because key social movements involving significant numbers of African Americans have centered on purposive social and

political mobilization aimed at (1) halting differential treatment based on ascriptive characteristics (i.e., skin color), and (2) reversing the political and psychosocial effects on African Americans, such events may generate precisely the kind of shared "historical-social" consciousness within this segment of the public – especially among African Americans of particular cohorts – that is difficult to find in the general US population.

Civil Rights, Black Power, and Regional Cohorts. Patterns of contemporary black political participation may bear the imprint of two distinct sets of socialization experiences: the Civil Rights movement (hereafter CRM) and the Black Power movement (hereafter BPM). Despite their historical overlap in the 1960s and early 1970s, these two movements and their leaders maintained a tenuous relationship, and developed divergent views on key issues (Haines 1988; Morris et al. 1988). It is expected that the possible lingering effects of these movements or tendencies will surface mainly within specific cohorts within particular geographical regions ("generational cohorts").

The CRM of the 1950s and 1960s offered an opportunity for extensive political resocialization among blacks of various ages. Although resistance to racism flourished long before the CRM, dating at least to the antebellum slave revolts (see Walton 1985; Morris et al. 1988), the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56 ushered in an era of widespread mobilization by African Americans to overcome a legacy of segregation, disenfranchisement, and caste. In addition, to input from national organizations (e.g., NAACP, CORE) and regional alliances (e.g., SCLC), the CRM of the 1950s and 1960s derived much of its impetus from relatively autonomous grassroots citizens' committees and other local groups (Morris 1984; Morris et al. 1988). Their activities centered on campaigns for equal access to public accommodations (e.g., lunch counters, public swimming pools, restaurants) (see Morris 1984), ending daily discriminatory practices that had permeated the South since the end of Reconstruction. CRM aims also included securing school desegregation and equal opportunities in employment, housing, and other arenas.

In addition, an important focus centered on voting rights, ending discriminatory legal practices (e.g., poll taxes, literacy and constitutional interpretation tests) and blatant intimidation that discouraged or prohibited most African Americans in the South from registering to vote (Matthews and Prothro 1966; Cohen, Cotter and Coulter 1983). Political initiatives also challenged a host of barriers that all but precluded the election of black officials throughout much of the South (see Parker 1990). While non-southern African Americans and whites supported

(and occasionally participated in) CRM initiatives, the backbone of these campaigns consisted of a cross-section of the southern black population. There was heavy involvement by middle-aged African Americans, as well as by young people, and among professionals and proprietors as well as among working-class and poor blacks. Because mobilization frequently occurred within neighborhoods, churches, and informal social networks, some accounts suggest that these grassroots efforts resulted in the political resocialization of many adult African Americans (Morris et al. 1988).

During this vibrant period, a new ideology emerged as a product of specific mobilization activities, including: (1) mass meetings, workshops, citizenship schools, freedom schools, where protest skills and nonviolence were taught; as well as (2) actual participation in grassroots protest marches, sit-ins, boycotts, demonstrations, and other events (see Morris et al. 1988: 282-89). This ideological turn toward hope and political efficacy (described as "cognitive liberation" by McAdam [1982]) valorized collective struggle, sacrifice of individual interests and comforts for the common good, solidarity and unity, and nonviolence. Participants and sympathizers developed a "racial community of fate," a sense that the long-term well-being of individual African Americans and their families hinged on the success of collective mobilization efforts.

To be sure, the Civil Rights movement became national in scope through media exposure, formal institutional linkages, and informal family and social contacts. Sympathetic northern blacks (and whites) provided important resources for southern protests. However, while race consciousness may contribute to black political participation regardless of region, it is reasonable to expect that ethnic community sentiments will have a particularly strong positive influence on political participation among southern blacks that were young and middle-aged adults, as well as those who were adolescents, during the heyday of these grassroots civil rights protests.

Mounting frustration with the pace of changes in the economic, political, and social status of African Americans – along with growing cynicism regarding the motives and intentions of whites – gave rise to the "Black Power" movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Farley, Hatchett and Schuman 1979; Hatchett 1982; Morris et al. 1988: 289-97). While Black Power rhetoric and ideology first surfaced within key national organizations (i.e., CORE, SNCC) active in the southern CRM, the BPM crystallized in the urban non-South. The BPM addressed the core concerns of "ghetto" blacks: poverty, unemployment, urban neglect and deterioration, police brutality, and other urban problems. Black

Power advocates embraced several controversial positions, including: (1) support for cultural nationalism, e.g., interest in African roots; (2) racial pride, an emphatic rejection of negative images of blacks and a substitution of more favorable images; (3) "community control," or African American control over schools, public safety, businesses (see Gurin and Epps 1975); (4) rejection of nonviolence, a staple of the mainstream CRM, particularly in cases of self-defense; and (5) separatism, or institutional and cultural distance from whites, and reluctance to cooperate with white liberals in social and political causes.

Key BPM socializing agents ranged from black-owned newspapers and other media, to books and pamphlets, to cultural events and educational projects focused on African and African American history and cultural heritage, among other mechanisms. At least as importantly, however, the urban riots of the 1965-72 period played a critical role in "Black Power" socialization, particularly among African American youths of that period. Although a handful of urban riots (e.g., the Watts riots in Los Angeles) received much of the attention, there were dozens, if not hundreds, of smaller episodes during this period, many (but not all) of which occurred in non-southern cities. Viewed as a legitimate political strategy by many urban blacks (see Feagin and Hahn 1973), rioting was often much more organized and selective than media accounts of the day indicated. Indeed, rioters tended to target specific symbols and institutions of oppression, such as white-owned businesses in minority neighborhoods, urban police, and others. Numerous studies conducted immediately after these riots observed that participants and sympathizers embraced various tenets of Afro-American cultural nationalism (Caplan and Paige 1968; Sears and Tomlinson 1968; Caplan 1970), voiced enthusiasm for the Black Muslims, Black Panthers, and other militant groups (Tomlinson 1970), and rejected conventional negative stereotypes of blacks, even substituting attitudes of African American superiority (Caplan and Paige 1968; Caplan 1970).

In contrast to the CRM, in which voting rights and electoral mobilization were central, "Black Power" groups (e.g., the Black Panthers) and ideologies are usually associated with unconventional and extra-systemic forms of activism. Interestingly, however, by the early 1980s many of the cities with high levels of BPM activity, Black Panther mobilization, rioting, and other expressions of discontent had elected African American mayors, other black local officials, and experienced increased political efficacy and electoral turnout (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). As Jennings (1990) demonstrates, African American activists were instrumental in these developments, shifting their focus from mass protest to ballot box mobilization. Indeed, some former proponents of Black Power ideology, cultural

nationalism, and related themes made this link very explicit. For instance, as Jito Weusi, a longtime New York activist observed in the late 1980s:

> "Twenty years ago I said electoral politics was a waste of time, but by 10 years ago I was deeply involved in electoral politics. Now I feel the street has much value, and we must continue to protest in the street, but we must also play all over the board. In Zimbabwe, the folks came out of the bush and ran for office. We need to have that same kind of flexibility" (quoted by Jennings 1990: 32).

Thus, Jennings (1990) and others suggest that the energy surrounding the BPM were gradually transformed into electoral activity, particularly aimed at achieving "community control" over urban land use and investment, minority involvement in economic development, public employment and civil service policies, and other issues (see also Gurin et al. 1989). These changes yielded a politically charged racial pride, and a new sense of collective efficacy in many cities (Bobo and Gilliam 1990).

Hypotheses. Taken together, the arguments developed to this point suggest the following hypotheses:

H1: Two aspects of racial ideology – racial identification and racial pride – will be positively associated with electoral participation among African American adults.

H2: Levels of racial identification, or feelings of closeness to other African Americans from various backgrounds, will be higher among older African Americans, and particularly those residing in the South during the heyday of the CRM, than among others.

H3: Levels of racial pride, or positive images about African Americans as a group, will be higher among younger African Americans, and particularly those residing in urban areas outside the South during the peak of the BPM, as compared with others.

H4: The estimated net effects of racial identification on political participation, i.e., voting in presidential and in state/local elections, will be stronger among older African Americans, and especially those residing in the South during the heyday of the CRM, as compared with others.

H5: The estimated net effects of racial pride on these electoral forms of political participation will be stronger among younger African Americans, and especially those living in the urban non-South at the peak of the BPM.

Data and Measures

Data. To investigate the complex relationships between regional cohort membership, racial ideology, and electoral participation, I use data from the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA). This survey was conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan during 1979-80 (Jackson, Tucker and Gurin 1987). The NSBA sampling procedures, described more fully elsewhere (see Jackson 1991), yielded a sample of 2107 and an interview completion rate of approximately 70 percent. Given previous evidence that race-of-interviewer effects condition the racial and political attitudes expressed by black respondents in surveys (see Anderson et al. 1988), the fact that the NSBA project involved exclusively black interviewers is noted.

For the purposes at hand, the NSBA has two limitations: (1) the data are cross-sectional; the NSBA data collection effort began well after the heyday of both CRM and BPM had passed; (2) the NSBA contains no direct information about the participation of individual respondents in CRM or BPM groups or activities. Nevertheless, the strengths of the NSBA far outweigh its weaknesses. Specifically, the NSBA: (1) includes sufficient numbers of African Americans of diverse ages and in various regions of the US to explore the issue of regional cohorts; (2) contains information on both electoral and non-electoral forms of political activity; (3) includes validated measures of racial identification and group consciousness, racial pride, and other relevant aspects of racial ideology; and (4) provides perhaps the only large (N=2,107) nationwide survey of African Americans giving particular attention to these issues. It should be noted that, although the NSBA was based on a sampling frame designed specifically to represent the diversity of the African American population, on average, NSBA respondents are slightly older, more likely to be female, less likely to reside in western states, and report slightly higher family incomes than African Americans in the 1980 US Census. Nevertheless, the NSBA offers a unique opportunity to explore the possible impact of CRM and BPM ideologies on subsequent political activity within the national African American population.

Dependent Variables: Political Participation. This study examines the effects of race consciousness and racial pride on two indicators of electoral participation: (1) presidential voting ("Did you vote in the last presidential election?"); (2)

state and local voting ("Did you vote in any state or local election during the last year?"). Given the timing of the baseline NSBA survey, the item on presidential voting almost certainly refers to the 1976 presidential election, in which Democrat Jimmy Carter triumphed narrowly over Republican Gerald Ford. The wording of the item on state and/or local voting restricts responses to the 1978-79 period.

Although some observers have criticized the use of self-reported voting measures, arguing that African Americans are especially likely to over-report electoral participation (e.g., Abramson and Claggett 1984), studies that take account of racial differences in the size of the actual population "at risk" of electoral over-reporting suggest that these concerns may have been exaggerated (Anderson and Silver 1986).

Independent Variables: Racial Identification and Racial Pride. A substantial literature underscores the importance of the CRM in promoting race identification, or feelings of solidarity and commonality of interests among African Americans (Gurin, Miller and Gurin 1980; Broman, Neighbors and Jackson 1988). Accordingly, racial identification is measured via an unweighted eight-item index (alpha=.82). NSBA respondents were asked, "How close do you feel in your ideas and feelings about things to black people who are _____?" The specific segments of the black population mentioned in these items were (1) poor; (2) religious; (3) young; (4) middle-class; (5) working-class; (6) older; (7) professional; and (8) elected officials. Responses ranged from "not close at all" to "very close."

As indicated earlier, many discussions of the BPM center on the apparent surge in politicized racial pride, or the rejection of negative racial images and the substitution of positive racial images, particularly among young urban blacks (Caplan 1970; Gurin and Epps 1975). The indicator of racial pride is a fourteen-item index based upon the mean level of agreement that "most black people" (1) are strong; (2) are honest; (3) do for others; (4) are proud of themselves; (5) are hardworking; (6) keep trying; (7) love their families; (8) are ashamed of themselves; (9) are lazy; (10) are lying or trifling; (11) neglect their families; (12) give up easily; (13) are weak; and (14) are selfish (alpha=.80). Responses ranged from "not true at all" to "very true,' and items were recoded to ensure that higher scores indicate more positive images of blacks (Hughes and Demo 1989).

Control Variables. The analyses include statistical controls for several common sociodemographic predictors of African American political participation (Bobo

and Gilliam 1990; Brown 1991; Ellison and London 1992): education (18-point summary scale); household income (17-point summary scale); age (years); gender (1=female); region (1=resident of a southern state, as designated by the US Bureau of the Census); and urban residence (1=resident of a self-representing urban area). To control for the possibility that some individuals may have migrated into or out of the South since the heyday of the CRM and BPM, interregional migration (1=migrant into, or out of, the South since 1971). As a rule, missing values are handled via listwise deletion. However, because roughly 13% of NSBA respondents are missing data on family income, these missing values were imputed, and a dummy variable identifying these cases was included in preliminary analyses. When this dummy variable was unrelated to self-reported voting, it was dropped from subsequent analyses.

Analytical Strategy. This analysis proceeds in several stages. It begins by estimating the net effects of black pride and race identification on electoral participation in the total black population. Next, to evaluate the hypotheses regarding the effects of differential political socialization, the total NSBA sample is partitioned into four subgroups using (a) year of birth and (b) region of residence. This practice yields four subsamples: older southerners (southern residents born prior to 1945); older non-southerners (non-southern residents born prior to 1945); younger southerners (southern residents born during or after 1945); and younger non-southerners (non-southern residents born during or after 1945). The net effects of racial ideology and covariates on electoral participation are estimated separately for each group. T-tests are then used to compare the coefficients for race identification and black pride across the four groups.

For an initial test of the regional-cohort hypotheses using data collected in1979-80, the birth year 1945 seems to be an appropriate point of division in light of evidence that the Civil Rights movement is believed to have (re)socialized middle-aged and older southerners as well as adolescents and young adults (Morris et al. 1988; see also Schuman and Scott 1989: 368-69). NSBA respondents born in 1944 were approximately 11 years of age when the landmark Montgomery bus boycott began and they were adolescents during the historic grassroots civil rights campaigns of the early 1960s. Thus, individuals born in 1944 are among the very youngest African Americans who conceivably could have participated in grassroots civil rights campaigns directly. More importantly, these individuals are among the very youngest who were likely to be exposed to the ideology and discourse of the Civil Rights movement through churches, local networks, and media. On the other hand, individuals born between 1945-61 include those who were in their early- to mid-20s during the heyday of the Black Panthers, as well

as those who were pre-adolescents during the early 1970s, but who are likely to have encountered the ideology of politically charged racial pride that was spawned by the Black Power movement. Thus, if the CRM and BPM did have divergent implications for the political socialization of two generations of African Americans, as some have suggested, then such differential effects among the four regional-cohort groups identified here should be detected.

Results

The analyses begin by estimating the effects of racial ideology and covariates on the likelihood of African American voting in presidential and state or local elections for the overall NSBA sample. Consistent with H1, both racial identification and racial pride emerge as relatively strong positive predictors of electoral participation in Table 1. Each one-unit increment in the racial identification index (which ranges from 1 to 4) is associated with an increase of approximately 54% (exp [.433] = 1.542) in the odds of presidential voting and an increase of nearly 43% (exp [.357] = 1.429) in the odds of voting in state or local contests. Each one-unit increment in the racial pride index (which also ranges from 1 to 4) is associated with increases of roughly 38% in the odds of presidential voting, and 39% in the odds of state or local voting.

The findings regarding the sociodemographic correlates of electoral activity are consistent with those reported in previous research (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Ellison and London 1992). Better-educated and more affluent respondents are consistently more likely to have voted in both types of elections, as are older respondents. Gender differences in voting are much more modest: Females are somewhat more likely than males to have voted in presidential elections, but not in state or local races. Although interregional migration slightly decreases the likelihood of presidential voting, it has little bearing on voting in state or local contests. No consistent main effects of region or urban (vs. rural) residence surface in these models.

Next, unadjusted "regional cohort" differences in electoral participation, racial consciousness, and racial pride are displayed in Table 2. At least three empirical patterns deserve brief discussion. First, older African Americans were dramatically more likely to vote in presidential and state or local elections in the late 1970s than were younger persons. Older non-southern blacks were more likely to vote in both presidential and state or local elections than were members of any other regional-cohort group (p<.01). The observed differences between older southerners and both younger regional-cohort groups are also substantial (p<.01),

**TABLE 1: ESTIMATED NET EFFECTS OF RACIAL IDEOLOGY AND COVARIATES
ON ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN TOTAL SAMPLE**
(Logistic Regression Estimates)

	Presidential Voting		State/Local Voting	
	b (se)	OR	b (se)	OR
Racial identification	.433*** (.110)	1.542	.357*** (.106)	1.429
Racial pride	.320** (.117)	1.377	.330** (.112)	1.391
Female	.255* (.111)	1.290	.189 (.106)	1.208
Age	.055*** (.004)	1.057	.038*** (.003)	1.039
South	−.068 (.120)	.934	−.068 (.114)	.934
Urban	.152 (.120)	1.164	.171 (.115)	1.186
Education	.366*** (.037)	1.442	.319*** (.034)	1.376
Income	.087*** (.013)	1.091	.067*** (.013)	1.069
Interregional migrant (since 1971)	−.493* (.202)	.611	−.342 (.201)	.710
Intercept	−6.897 (.583)		−6.025 (.551)	
N	1996		1993	
Model x2/df	448.39/9		299.00/9	
Dependent variable mean	.555		.456	
Pseudo R2a	.183		.130	

KEY: *** p<.001   ** p<.01   * p<.05
a Pseudo R2 calculated according to the formula provided by
Aldrich and Nelson (1984: 57).

TABLE 2: REGIONAL COHORT VARIATIONS IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND RACIAL IDEOLOGY (Unadjusted Means)

	Presidential voting	State/Local voting	Race ident-ification	Racial pride
Southerners, born prior to 1945	.632bbccdd	.481bbccdd	3.60bbccdd	3.04
Non-southerners, born prior to 1945	.743aaccdd	.597aaccdd	3.36aacdd	3.08d
Southerners, born 1945 and after	.426aabb	.355aabb	3.30aabdd	3.08d
Non-southerners, born 1945 and after	.414aabb	.357aabb	3.06aabbcc	3.01bc

KEY: a different from southerners born prior to 1945, p<.05
     aa different from southerners born prior to 1945, p<.01
      b different from non-southerners born prior to 1945, p<.05
     bb different from non-southerners born prior to 1945, p<.01
      c different from southerners born 1945 and after, p<.05
     cc different from southerners born 1945 and after, p<.01
      d different from non-southerners born 1945 and after, p<.05
     dd different from non-southerners born 1945 and after, p<.01

while differences in electoral activity between younger southerners and younger non-southerners are negligible.

Consistent with H2, older southerners reported by far the highest levels of racial identification, or feelings of a racial "community of fate" (p<.01). While they received lower scores on this index than their southern counterparts, older non-southerners express somewhat stronger racial identification than younger southerners (p<.05), and substantially stronger racial identification than younger non-southerners (p<.01).

However, contrary to H3, there are no major differences in levels of racial pride across regional-cohort groups, and indeed, levels of racial pride are actually

somewhat lower among younger non-southerners than among the other three regional-cohort groups. Although the cross-sectional nature of these data obviously dictates interpretive caution, this latter finding seems at odds with the common assumption among scholars and the general public that the Black Power movement fundamentally altered the racial images of younger African Americans, regardless of their place of residence (Porter and Washington 1979; Cross 1991).

Table 3 reports the results of a series of logistic regression models, estimating the net effects of racial identification, racial pride, and covariates on electoral political participation for each of the four regional-cohort groups. To conserve space, the estimated net effects of covariates in these models are not displayed, but they are available upon request from the lead author. In Table 4, t-tests are used to compare the estimated net effects of racial ideology on voting, based on the models presented in Table 3.

In partial support of H4, racial identification is positively associated with both presidential and state/local voting among older southerners, net of the confounding effects of covariates. According to the models estimated in Table 3, each one-unit increment in the racial identification index approximately doubles (exp [.710] = 2.034) the odds of voting in state or local elections, and is also associated with an 80% increase (exp [.586] = 1.797) in the odds of voting in presidential contests, among older southerners. While racial identification is also positively related to presidential voting among older non-southerners, a pattern that is at odds with the spirit of H4, this facet of racial ideology is only weakly associated with voting in state or local elections in that regional-cohort group. As expected, racial identification is generally unrelated to voting among younger African American respondents, within or outside the South. As the t-values in Table 4 indicate, the author's expectation that racial identification would be more closely related to electoral participation among older southerners than among the other regional-cohort groups is confirmed in three of the six possible comparisons. The contrast between older southerners and younger non-southerners is especially pronounced.

In a finding that is strongly supportive of H5, racial pride emerges as a strong positive predictor of electoral activity among younger, non-southern African Americans. Each one-unit increment in the racial pride index is associated with an increase of more than 200% (exp [1.173] = 3.232) in the odds of presidential voting and a comparable increase (exp [1.061] = 2.889) in the odds of state or local participation. The estimated net effects of racial pride on voting among the

TABLE 3: SELECTED COEFFICIENTS FROM GROUP-SPECIFIC MODELS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (Logistic Regression Estimates)a

	Southerners born prior to 1945:			
	Presidential Voting		State/Local Voting	
	b	OR	b	OR
	(se)		(se)	
Racial identification	.586*	1.797	.710**	2.034
	(.236)		(.230)	
Racial pride	−.169	.845	.034	1.035
	(.221)		(.208)	

	Non-southerners born prior to 1945:			
	Presidential Voting		State/Local Voting	
	b	OR	b	OR
	(se)		(se)	
Racial identification	.653**	1.921	.346	1.413
	(.211)		(.192)	
Racial pride	.176	1.192	.311	1.365
	(.231)		(.206)	

	Southerners born 1945 and after:			
	Presidential Voting		State/Local Voting	
	b	OR	b	OR
	(se)		(se)	
Racial identification	.208	1.231	.146	1.157
	(.227)		(.230)	
Racial pride	.260	1.297	−.036	.965
	(.255)		(.260)	

	Non-southerners born 1945 and after:			
	Presidential Voting		State/Local Voting	
	b	OR	b	OR
	(se)		(se)	
Racial identification	.007	1.007	.057	1.059
	(.233)		(.232)	
Racial pride	1.173***	3.232	1.061***	2.889
	(.278)		(.273)	

KEY: a All models include controls for gender, age, urban residence, education, family income, and interregional migration since 1971.
*** p<.001   ** p<.01   * p<.05

TABLE 4: DIFFERENCES IN MAGNITUDE OF SELECTED LOGISTIC REGRES-SION COEFFICIENTS ACROSS MODELS (T-values)a

Southerners born prior to 1945 vs. Southerners born 1945 and after:

	Presidential Voting	State/Local Voting
Racial identification	1.156	1.734*
Racial pride	—	—

Southerners born prior to 1945 vs. Non-southerners born prior to 1945:

	Presidential Voting	State/Local Voting
Racial identification	-0.212	1.210
Racial pride	—	—

Southerners born prior to 1945 vs. Non-southerners born 1945 and after:

	Presidential Voting	State/Local Voting
Racial identification	1.728*	2.007**
Racial pride	-3.779***	-2.993***

Non-southerners born 1945 and after vs. Southerners born 1945 and after:

	Presidential Voting	State/Local Voting
Racial identification	—	—
Racial pride	2.421**	2.921***

Non-southerners born 1945 and after vs. Non-southerners born prior to 1945:

	Presidential Voting	State/Local Voting
Racial identification	—	—
Racial pride	2.762***	2.193**

KEY: a Based on models in Table 2.
   *** $p < .001$, one-tailed
   ** $p < .01$, one-tailed
   * $p < .05$, one-tailed

other regional-cohort groups are negligible, and some net coefficients are actually negative (although non-significant). The hypothesis (H5) that racial pride would be associated with electoral participation more strongly among younger non-southerners than among other regional-cohort groups is supported in every case, with the most vivid differences again involving younger non-southerners and older southerners.[1]

Discussion

This study has explored the links between racial ideology and electoral participation among African American adults, from the standpoint of the literature on generational politics. To be sure, the considerable difficulties of inferring age, period, and cohort effects, particularly from cross-sectional survey data, are well-known (Glenn 1977). Nevertheless, the results are highly consistent with the arguments that (1) the distinctive events and movements experienced by certain cohorts of African Americans have influenced their subsequent political attitudes and behavior, and (2) the lingering influence of these historical developments is also contingent on geographic allocation. Two key patterns seem especially noteworthy.

First, attitudes of racial solidarity are related to the increased likelihood of voting, but only among southern blacks born prior to 1945. I interpret this finding as evidence that the grassroots CRM of the late 1950s and 1960s, an important component of which involved the struggle for full voting rights, left an imprint on the politics of many older southern blacks, stretching at least into the late 1970s. Circa 1980, those who felt part of a racial "community of fate" were especially likely to vote in elections at all levels of government. And, levels of racial identification were higher among older African Americans, particularly in the South, as compared with their younger counterparts. These patterns may indicate: (1) a strong sense of responsibility among members of this regional cohort to vote because of the sacrifices made by others to secure African American civil and political rights; and/or (2) a strong awareness of the importance and

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[1] Similar analyses of generational differences in the predictors of campaign activity (not shown) turned up no substantial variations. This may reflect (1) differences in the determinants of high-initiative vs. low-initiative types of political participation, or (2) the relatively imprecise wording of the item used to measure campaign activity: "Have you ever...?" In addition, to conserve space, coefficients for the sociodemographic predictors of voting are not presented in Table 4.

efficacy of electoral politics for furthering community goals. Despite the fact that the grassroots Civil Rights movement assumed a national character in its heyday, in this analysis the link between racial identification and voting surfaces mainly in the South.

Thus, two distinct but related patterns are in play here: Older (and especially older southern) blacks report comparatively high levels of racial identification, as well as a clear positive link between racial identification and the likelihood of voting. On the other hand, there is no association between racial group identification and political participation among younger African Americans, even in the South. The dearth of any significant relationships between racial identification and political activity among other blacks contrasts with the findings of several prior studies using data gathered from community samples in the 1960s and early 1970s (for review, see Ellison and London 1992). These differences may reflect: (1) the relatively ephemeral character of such "ethnic community" effects among non-southerners; and/or (2) the mismeasurement of core concepts such as racial identification in previous research.

This pattern underscores the importance of the actual life experiences in fostering a sense of "historical-social" consciousness among cohort members. It also raises questions regarding the capacity of African American communities, families, churches, and other institutions (e.g., political organizations, voluntary associations) to sustain racial solidarity in political expression across birth cohorts.

Second, we find that racial pride is also strongly related to voting, but only among younger non-southern African Americans. We interpret this result as evidence of a lingering, diffuse influence of the urban "Black Power" ideology popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially among younger urban blacks (e.g., Gurin and Epps 1975). Interestingly, despite the apparent political salience of racial pride among younger non-southern blacks, the NSBA data reveal few meaningful regional-cohort differences in adherence to positive racial images.

At first glance, our results would appear to be counterintuitive, given that many studies conducted during the late 1960s and early 1970s linked high levels of black racial pride mainly with unconventional politics, particularly participation in demonstrations and riots (for review, see Caplan 1970). However, more recent work has indicated that many advocates of racial pride, cultural nationalism, and extrasystemic political mobilization during the 1960s and early 1970s shifted their focus to the electoral arena during the ensuing decade, and viewed local

political campaigns as vehicles for attaining some of the goals of black empowerment and autonomy that were earlier foci of African American urban militants (Jennings 1990). Indeed, the relationship between racial pride and voting among younger non-southern blacks is especially strong in models of state and local voting. This association may reflect (and may also be partly responsible for) the growing numbers of African American candidates for local and state offices around the nation, many of whom enjoyed unprecedented success during the 1970s and 1980s (Williams 1987; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Jennings 1990). Other researchers have suggested that, during the 1980s, support for cultural nationalism and separatism was linked with: (1) voting for black candidates; (2) support for the formation of a black political party; and (3) a critical perspective on the Democratic party (Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson 1989).

As we noted earlier, studies using population samples have frequently failed to confirm generational variations in political attitudes and behaviors. Perhaps the absence of clear generational influences in the general population should not be surprising: Schuman and Scott (1989) show that while cohort membership does shape the interpretation of major historical events, individuals still diverge widely in their judgments concerning which events are most important. However, such individual differences in perception and historical memory may be less dramatic among certain segments of the African American population. For generations, blacks shared conditions of ascriptive status devaluation, social marginality and economic exclusion, and the events of the 1950s and 1960s led to rising expectations – and tangible gains – for African Americans, movement activists, sympathizers, and non-participants alike.

Despite the apparent commonalities in the life experiences of many African Americans, for the most part the analyses do not uncover simple age-related differences in the determinants of political participation within the black population. Instead, the contemporary links between racial orientations and political participation are complex, reflecting the joint influences of cohort and geography. These results highlight two general issues in research on generational politics. First, cohort differences in political attitudes and behavior may, in turn, vary across additional parameters of social structure (e.g., social class, educational background, region). These social patterns need not indicate the competing (often antagonistic) "generational units" conceptualized by Mannheim (1928/1952) to be theoretically and substantively meaningful. Second, arguments regarding generational effects are most persuasive when differences in attitudes and/or behavior are linked with specific socialization influences, even to particular phases within broader social movements (e.g., the "Black Power" move-

ment).

These results suggest that lingering influences of the CRM and the BPM may be detected in regional-cohort variations in African American political participation several years after the heyday of these movements. But how long did such influences persist? And more importantly, have the effects of cohort replacement, structural change, and subsequent events eroded the shared "historical-social" consciousness of these generational fragments? In the more than two decades since the collection of the baseline NSBA data, a number of important changes have impacted the African American population: (1) the widening gaps in SES, opportunity, and quality of life among African Americans; (2) the growing influence of conservative political ideology and partisanship since the late 1970s; (3) 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns of Rev. Jesse Jackson[2]; (4) the persistence of de facto discrimination, police brutality and racial profiling, etc.; (5) the multiethnic character of major urban centers, and the related intergroup competition for status and resources; (6) the rise of gangs, drugs, and violence; (7) the urban riots of the early 1990s; and (8) the racial and political cues in popular culture (e.g., rap, hip-hop, film, etc.), to name but a few. Have these or other post-1980 developments left any clear imprint on the racial ideology and/or political activism of African Americans? Is there evidence of competing (or antagonistic) "generational units?" Or has the heterogeneity of life experiences reduced the possibility of shared "historical-social" consciousness within and across cohorts among African Americans, in ways similar to those identified by Schuman and Scott (1989) for the general population? What factors influence the circulation of political ideas and the interpretation of major events and developments among African Americans – media, churches, neighborhood groups,

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[2] The figures in Table 2 indicate substantial differences in the levels of self-reported voting by regional cohort. Older blacks – especially those residing outside the South – are more likely to report voting in both national and state/local elections. Levels of electoral participation among blacks who were under 35 in 1979-80 are far lower, and show little regional variation. Interestingly, a recent study of black support for Rev. Jesse Jackson's initial presidential bid in 1984 reports only slight age/cohort variation in (1) self-reported voting, (2) support for Jackson, and (3) interest in the outcome of the 1984 elections (Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson 1989: 110-12). These discrepant findings raise the possibility that Jackson-inspired voter registration drives and the campaigns of black mayoral candidates during the early and mid-1980s were responsible for levels of politicization which were extraordinary for young blacks (and for youths in general). Further research is needed to clarify whether these patterns reflect ephemeral interest in the Jackson candidacy, or long-term mobilization among young blacks.

social and discussion networks (Sheingold 1973; Weatherford 1982)? Our understanding of African American politics – present and future – will be enriched by theoretically informed, empirically sound research on these and related issues.

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