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THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE BLACK CHURCH

A Dissertation Presented
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Chanse Jamal Travis

August 2015

ABSTRACT

Black churches are more than spiritual gathering places, they are power centers within the black community. Dr. King and Malcolm X used churches as mobilization centers in their attempts to equip African Americans with political information and the frame of mind needed for political change. When combining the various roles of the black church, over time, the church has gained leverage within the community and this leverage has translated into the church having political power.

How exactly does this political power translate? From the pulpit, to be exact, through the power of persuasion. The public face of any church, especially the black church, is the pastor. As a religious leader he is seen as a cue-giver (Brewer, Kersh, and Peterson, 2003). The pastor is given the job of guiding the congregation with a message. Typically the message is spiritual in nature; however, at times can be mixed with blatant references to occurrences within the community and nation as a whole.

The point of significance is not only the message from the pulpit but the congregation's acceptance of the message. The peculiarity of the black church is it is an institution that sends mixed messages. Black churches advocate on behalf of the Democratic Party but advance conservative messages all year round. This causes blacks to be politically cross pressured. As such, what are individuals to do? What is their final determination in deciding how to act politically? Can the church influence which direction an individual ultimately leans politically?

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who helped me and guided me through my own times of stress and anxiety. In particular, my mother, Minnie Travis, my sister, Candice Travis, my father, Ronnie Travis, and my daughter, Harmony Travis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The road to completing a doctoral degree is long, lonely and treacherous. However, throughout the journey, valuable experiences are gained. As such, through my five years of study, I have gained valuable experience in time management, critical analysis, and research techniques. In addition, I have learned how to work independently on long term goals. That is not to say there were no challenges. Upon beginning this dissertation, I did not know where to start and had so many ideas running through my head. There were so many topics to choose from, it was difficult to know which ones were worthwhile and achievable. Once I chose a topic, the collecting of data turned out to be a challenging process that took longer than expected. Gaining access to people and/or organizations was challenging and sometimes agreed upon access fell through. Time pressures were always in the forefront, as delays in gaining access to the people I interviewed severely tested the time plan I had put in place. Lastly, financial pressures had to be recognized, as travel and transcription costs did accumulate over the process.

The challenges listed above were some of the major hurdles I faced in the process of writing my dissertation. However, I did not overcome all challenges on my own. I owe so much to the individuals who assisted me in the completion of my academic dream. Without the support, patience, and guidance of several people, I would have got lost along the way and ultimately failed to complete this study. The individuals I am speaking of challenged me mentally, while keeping me motivated and encouraging me to finish.

It is to them that I owe my deepest gratitude. I would never have been able to finish, yet alone begin, my dissertation without the guidance of my committee members – Drs. Connor Dowling, Kirk Johnson, Marvin King, and Jonathan Winburn.

I would first like to acknowledge Dr. Jonathan Winburn for not only supervising my dissertation despite his many academic and professional commitments, but also inviting me to come to his office to chat after my comprehensive exams were completed. At that point in time, I had already completed my course requirements and stood a chance of falling through the cracks considering I was no longer a regular face within the department. Along the way he became a mentor to me, and I am very appreciative for that and him. I can honestly say without him and his belief in me, this dissertation may have not come to life. Thank you for everything, Dr. Winburn.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family for moral support. You all are the real MVP's. My family never questioned me about my research or schooling. They only asked when was I graduating and provided me with strength along the way. To my mother, Minnie Travis, thank you for providing me with a strong foundation in life. I hope this dissertation can be a minor down payment in paying you back for everything you have done for me. To my sister, I hope my dissertation leads you to your own. I believe in you. To my father, Ronnie Travis, I see so much of you in me. To my daughter, Harmony Travis, who was born before this dissertation was completed and spent too many days with relatives to allow me to focus, I am deeply sorry for the time we spent apart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
List OF Figures.....	ix
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW	6
III. DATA AND METHODOLOGY	29
IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.....	56
V. THE INFLUENCE OF PASTORS.....	97
VI. CONCLUSION.....	110
REFERENCES.....	115
APPENDIX	134
VITA.....	143

LIST OF TABLES

1. Direction of Hypotheses	59
2. Religious Impact on Gay Marriage	64
3. Average Person in Dataset	67
4. Gay Marriage Significant Predictive Probability Differences	67
5. Religious Impact on Abortion	69
6. Abortion Rights Significant Predictive Probability Differences	73
7. Religious Impact on Affirmative Action	74
8. Affirmative Action Significant Predictive Probability Differences	77
9. Layout of Experimental Design	80
10A. Experimental Regressions	86
10B. Test Equality of the Regression Coefficients.....	87
11. Experimental Summary	95

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Abortion	42
2. Gay Marriage	43
3. Affirmative Action	44
4. Linked Fate	45
5. Church Attendance	46
6. Electoral Participation	47
7. Pastor Weight	48
8. Candidates Speak	48
9. Rural	49
10. Racial Matters	50
11. Gender	51
12. Age	52
13. Education	53
14. Income	54
15. Partisanship	54
16. Region	55

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The public face of any church, especially the black¹ church, is the pastor. As a religious leader, the pastor is seen as a cue-giver (Brewer, Kersh, and Peterson, 2003). The pastor is given the job of guiding the congregation, along with the community, with a message. Typically the message is spiritual in nature, but at times can be mixed with explicit connections or references to occurrences within the community or nation. As at least three-fourths of blacks feel the black church should be involved with social change (Gallup, 2001), sometimes the references can take a political turn (Harris-Lacewell, 2004). In a 1993 interview with *The Precinct Reporter*, Rev. Charles Brooks stated, "Our purpose is to have a more meaningful role in the community. We cannot ignore political and economic realities...." (Berry, 1993).

One notable example of preachers speaking politically occurred in the 2008 presidential election when Reverend Jeremiah Wright, the pastor of the Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama, was caught on tape making controversial remarks regarding the state of black America. From the pulpit he stated, "Senator Hillary Clinton's race gave her an unfair advantage over Senator Barack Obama" (Monney, 2008). In a sermon from 2003 he states,

¹ The terms black and African American are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

“The government gives them [blacks] the drugs, builds bigger prisons, passes a three-strike law, and then wants us [blacks] to sing ‘God Bless America.’ No, no, no, God bless America. God damn America.....God damn America for treating our innocent as less than human.....” (Ross and El-Buri, 2008). While all this was occurring, shouts of “amen” and “preach” could be heard coming from the congregation encouraging the pastor to keep on coming with the word. In fact, the pastor and the congregation were feeding off one another.

The point of significance here is not only the message from the pulpit but the welcoming acceptance of the message from the congregation. This back and forth dialogue between pastor and members shows some of the political power of the church in moving a crowd with politically laced rhetoric. Even while the pastor is preaching worshipers express their approval and agreement with ejaculations such as “Tell it like it is!” or “That’s right pastor!” The rhetoric and overflowing emotion coming from the pulpit on a consistent basis has the ability to sway opinion on many issues including politics. When looking at the political landscape, since the 1960s, the black church has advocated on behalf of the Democratic Party noting it is the Democrats who best represent the interests and concerns of the African American community. This is commonly known whether one attends church regularly or is just a member of the community. Not only can this be seen in the words of the pastor but can be heard explicitly when a member of the church stands in front of the congregation and tells the history of African Americans or when a candidate speaks in front of the church. This repetitive preaching and advocating for the Democratic Party can induce or persuade an already predominantly voting bloc of the party to strengthen their ties to the party even more. Right?

The black church is widely known for its role in the Civil Rights Movement.² At that time, the church was the focal point for black pride and advancement. The church advocated on behalf of the Democratic Party because it was the national Democratic Party that fought for the political rights of African Americans. During this time, due to a racialized and segregated society, the church was the main institution African Americans had (Raboteau, 1978; Woodson, 1972). Trying to escape oppression and racism, the church was a safe haven for African Americans of all ages. As the years passed, although the church kept its importance to the black community, the political importance of race changed. Segregation ended and blacks were afforded opportunities previously withheld from them.

Now that segregation and many other social injustices are issues of the past, the black church has started focusing on more than racial issues. New issues include gay marriage, family structure, school prayer, and abortion. These are everyday social issues, better yet, hot topics, that society has begun to focus more attention on. Being pastors preach the principles of the Bible, it is not surprising the church advances conservative positions on these issues. This is very important to acknowledge and study because if the church does have influencing power it could have major implications for the political landscape of the American political system.

The Democratic Party has received most of the black vote since the 1960s (Tate, 1993). With the changing times of American society, and the importance of race changing³ in the

² Many prominent figures of the Civil Rights Movement were pastors.

³ Within the African American community, the race issue itself is still important. However, over time, the importance of many other issues has increased.

African American community, the conservative teachings being directed and advanced in the church can potentially move a left leaning crowd towards the middle or right. This can easily happen considering notable black figures, such as Rev. Al Sharpton, have made public comments pertaining to how the Democratic Party takes the black vote for granted (Elder, 2005). Considering parts of the black community feel this way and blacks are often conservative on moral and cultural issues (Tate, 2010; Hajnal and Lee, 2011; Kinder, 2001), conservative teachings in the church could pull the black vote away from the Democratic Party.

My dissertation seeks to study this possibility and determine the outcome of any potential change in the political arena. Due to this, my research question is: “When gauging the political power of the black church, what amount of influence does the church have on individuals within the black community?” This is important because black churches are more than spiritual gathering places, they are and have been power centers within the black community. Within these communities, leaders such as Dr. King and Malcolm X, to name a few, have used the church as mobilization centers in their attempts to equip their followers, members of the black community, with political information and the frame of mind needed for political change. As a result, many black churches have more roles than a traditional church would have. One of these roles is being the backbone of African American society (Frazier, 1964). Being the backbone of African American society, over time, the church has gained leverage within the community and this leverage has translated into the church having political power.

The remaining parts of the dissertation are broken down into five chapters. The second chapter of the dissertation provides the literature review and theory sections. The literature review is broken down into several sections. In the first section, I provide a background of the black church. I discuss the black church origins of significance, what the church means to the black community, and the weight a pastor carries within the community. The second section provides a background of black political behavior explaining what existing research says concerning electoral participation, followed by how the black church influences African American political behavior. Section three covers partisan formation and how the political allegiance of the black community may not necessarily be secured by a single party. The final section of chapter two offers a synopsis of the cross pressure literature and then explains how blacks are politically cross pressured. Chapter three explains the data sources and the methodologies used to evaluate the research question. Upon covering the methodologies this dissertation uses, the data is descriptively broken down and displayed. Chapter four presents the findings of the analysis. Chapter four is comprised of two sections: (1) policy dependent regressions and (2) experimental regressions. Chapter five presents several case studies to the reader concerning the thoughts and feelings of preachers. Chapter six summarizes all conclusions and presents any normative implications of its findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

History of the Black Church

The church is the most important institution organized by blacks during and after slavery (Gadzekpo, 1997). This is because African slaves established and relied heavily on their churches, as the church was the only institution slaves could partake in (Raboteau, 1978; Woodson, 1972).⁴ Slaves would worship under their masters guidance, only to hold their own secret worship services later, outside of their master's eye, in the backwoods of plantations and sometimes in their slave quarters (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990). Meetings had to be held in secret because slave owners feared the empowerment of slaves after Nat Turner, a slave who was a minister, led a rebellion in Virginia.⁵ As a result, slave meetings of any sort were a threat to the current way of life, and slave owners would severely punish any slave caught participating in one.⁶ For this reason, since slaves were prohibited to congregate, the black church has been termed the "invisible institution."⁷

⁴ At this point in time, African Americans had no legal standing and were deemed property. As such, African Americans had no legal right to participate in everyday aspects of life.

⁵ Nat Turner became a preacher who claimed he had been chosen by God to lead slaves from bondage. On August 21, 1831, he led a violent insurrection. For a detailed discussion of the rebellion see Greenberg (2004).

⁶ More times than not, to prevent the future planning of slave meetings, slave owners would make examples out of any slave caught planning or attending a slave meeting.

⁷ See Raboteau (1978; 2004).

Although risking death, slaves still participated in these hidden meetings because religion signified freedom and salvation, while being an escape from earthly incarceration and oppression. Slaves sought refuge within the church where they would pray to their God. Slaves related the Bible to their lives. They saw the story of Moses freeing his people from captivity and related it to their struggles. It was in these gatherings slaves mixed African rhythms, singing and beliefs, with Christianity creating spirituals with multiple meanings of religious salvation and freedom from slavery (Maffey-Kip, 2001). Some spirituals that have survived over the years are believed to have originated as coded songs (McKinney, 1971). Some examples include “Down by the Riverside” and “Steal Away to Jesus.” Part church, psychological refuge, and organizing place for uprisings, slave meetings, whether in backwoods or slave quarters, provided slaves with a way to express themselves and carry on while waiting for a better future.

Moving onto the 19th century, years before the American Civil War started, northern black churches turned their attention to abolition. Within the church, ministers preached about the sins of holding people in captivity, while outside the church, ministers and community members, joined by white abolitionists, organized the Underground Railroad helping many slaves reach freedom. Once the American Civil War was waged and won by the North, slavery was outlawed nationwide and blacks were given their freedom. However, black churches were still the only places blacks could find refuge. Due to this and the fact blacks no longer had to hide to meet, black churches sprung up across the South (Harvey, 2011). Still they faced many battles. Although blacks had new freedoms, they still faced poverty, dislocation, the need for jobs, and had to adjust to society as freedman. Due to this, black

churches in the North organized trips to the South to assist newly freed people gain the skills needed to live in society (Maffey-Kip, 2001).

During reconstruction newly freed blacks in the South settled together and made the church the centers of their communities (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990). In these new communities, the church was the heart of all aspects of life – secular and non-secular, political and non-political. Pastors served the otherworldly needs of the congregation, while also serving in secular functions.⁸ Church buildings were not only used for worship centers, but as community centers where people could come together and voice their political concerns or just enjoy one another's company. Churches were used as school houses, banks, insurance companies, and business enterprises (Harris, 2001). In some instances, churches founded hospitals, nursing homes, and orphanages (Montgomery, 1993). In addition, churches created mutual aid and burial societies. These organizations were created to assist members within the community in times of sickness and death. Organizations such as mutual aid and burial societies, alongside banks, businesses and schools, were created in response to discriminatory practices in the greater community which stopped African Americans from partaking in activities or businesses due to their race.

By the mid-twentieth century, black churches had not only established themselves as social places, but also political places. Churches were where community members met up for rallies, marches, and to strategize against racial segregation and oppression. Plans were made in crowded church basements and offices. Marches resembled church service with

⁸ Religious leaders helped formed the NAACP and National Urban League. A positive aspect of these secular organizations is that most stemmed from the church and shared the same membership of the church.

prayers and sermons. As a result, it was only natural for the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement to be pastors. After all, they were the leaders of the community, and the community looked to them for leadership in all areas of life (McKinney, 1971). This caused the influence of the church to increase within the community. With the church having greater influence within the community, prominent religious leaders -- Martin Luther King Jr., Andrew Young, Fred Shuttlesworth, Wyatt Walker, and Jesse Jackson -- became politically active and well known faces of the Civil Rights Movement (Taylor, 2002). Religious leaders were the ones who advanced grievances within their communities and strategized the next political move of their communities. Without the church being the heart of the movement, it is unlikely the movement would have lasted as long or been as successful (McKinney, 1971). Through the activism of black religious leaders, the black church became an institution of hope, faith, and unity for African Americans.

In essence, since slavery, the black church has been key to all aspects of life – social, political, economic, and otherworldly. In an attempt to escape the struggles of the world, blacks have sought the church for refuge and peace. The church allowed blacks to participate in their own society where all individuals were equal. The structure of black churches made religious leaders the leaders of the church and community. From the pulpit, pastors delivered messages relating community problems to biblical stories. Charismatic pastors helped their listeners adhere to the Word by their dramatic delivery and expressions causing the congregation to be overcome with emotions, excitement, joy, and hope. All in all, the church is home for most blacks and the heart of the black community.⁹

⁹ More than half of African Americans report attending religious services at least once a week (Pew, 2009).

Black Political Behavior and the Black Church

Various models of voting (Downs, 1957; Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1974; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968) and participation (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995) have been used to explain electoral actions. The participation models note resources, in large part, are key to the way in which individuals participate in politics (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995).¹⁰ The main resources being time, money and civic skills.¹¹ The more resources one has, the more likely they are to participate. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) share this belief. However, Rosenstone and Hansen note mobilization can overcome the lack of resources. Politicians can mobilize individuals to get to the polls and participate in politics by using direct and indirect mobilization tactics. Face to face contact, calling people, and mailing information to people are examples of direct mobilization, while the use of middle men to talk to groups of people would be an example of indirect mobilization. Herrera and Martinelli (2006), Morton (1991), and Uhlaner (1989) agree community leaders can mobilize citizens to the polls.

Having resources for politics is great, but being mobilized to act can help as well. Historically, blacks have experienced fewer economic opportunities and have been part of the lower class. As a result, the best way to involve blacks in the political process is through mobilization. More specifically, indirect mobilization¹² is the best way to mobilize the black

¹⁰ The most common form of political participation is voting. However, political participation can take the form of monetary donations to parties or candidates, placing yard signs and bumper stickers on personal property, holding political discussions, canvassing, etc.

¹¹ Time is invested in writing letters to officials, while money is needed to make donations, and civic skills to contact and hold discussions with public officials.

¹² Indirect mobilization refers to a politicians attempt to increase political participation without having direct contact with an individual.

community because of the community's alienated level of trust with government (Abramson, 1983; Long, 1978; Nunnally, 2003). When it comes to middle men, the best middle men politicians can use in the black community are religious leaders. This is because religious leaders are some of the most trusted figures within the community and are deemed politically knowledgeable. For this reason, most blacks are willing to hear political information within the church and accept it if it comes from the pastor.

Political participation is greatly unequal and this lopsidedness tends to favor the educated and well off compared to the less educated and poor (Dalton, 1988; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Peterson, 1990; Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba et al., 1995). These factors -- education and income -- are believed to afford the more advantaged more opportunities in the political process, making them feel it is their civic duty to participate, and that they have more at stake in the political process. Due to this, it is the more advantaged individuals who are more likely to vote. This is because poor people have less time and energy for the nonessentials of life (Tate, 1993).

In actuality, low voter turnout translates into socioeconomically based turnout. This has become apparent in the United States over the years and has major implications. Most important about who does and does not vote is deciding who gets elected to hold office.¹³ Key (1949) notes, "The blunt truth is that politicians and officials are under no compulsion to pay much heed to classes and groups of citizens that do not vote..." (p. 527). As a result, who

¹³ Due to the large numbers of voters who turnout in general elections, the idea of a change in the number of voters would hardly change election results. For example, if all non-voters would have voted in 1980 for the losing candidate, Jimmy Carter, the winning candidate, Ronald Reagan, would have still won (Bennett and Resnick, 1990; Petrocik, 1987). However, a change in turnout for primary elections would have significant consequences for the political landscape.

votes is important since politicians in office make policies their supporters favor (Hibbs, 1977). With this said, research has viewed socioeconomic status as the main predictor of participation. However, some scholars note although socioeconomic status is the best predictor of electoral participation, this is not the case for blacks who as a group participate more than their status would lead one to believe (Abney, 1974; Murray and Vedlitz, 1977 Verba and Nie, 1972).

What can explain the fact blacks vote more than their socioeconomic status would suggest, although a huge amount of blacks are impoverished?¹⁴ The black church can explain part of this because the church is the one institution that can overcome participation norms through means of political mobilization and socialization. Calhoun-Brown (2001) along with Wilmore (1983) believe the black church is central to political mobilization in the black community. Political parties and others seeking to influence the black community have noticed this and have begun recruiting ministers to do so (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). To this point, the black church has affected the participation rates of African Americans in many ways. Churches now hold political discussions (Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris, 1999). In these discussions, members of the church talk about current news topics and political situations. When political discourse is occurring, thoughts are shared, information passed, and opinions formed. These discussions increase the chances individuals participate in the electoral process (Brown and Brown, 2003).

¹⁴ The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates based on the Census Bureau's March 2014 Current Population Survey that blacks are the largest race to live below the poverty line.

In addition to political discussions, church attendance has been shown to increase political participation and activism (Brown and Brown, 2003; Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris, 1994; Liu, Austin and Orey, 2009). It is believed church goers pick up cues from their pastor and other church goers that voting is expected. Looking past typical predictors of vote choice, party identification and ideology, the opinions of the pastor further increases ones likelihood of voting (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). Looking at political activism, Colburn (2001) finds church members have even pressured their pastors to allow workshops on how to carry out campaign duties so members could work for black candidates. Knowing this, it is not surprising that Jesse Jackson used the black church to advance his presidential candidacy. As middle men, black pastors who supported Jackson's candidacy advised their members to assist in his campaign (Frady, 1993; Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990).

Within the black community, churches play a key role in determining the group interests of the community (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). The church environment itself has been shown to increase levels of group consciousness (Dawson et al., 1990). Group consciousness refers to the experiences members of the community share with one another. Group consciousness has the ability to develop into political consciousness by the formation of political coalitions (Henry and Munoz, 1991; Jennings, 1997). In result, group consciousness makes blacks realize they have an obligation to advance the groups needs before their own (McAdam, 1982). Studying the 1984 Presidential election, Chong and Rogers (2005) show group consciousness significantly influenced black participation in campaign activities. In addition, Gurin et al. (1989) alongside Miller et al. (1981) find support for group consciousness increasing the electoral participation of blacks.

Not only does the black church mobilize blacks to participate in politics, the church fosters an environment where civic skills can be attained. Attending church business meetings, taking notes during church programs, creating church flyers, and making speeches all help foster the skills needed to participate in the political process (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). The ability of civic skills to be attained in the black church proved to be important in the black community since blacks were not allowed to participate in the political process due to racial discrimination prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Blacks worked around this by creating their own institutions, organizations and associations (Babchuck and Thompson, 1962; Myrdal et al., 1944; Orum, 1966). One of the most important institutions was the church. Orum (1966) notes, "Since Negroes are deprived of the usual social and psychological satisfactions of everyday life, they are compelled to seek satisfactions collectively through other means.....in this respect, the most important consequence of activity in associations is a kind of civic education..." (p. 45). Being the church trained individuals to be in leadership positions within the church, -- deacons, trustees, and auxiliary leaders -- the church was key to the social development of African Americans. In essence, the church environment trained individuals how to handle real world political situations -- conflicts, budgets, and elections.

In the beginning blacks would form their own associations and organizations to escape racism. However, for one to fully participate, they must eventually integrate. Clergy advocated for electoral participation through means of social and political activism, and since pastors were trusted figures in the community, the community abided. As a result, it was expected members of the black community become aware of their history (Dawson, 1994).

Blacks would feel socially pressured to partake in whatever the group was doing in an attempt not to be stigmatized, and since the church advocated for social and political activism, blacks exerted pressures of conformity upon one another.¹⁵ Olsen (1970) notes this is why blacks in the civil rights era started to become more involved in community activities, contacted government officials more and increased the number of political events they were in, such as, registration drives, boycotts, sit-ins, and marches. With this said, since the best way to garner the support of the black community is through indirect mobilization, pastors are important to study because as trusted figures in the community, the candidate they endorse or let in their church to speak, could be seen by the community as a political sign.

Black Partisanship

Party identification has typically been viewed as a left-right continuum (Green et al. 2002, Franklin and Jackson, 1983). Each person fits somewhere in this 7 point continuum and chooses the party which best represents them. Outside of this continuum, scholars have discussed alternate ways people have become affiliated with parties (Bartels, 2000; Bolce et al. 1993; Cain et al. 1991; Green and Palmquist, 1994). Campbell et al. (1960) credited partisanship to childhood teachings.¹⁶ Their argument claims partisanship is passed down from ones childhood caretaker, and is used as a filter. For instance, if a person hears a message which goes against their beliefs, the filter rejects the message. Berelson et al. (1954) believe partisanship stems from ones social context being where one spends the majority of

¹⁵ Social black activism took the form of creating Head Start programs, Civil Rights organizations, neighborhood watch projects and neighborhood schools, while political activism took the form of joining political clubs, attending political meetings and rallies, and discussing politics with one another to attain a better understanding of what needs to be done in the community (Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris, 1999; Reese and Brown, 1995; West, 1989).

¹⁶ Partisanship is generally considered stable.

their time – work, school, family, etc. Prysby and Schavo (1986) agree. Fiorina (1981) claims partisanship is based on people’s perception of how a party is doing or has done in office.¹⁷

For the typical person partisanship is stable. However, does partisanship define issue preferences or do issue preferences define partisanship? Partisanship has been seen as an end all be all for some voters when deciding their stance on policy issues (Campbell et al. 1960; Jacoby, 1998).¹⁸ In this sense, partisanship tells one how to think on issues using the party as their trusted source of information. As a result, partisanship could be treated like a brand (Aldrich, 1995). For instance, the golden arches of McDonalds symbolize family eatery and cheap food. Customers come to the franchise because of past experiences at other McDonalds. This concept works the same for candidates running for office. Candidates running for office can use their partisanship, D or R, to advertise what they represent and what their values are allowing voters to act politically with a sense of confidence in their electoral action.

Scholars such as Key (1966) do not believe people depend on their partisanship to make political decisions. He argues voters are not fools and are indeed concerned with questions of policy (Key, 1966.) Hence, voters care about the substance of an issue. He goes on to show this by finding congruence between people’s personal preferences and the preferences of candidates in presidential elections from 1936 - 1960. Several scholars have since noted policy preferences determine partisanship and vote choice (Carmines, McIver and Stimson, 1987; Franklin, 1992; Franklin and Jackson, 1983; Page and Jones, 1979). These

¹⁷ Fiorina calls this prospective and retrospective evaluations.

¹⁸ For example, Voter X is a Democrat and the Democratic Party is pro issues A, B, and C. As a result, Voter X is pro issues A, B, and C.

studies assume when parties change their stances, people update their partisanship to represent the party which now represents their interests best.

If policy preferences determine partisanship, we need to understand what determines policy preferences. As pastors are trusted figures within the black community, one can argue pastors have major influence on issue preferences. The way individuals feel about their pastor can lead them to adapt their pastor's views and teachings. If a pastor endorses one candidate or party over the other, we can expect the endorsed candidate to receive higher levels of political support whether the voter fully agrees with the views of the candidate or the candidate's party. This could even be the playing field for the political parties in their attempts to recruit or secure the African American vote, as pastors are seen as cue givers in the black community (Brewer, Kersh and Peterson, 2003). This is important because African Americans have been a cohesive demographic in politics. This cohesiveness has allowed scholars to predict which party would collect the African American vote at any given time (Dawson, 2001).

What can explain the cohesiveness of African American voting? Racial segregation and oppression can explain a major part of the cohesiveness of African American voting. For a long time blacks could have no part in the electoral process. Neither the Democratic or Republican Party took them serious or advocated on their behalf. It was not until Lincoln expressed interest in abolishing slavery did black community and political leader's side with a party. For this reason, blacks were predominantly Republican during the Reconstruction Era.

This support was strengthened with the passing of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments.¹⁹

However, this solid support from the Republican Party did not last long. The Compromise of 1877 made sure of this.²⁰

From the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the New Deal, blacks were at a standstill in politics and in life. During the hard economic times of the Great Depression, Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) created various projects aimed at bettering the economy, putting people to work, and creating a welfare state. Although FDR was not a major advocate of Civil Rights (Nieman, 1991), his initiatives were of major importance to the black community because the Great Depression hit blacks the hardest (Barker and McCorry, 1980). As a result, out of economic necessity, blacks slowly started realigning their political allegiance with the Democratic Party (Weiss, 1983).

Sundquist (1983) notes by the 1940s the Democratic Party was clearly becoming very liberal and concerned with this issue of race. At the same time, blacks were also growing more and more liberal in their policy preferences (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1979). For this reason, Democratic President Harry Truman, started incorporating Civil Rights platforms into his political agenda. This was just the beginning. By the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States was stronger than it had ever been. By advancing major civil rights legislation, Democratic Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson solidified the political support of the black community to the Democratic Party.²¹

¹⁹ The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were enacted under Republican leadership. These amendments abolished slavery, gave black men universal suffrage and gave equal protection to everyone under the law.

²⁰ See Peskin (1973) for an explanation of the controversy which led to the compromise.

²¹ The major legislation was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

However, around 1980, blacks started to feel as if the Democratic Party was taking their support for granted. Lewis and Schneider (1983) reported a Los Angeles Times survey found the same percentage, 44, of blacks felt the Democratic Party did and did not take them seriously. In 2006, an Associated Press/AOL/LPSOS Public Affairs Poll reported 41% of blacks still felt the Democratic Party takes the black vote for granted (Mitchell and Covin, 2011). This was due to black political support not translating into influence within the party. In Washington, several black members of Congress advocated the party was in no hurry to put them in any sort of leadership position (Walters, 1988). This in turn meant they had no influence in their party's doings or nomination process.

Due to various reasons, over the years, black support for the Democratic Party has shown signs of decline with more blacks starting to consider themselves conservative (Tate, 1993), even if they do not necessarily switch their partisanship (Hamilton, 1982). As a result, over the years, the Republican Party has made various attempts at attracting more of the black vote. For example, the Reagan administration vocally announced in meetings they wanted to recruit middle and upper class conservative blacks along class and ideological lines (Walton, 1997). Considering the black middle class grew from 12% in the 1950s to 40% in the 1990s (Farley, 1996), it is possible these individuals could be more inclined to vote Republican, if not switch their partisanship completely, due to the economic advantages they would benefit from by Republican policies.²² Likewise, the Republican Party could attract blacks who share the same conservative stances the party holds on abortion, family values,

²² At the same time, blacks who have been afforded economic opportunities may be more inclined to vote Republican or switch their partisanship not because they would benefit from Republican economic policies but because their new economic fortunes allows them to act in a way which advances their other issue stances.

gay rights, and school prayer considering these are current highly debated topics in society. With this being said, there are segments of the black community that could be open to Republican appeals.

The brief history of African American partisanship is given to show blacks have not always given their political support to one party. More so, a growing segment within the black community is becoming more and more dissatisfied with the actions or lack of actions of the Democratic Party in advancing black interests. Knowing there is a growing black middle class and conservative values in the black community, it is plausible the black vote may be more up for grabs than usually believed. In today's electoral environment, where elections are candidate orientated and no longer party orientated, pastors could hold the key in determining political outcomes.

Cross Pressures

The concept "cross pressure" is used, more times than not, to examine conflicting, rather than reinforcing, desires. One of the first studies to discover cross pressures was Berelson et al. (1954). These authors, from the Columbia school, examined the 1948 presidential election in the small town of Elmira, New York. The authors note, "It is people with 'cross-pressured' opinions on the issues or candidates or parties – that is, opinions or views simultaneously supporting different sides – who are more likely to be unstable in their voting position during the campaign..." (p. 19). Put simply, when a person favors views from each party or candidate, they are more likely to be swayed both ways easily. Table 4 of the authors book reports this instability can actually lower ones interest in the election, and their likelihood of voting. Campbell et al. (1960) directly acknowledges the idea of cross pressures:

“The person who experiences some degree of conflict tends to cast his vote for President with substantially less enthusiasm, he is much more prone to split his ticket in voting for other offices, and he is somewhat less likely to vote at all than is the person whose partisan feelings are entirely consistent.” (p. 83)

Advancing earlier research which found the presence of cross pressures, Eitzen (1972) seeks to determine which individuals are most likely to be cross pressured. His theory is based in “status inconsistency.” His belief is one’s status in society determines whether they are liberal or conservative. Typical findings show a positive relationship between conservative attitudes and social attributes. For instance, Kelly and Chambliss (1966) find a positive relationship between education and social welfare conservatism. Key (1961) finds a positive relationship between occupational prestige and social welfare conservatism, and Lipset (1963) a positive relationship between social welfare conservatism and income. In light of this, Eitzen felt individuals in the middle range of the socio-economic scale should be the most cross pressured due to their inconsistent policy attitudes. Using the 1964 National Election Study and three dependent variables, – interest in politics, party id and time of final political choice – Eitzen finds as a person moves between the middle range of social attributes, their attitudes become more inconsistent, are more likely to make their final political choice later, have mixed interests on politics and switch their vote choice.

Going beyond the influence of values, Berelson et al. (1954) find people can also be pressured by the groups they associate with or the places they go. For instance, “union members among wage-earners vote more Democratic than non-members” and “feel more strongly for the Democratic candidate” (p. 46). In this instance, being around union workers

makes one more Democratic. All this comes with controlling for the usual suspects – age, income, education, religion, party identification and even satisfaction with one’s job. Tingston (1937) finds working class people participate more in politics when surrounded by other working class people.²³ These findings lend credence to social networks being able to influence politics.

Social networks are the people one spends time with – family, coworkers, church members, friends, etc. The key to the influence of social networks is not the interaction group members have with each other, but the political content of the interactions (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; McClurg, 2003). This is important because not all members of the group hold the same preferences, and the ones that do hold the same preferences may not hold them to the same degree. This creates the opportunity for preferences to sway from one side to the other potentially having electoral consequences. People do decide, most of the time, who they hang out with, but there is no way to avoid unwanted political information. For instance, a lot of information is obtained off yard signs and commercials informing us of a person’s political preferences, whether we care to know or not (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995).²⁴

Examining ones political networks, Mutz (2002) examines how disagreements within a network affect political participation. Her study focuses on cross cutting networks and political ambivalence – having positive and negative connotations about an object. These mixed feelings come from interacting with people holding different views, supplying new information

²³ In this instance, preferences were being reinforced leading to increased participation in electoral activities.

²⁴ Although this is true, with technological advances over the years – internet - and today’s vast media market, it is becoming easier and more common for people to self-select out of receiving unwanted information. However, even with this, it is impossible to avoid all unwanted information.

to be consumed, making people uncertain about their own position with respect to candidates, issues, or parties. In addition, she notes, alongside Ulbig and Funk (1999), in combination with political ambivalence, people may decide to abstain from participation in an attempt not to displease any members of their social network. Her results support both beliefs. McClurg (2006a) advances Mutz (2002) by adding those who are minority status are further demobilized in their electoral participation after experiencing disagreements within their social networks.

McClurg (2006b) also finds disagreements can depress turnout. However, he adds, when some discussants are political experts, disagreements can lead to increased participation. These discussants are more likely to say what they feel in a way that seems logical to the group, making the group accept the message. Thus, people can use social networks as shortcuts in attaining political information. This in turn leads people to feel empowered to participate due to seeing the relevance of the message to their lives. This is done by helping discussants connect the issue to themselves on a personal level.

To this point, studies of cross pressure have focused on the social vs. issue sense of being cross pressured. Social cross pressures emerge from having memberships in different social groups. One would be said to be socially cross pressured if they belonged to two groups pulling them in different directions. Hutchings (2001) notes African Americans were socially cross pressured, due to being African American and Democratic, when they were asked to give their opinion of President Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas to the United States Supreme Court.²⁵ On the other hand, issue cross pressures arise when one person agrees with issue

²⁵ Clarence Thomas, although African American, was very conservative and publicly Republican.

stances from both parties resulting in a conflict of political preferences. With this said, cross pressured individuals tend to be persuadable voters (Hillygus and Shields, 2008). For example, a pro-life Democrat or a pro-gun control Republican. It is these persuadable voters who usually cross party lines (Hillygus and Shields, 2008).

For cross pressure to take effect, whether it be social or issue based, cross pressured individuals must not only be around conflicting information, but also willing to accept some of this information. We know this because people are always exposed to information, conservative and liberal, on an issue and tend to resist information that goes against their values and preferences (Zaller, 1991).²⁶ As a result, for a person to be persuaded, they must first be willing to accept messages outside of their party. People with moderate or low levels of political awareness should be the ones accepting these messages (Converse, 1962). This is because they are not politically aware enough to reject inconsistent messages.

Many early scholars of public opinion and preferences share the idea people are not informed enough to make accurate judgments (Lippman, 1922; Lowell, 1913). Lowell (1913) deemed this to be because Americans lack interest in the political process. In fact, few people know the existence or substance of major issues of policy (Campbell et al., 1960). However, after years of scholarly work arguing citizens have low levels of political knowledge and awareness, scholars found citizens, especially the poor ones, could make accurate judgments (Neuman, 1986; Page and Shapiro, 1992; Popkin, 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, 1991).

²⁶ This concept is better known as the Receive, Accept, Sample (RAS) model.

People must utilize their time in ways that serve them best. For the typical person, this means doing everyday activities – working, child rearing, shopping, schooling, driving to and from places, etc. – and not spending large amounts of time, if any, collecting political information, especially outside of election season. As a result, people look for and use shortcuts when making political decisions. Berelson et al. (1954) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) note most people take political advice from public figures who they know tend to be well informed and politically aware. Some examples of public figures commonly used for political advice are community leaders and pastors. The endorsements of these figures is all that is needed to make a political inference for some (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, 1991). Alongside using the opinions and advice of trusted members of the community as shortcuts for political information, individuals can also use party identification (Lodge and Hamill, 1986; Rahn, 1993), and a candidate's ideology (Conover and Feldman, 1989) as ways to get around low levels of political awareness. Party identification and ideology are two of the most well-known and used political shortcuts. These three shortcuts allow individuals, who are not political aware and/or active, to make accurate judgments.

Theory: The Cross Pressures of African Americans

Blacks today are typically Democratic and have been since the 1960s. No matter the race of the candidate, blacks have been shown to support the Democratic Party faithfully. For instance, in the 2004 and 2008 presidential races, blacks supported John Kerry and Barack Obama at rates of 88% and 95%, respectively. It has typically been like this since both parties became polarized on issues such as race in the 1960s. Due to the Civil Rights Movement, by the 1970s, black were becoming more and more liberal (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1979). The

racial inequalities and issues of the 1950s and 1960s made blacks more group conscious, and with the policies being projected from the Democratic Party, it was natural for blacks to lean that way.

Blacks view racial progress as very important. This causes them to be liberal on social welfare and racial policies. According to the 1992 National Election Study, 89.2% of blacks felt the government should ensure equal employment opportunities in the workplace for blacks, while 84% and 88% felt the government should increase spending on education and programs for people below the poverty line, two areas blacks have been shown to be on the wrong end of. However, there are more policy areas than race and social welfare. Although blacks tend to be liberal on social welfare policies and racial policies, blacks believe moral and cultural issues such as gay rights, abortion, a women's role in society, and school prayer are salient (Hajnal and Lee, 2011; Kinder, 2001; Tate, 2010). This salience leads blacks to lean conservative on these issues.

There could be several reasons for this. One could be due to the media airing less racial news coverage after the Civil Rights Movement. Less media coverage of racial and social welfare issues could have allowed blacks to focus on other issues which were also important to them. A second reason is cleavages within the black community. Since the 1960s, but rapidly escalating in the 1970s, blacks have been afforded better economic opportunities and these opportunities created more middle class black families (Hutchinson, 1999; Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997; Wilson, 1978, 1987). In fact, during the twenty six years between 1952 and 1978, the percentage of blacks who identified themselves as middle class doubled (Vanneman and Cannon, 1987). By the 1984 National Black Election Study, 52% of blacks,

more than a majority, felt they were middle class or higher. Being in a better economic position might open the ears of blacks to the Republican Party in an attempt to secure their future financially.²⁷ Once listening to the whims of the GOP, blacks may be more likely to listen to other issues stances.

As stated earlier, blacks tend to be cross pressured. They are liberal on racial and social welfare issues, and conservative on moral and cultural issues (Tate, 2010; Hajnal and Lee, 2011; Kinder, 2001). Considering the black church is the strongest and oldest institution in the black community, it is natural for the people in the pews to follow the words of their pastor. This can create a conflict for members.²⁸ The reason for this is pastors preach from the Bible and dwell on the Bible's teachings. Many parts of the Bible advocate conservative values. For instance, marriage being a union between woman and man, and how they are supposed to reproduce.²⁹ Pastors in turn preach about the sins of being gay. The congregation then adapts these conservative values. However, during election years and campaign seasons, black churches advocate on the Democratic Party's behalf and typically bring in Democratic candidates to speak to the church. This brings a conflict in the messages being sent to the congregation. In turn congregants ask: Do I follow a party who is conservative on moral and cultural issues, or the party my church consistently advocates for?

²⁷ As noted in footnote 17, blacks who have been afforded economic opportunities may be more inclined to vote Republican or switch their partisanship. This is not because they would benefit from Republican economic policies, but because their new economic fortunes allow them to act in a way which advances their other issue stances.

²⁸ Conventional wisdom says the typical black church is conservative. However, not all black churches are, as shown in the qualitative interviews provided later in this dissertation. There are some moderate black churches that hold slightly different views.

²⁹ See 1 Corinthians 7:1 - 40; 1 Corinthians 13: 4 -7; Ephesians 5: 22 -33; Genesis 2: 24.

Conclusion

The black church is not just another institution African Americans partake in. It is not a place that can be replaced with another entity. The black church is largely the reason African Americans were able to make it through slavery and hard times throughout life. Without having access to worldly institutions, African Americans used the church to learn political and social skills. Pastors led the way throughout the process being the most notable figures throughout the community. Looking at politics, the black church has been shown to mobilize African Americans to participate in the electoral process by holding political discussions, and rallies within the church. However, the church sends mixed signals. It preaches conservative values of the Bible, but advances Democratic cues during election season. As such, African Americans are cross pressured. Due to the significance of the church to African Americans, it is possible church leaders, pastors, have the ability to affect the electoral landscape by preaching conservative biblical values and potentially persuading congregants to behave certain ways electorally. Considering some claim the Democratic Party takes the African American vote for granted and pastors advance conservative principles, the church could play a role in making the African American voting bloc more competitive between parties.

CHAPTER THREE: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter reviewed the relevant academic literature concerning the significance of the black church, African American political behavior, African American partisanship, and cross pressures. This chapter presents an overview of the data and methodological approaches to investigating the research question. The goal of this dissertation is two-fold. The first goal is to determine whether the African American church has influence on African American political behavior. The second goal is to determine whether pastors believe they have influencing power, and, if so, to determine whether they attempt to use that power to influence the behavior of their congregations. This chapter is broken down into two sections. The first section covers my expectations for the analysis. The second section covers the research design, and various statistical methods I employ to analyze the data. Within the second section, descriptive statistics are presented.

Expectations

My argument to this point is African Americans are cross pressured by an institution that sends mixed signals and messages. Being the most religiously committed group in America (Pew Research, 2009), African Americans are predominately theologically conservative. The church sees the Bible as the authoritative word of God. As a result, the black church is traditionally socially conservative in nature. This conservative culture has led some to believe the teachings within the church has turned the church homophobic (Brown, 1999). With that said, many congregants have heard the saying, “God created Adam and Eve,

not Adam and Steve.” Upon hearing these messages from the pulpit, whether a member or a once in a blue moon church attendee, one can quickly see the church has a social bias. This social bias has the ability to spread into the community. As a result, when looking at the conservative teachings stemming from the black church, African Americans may be more inclined to accept and follow conservative teachings on social issues.

I believe five factors determine what influence cross pressures have on an individual. The first factor is church attendance. Church attendance has been shown to increase levels of political activism (Brown and Brown, 2003). One way this occurs is by creating an environment that fosters healthy discussions between individuals. Attending church regularly, whether for Sunday service, choir rehearsal, Bible study, Sunday school, or auxiliary meetings, allows individuals to interact with one another on an everyday basis. These interactions can have serious implications on their political preferences. This is because a lot of times what is being discussed before these events, after these events, and sometimes during these events, are situations within the community. Usually the discussion ties into a previous sermon, something the pastor has said, or an individual’s personal experience with a situation they were a part of that relates to the conversation at hand. A lot of times, when the pastor is on hand, attendees ask the pastor where he stands on the topic and the pastor gives a politically correct answer that revolves around the Bible. All this put together strengthens individual’s conservative stands and the belief that the Bible is the way to God’s promises by helping members grow closer to one another, while developing a sense of mutual obligation to biblical practices. Therefore, church based discussions lead to members passing cues to one another that political practices are expected to be in line with biblical practices. As a result, when considering the

discussions that occur within the church, I anticipate church attendance to be correlated with conservative beliefs. In addition, I expect individuals who attend church to be more willing to follow the political endorsement of a pastor because they should have the strongest attachment to the pastor. The assumption is the more one attends church, the more likely they are to listen to and follow the words of the pastor.

Moving on to the second factor, I expect the amount of weight a person places on their pastor to influence cross pressured individuals.³⁰ Research has shown people use trusted sources of information as political shortcuts when making political decisions (Lupia, 1994). The logic implies people do not have the time to do their due diligence and collect the amount of information needed to make informed decisions. As such, people use shortcuts in place of full amounts of information. Within the black community, pastors are a political shortcut African Americans can use. Considering pastors are some of the most trusted individuals within black communities, the more weight a person places on the messages of pastors, the more likely they should be to hold conservative views on social issues. In addition, I expect people who place more weight on the messages of pastors to be more influenced by a pastor's political endorsement of a candidate. This is expected because on any given Sunday, one can sit in the congregation and watch how a pastor, especially a charismatic one, talks to their congregation in a one sided conversation. While watching the enthusiastic reactions from the congregation, one can quickly realize the pastor is a trusted source of biblical information and everyday knowledge. Beyond Sunday service, members seek their pastors for help with various issues –

³⁰ The amount of weight can be considered the degree to which a person places value in what a pastor preaches.

marriage, infidelity, child rearing, prayer, etc. The mere admiration of these figures gives them power to persuade opinion in many different areas of life.

Moving on to the third factor, I expect income to influence cross pressured individuals. Previous research has shown higher incomes lead to more conservative values. As a result, despite the allegiance of the black community to the Democratic Party, I expect blacks with higher incomes, middle class and up, to hold more conservative views. Landry (1987) notes the improvement of black living conditions, during the Civil Rights Movement, afforded blacks more opportunities in life, and those opportunities led to parts of the black community prospering more than others. As a result, the black community has experienced a divide due to the development of the different interests of the newly formulated black middle class. Due to this divide, agreeing with Welch and Foster (1987), I expect more privileged blacks to be less likely to feel the government should be involved in funding social welfare programs. This is because the economic differences between classes in the black community has led to attitudinal differences (Ashbee, 1999; Welch and Combs, 1985).

The fourth factor that determines the influence cross pressures have on an individual is group consciousness. Group consciousness fosters feelings of identification and solidarity, which fuel collective action (Chong, 1991; Morris, 1984; McAdam, 1982). It is an important concept for understanding the participation rates of certain groups in the electoral process. One of these groups is African Americans. The troubles blacks faced over the years has led them to recognize their common struggles. Due to these common struggles, blacks developed

a sense of group awareness.³¹ This awareness has led the black community to believe the best way to advance black policy preferences is by supporting the Democratic Party.³²

The last factor I expect to determine the influence cross pressures have on an individual is one's social (rural/urban) environment. I believe one's environment can influence their political behavior. This is because of the differences between rural and urban living. Take rural areas first. The conventional wisdom is life is slow and everyone knows each other by association or through a mutual friend. Most people are connected with one another and see each other on a consistent basis. People shop at the same small shopping center, while their kids go to the same school. Due to the lack of industrialization, along with low pay in rural areas, many people have to lean on each other for support in one way or the other.

Social life in rural areas is simple. There are fewer organizations outside of the school house and church. Looking at social issues, rural areas are traditional and old fashioned. Family values are very important. Also important are traditional relationships between women and men. Because of this, rural gays hold private lives that only close friends may know about (Cody and Welch, 1997; Kramer, 1995). Interviewing eight gay men about their personal experiences, Boulden (2001) finds that rural gays fear being exposed for safety reasons. In a Los Angeles Times article, Cart and Stanley (1999) note, "If they [gays] live in a small town and hope to find a gathering place where they can be themselves without fear, it generally means driving as much as four hours to a large city and the safe haven of a gay bar." This is out of protection and fear of one's safety (D'Augelli and Hart, 1987). In rural areas,

³¹ This awareness reached its apex during the Civil Rights Movement politicizing blacks.

³² This is because most Civil Rights laws were implemented and advanced under Democratic presidents.

liberal practices surrounding social issues are shunned upon. Due to this, I expect rural living to be associated with holding and favoring conservative social values. In addition, I expect residents of rural areas to be more receptive to a pastor's political endorsement of a socially conservative candidate. This is because the traditional old fashioned way of life in rural areas. As rural communities are already old fashioned, when pastors endorse a social conservative, the predispositions of rural individuals should be reinforced and strengthened. In this case, the pastor is advising the individuals to do something they already plan on doing.

Urban areas are different from rural areas. These areas generally have more organizations and a wider range of social offerings. Looking at social and moral concerns, urban areas are more open and welcoming to things widely debated in the public sphere. For this reason, research has shown cities attract gay individuals looking to escape a conservative culture (Valentine and Skelton, 2003; Weston, 1995). In addition, Florida (2010) notes the largest gay concentrations can be found in cities -- New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, D.C., Boston, San Diego, Denver, Portland (Oregon), Dallas, Columbus (Ohio), and Sacramento. As can be seen, urban areas are safe havens for gay culture and social life. As a result, over time, people may have become accustomed to seeing this, and may even tolerate it more than they would have previously.³³ Therefore, I expect urban dwellers to favor liberal stances on gay rights.

³³ It should be noted the presence of diversity may not equal the acceptance of diversity.

Research Design

This dissertation consists of both qualitative and quantitative analyses. As a result, the final product of research is richer by providing a better understanding of individual's perceptions and the underlying thought processes that guide their social and political behavior (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The qualitative portion of the study consists of open-ended interviews. Open-ended interviews aid in developing descriptions and further understanding how respondents interpret events (Weiss, 1994). In addition, open-ended interviews allow researchers more use of the data by providing a wider range of responses, which a survey cannot.

I interviewed pastors to gain an understanding of the political power of the black church. In particular, pastors were interviewed to understand their attitudes about politics, their congregations, and how they feel about the idea of mixing church and politics together. My first preference for conducting the interviews was the pastor's church. This is because the church is the main interacting place between pastors and their members. In addition, the church is the most natural environment for this research. Weiss (1994) notes subjects of interest can be shy and less comfortable outside of their normal settings. As a result, I wanted to interview pastors within the church. This would allow the pastors to be in their "comfort zone," diminishing the chances of setbacks and candidness, allowing for more straight forward responses.

The quantitative data in my analysis comes from a survey and survey experiment. Surveys provide access to individual's thoughts, opinions, and feelings. This access is important because I gauge the weight individuals place on their pastor's messages, and how

these messages influence political participation. The survey contained questions relating to partisanship, socioeconomic status, issue preferences, and feelings concerning the church and politics. Embedded within the survey is a survey experiment that attempts to isolate the influence of pastor endorsements.³⁴ The experiment is a very conservative test, as the treatments only differ by a line or two. The survey experiment includes a question concerning a hypothetical election. Including a hypothetical election allows me to examine the amount of support a person gives a candidate when a pastor politically endorses a candidate.

Hypothetical elections are useful because actual elections are spaced apart. This makes it difficult to use real elections. In addition, most elections tend to have the same characteristics: a clear underdog, an expected front runner, and media effects.³⁵ Due to these restrictions, I measure candidate evaluations and the influence of pastors using hypothetical elections. This allows me to overcome the lack of real world occurrences that may or may not occur in actual elections.³⁶

Survey Construction and Respondent Accumulation

Upon constructing the survey, one question was asked: “Does the information needed already exist?” The answer to this question was important, as surveys can be very expensive.

As such, to begin my search, surveys completed by the National Black Election Study, National

³⁴ An experiment is a controlled study in which the researcher attempts to understand cause and effect relationships. Experiments are great for conducting research because researchers can manipulate different factors and see how respondents react. A more detailed explanation of the survey experiment used in this research will be provided in chapter four.

³⁵ People may vote or change their vote based on how the media portrays an election, and who is deemed to be the frontrunner (Potter, 2013).

³⁶ Although hypothetical elections miss out on certain environmental aspects people would run into in actual elections, hypothetical elections can still add to the accumulation of knowledge concerning decisions to vote.

Black Politics Study, General Social Survey, American National Election Study, and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICSPR) were examined. However, the information needed for this dissertation was not readily available through those avenues. Being the target population is African American and surveys tend to have a small sample size of African Americans in their response pool, it was deemed necessary to go a different route and not use surveys that have been made available to the public. As such, I developed my own survey.

In the process of developing my survey, it was decided only close-ended and multiple choice questions were going to be asked. Close ended questions help avoid un-useful and un-needed information, while making it easier to compare responses later. The process itself took months of careful planning and committee member meetings to decide on a list of areas the survey would focus on, eventually turning areas into specific questions. For instance, two areas of focus were church related matters and political matters. These two areas of focus led to several questions, each aimed at acquiring information pertinent to the given subject matter. Once into the process, several drafts of the survey were created and ultimately revised. When possible, questions were worded to keep in sync with the question wording of similar questions from major survey collection firms.

The format of the survey was straight forward. It started with an introduction. The introduction was short and to the point naming who was conducting the survey and any risks involved, which was none. I also informed the individuals how the information collected would be used, and that the information gathered would be anonymous and/or confidential. Looking past the introduction, the survey was broken into two parts – a first set of questions

dealing with demographics and politics, and a second set dealing with a hypothetical election. The first set of questions set the tone for the survey. These questions were simple and allowed the respondents to answer without any hesitation – age, race, party, residence, etc. By making these questions simple, respondents were slowly coached into the process giving me a higher success rate of survey completions, as fewer respondents would complete the survey if they struggled in the beginning. The last set of questions, the second part of the survey, dealt with my survey experiment. There were twelve different versions of the survey experiment, each distributed randomly and equally. Upon choosing a control group, several variables were then alternated in the remaining treatments to gauge the amount of influence pastors have.

With the final draft ready for distribution, the search for respondents would soon begin. However, I first had to decide which distribution method would be best – face to face, email, U.S. postal mail, etc. For time reasons and financial constraints, it was deemed best to make the survey available online. In an attempt to reach a broad range of African Americans across the country, historically black college universities (HBCU's) were selected as the best locations to conduct research. A list of HBCU's was obtained through the White House Initiative on Historically Black College Universities located under the reigns of the U.S. Department of Education.³⁷ The initiative provided me with the names, numbers and addresses of each accredited HBCU, totaling 101 institutions. For every institution on the list, I went to its respective website and collected the contact information of the various Department Chairs within the Political Science, Religion, Sociology, and General Education

³⁷ An historical overview can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/whhbcu/about-us/>.

programs. A personal email was then sent to each department chair asking for their help in distributing my survey to the faculty members within their departments, who could then ask their students to participate. Once that was completed, to speed up the process, I then went and contacted each faculty member within each of the following departments – Political Science, Religion, Sociology, and General Education – for assistance with my research. This was done for two reasons: (1) because it was no guarantee department chairs would help, even if they said they were willing to; and (2) because certain department chairs would say no.

After contacting various professors at academic institutions, the online networking company of Facebook was then used to expand the participant pool. There are a plethora of groups within Facebook. The main groups contacted were academic based or affiliated. Through a Facebook account various HBCU alumni groups were contacted. For instance, the Alcorn State University National Alumni Association and Mississippi Valley State University Alumni group, which has over 2,660 members and 1,401 members, respectively. Moving past alumni groups, professional groups were then contacted. One professional group contacted was the Black Student Affairs Professionals group, which has 4,296 members. The last type of groups contacted were Political Science or educational based. Two groups fell within the Political Science category – the National Conference of Black Political Scientists and the Political Science group. The education group, which has 4,478 members, is a multidisciplinary group for minorities and professionals who either have PhDs or are in the process of obtaining one.³⁸ For all of the groups listed above and more, membership lists were collected

³⁸ A large amount of respondents came from this group.

for messages could be sent to several of the members in each group. The same generic message was sent to each member.

The last avenue used to expand the respondent pool was having the students of my professors, alongside my own students, take the survey. Friends and acquaintances of mine took the survey and asked their friends and acquaintances to take the survey. Family members took the survey as well. In addition, they asked their coworkers to take the survey and forward the survey along. My professors offered their students extra points to take the survey, as did I.

Although there are many places this research could have reached out to for African American participants, since I was trying to get a large number of African Americans to take the survey, this sample was used out of convenience. For this reason, I went the different processes stated above to get my sample size large enough to conduct an analysis. Knowing the route taken to gather the minimum number of respondents needed to run this analysis, one could wonder: what are the implications of this sample? The first implication is the sample may not be fully representative of the black population, as most of the respondents are students. In addition, the population of highly educated individuals is extremely large in this sample, not just for African Americans, but for the American society at large.

Analysis

The empirical analysis within chapter four has two components. The first component is a series of logistic regressions based upon social and racial policy views. Logistic Regression is utilized when the dependent variable is dichotomous. This particular method allows the researcher to predict the probability of the effect of the dependent variable on the

independent variables. Like OLS Regression, there are certain assumptions expected for the model: (1) the true conditional probabilities must be a logistic function of the independent variables; (2) the model must include all important variables; (3) all extraneous variables should be excluded; and (4) the observations must be independent. The second component is the results of the survey experiment. OLS regressions are used to run the regressions of the survey experiment. All data in this analysis is analyzed using Stata 13.0.

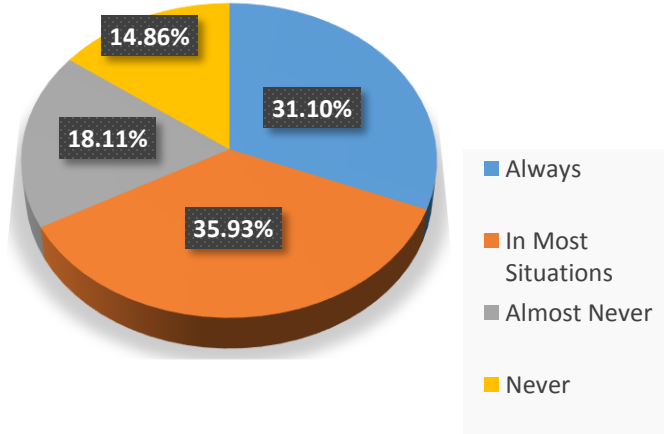
Dependent Variables

There are three dependent variables within the first component of the analysis. The dependent variables (Gay Marriage, Abortion, and Affirmative Action) cover policy issue areas. Each of these variables is regressed on the independent variables of interest.

Abortion – Respondents were asked, “Should abortions be allowed?” Respondents were then given the answer choices of “always,” “in most situations,” “almost never,” and “never.” Respondents who recorded “always” or “in most situations” were coded 1. Respondents who answered “almost never” or “never” were coded 0.

Figure 1 shows respondent answers when asked about abortion. When asked should abortions be allowed, 31.10% (316 people) answered “always,” 35.93% (365 people) answered “in most situations,” 18.11% answered “almost never,” and 14.86% (151 people) answered “never.”

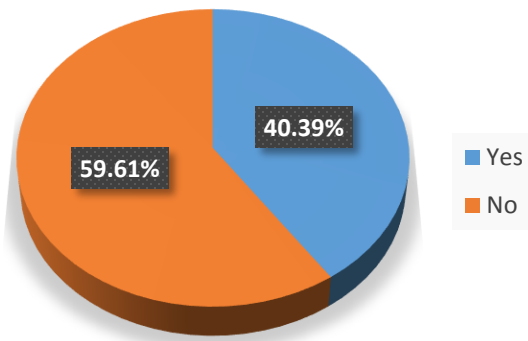
Figure 1: Abortion



Gay Marriage – Respondents were asked, “Should marriage be between two people of the same sex?” Respondents were then given the answer choices of “yes” and “no.” Respondents who answered in the affirmative were coded 1, while respondents who answered in the negative were coded 0.

Some individuals feel marriage is a special union and the ultimate showing of two peoples love for one another. Figure 2 shows respondents answers when asked about the issue of gay marriage. When asked should marriage be between two people of the same sex, 40.39% (412 people) of respondents felt same sex marriage should be legal, while 59.61% (608 people) felt it should not.

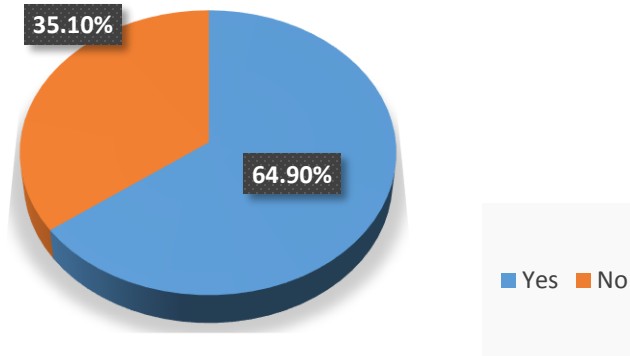
**Figure 2:
Gay Marriage**



Affirmative Action – Respondents were asked, “Do you generally favor affirmative action programs?” Respondents were given the answer choices of “yes” and “no.” Respondents who answered in the affirmative were coded 1, while respondents who answered in the negative were coded 0.

In an attempt to determine individuals issue stance on racial issues, respondents were asked, “Do you generally favor affirmative action programs?” Figure 3 shows respondents answers when asked about affirmative action. The data shows 64.90% (660 people) of respondents answered in the affirmative, while 35.10% (357 people) answered in the negative.

Figure 3: Affirmative Action



For the second component of the analysis, the results of the survey experiment, the dependent variable used for the survey experiment is candidate evaluation.

Candidate Evaluation – Originally respondents recorded the extent to which they agreed on a five point scale with a series of statements concerning the candidate in their respective treatment. The statements pertained to the likelihood they would vote for the candidate, whether they felt the candidate had enough skills and experience, whether the candidate could relate to them, whether the candidate could represent them effectively, and whether they felt the candidate would do a good job in office. The plan was for each question to be a separate dependent variable. However, an index was created based on all five statements and used as the measurement for candidate evaluation.

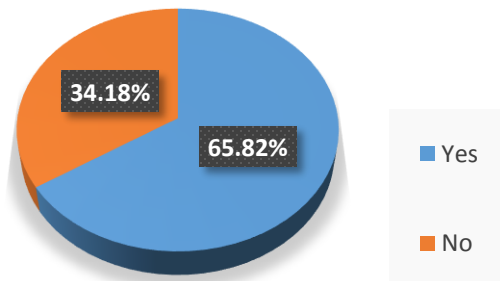
Independent Variables

To test my hypotheses, these are the primary independent variables I am interested in within the policy analysis.

Linked Fate - Group consciousness is developed when members of a group recognize their status as being a part of something that has similar properties. It produces a sense of commonality based on shared circumstances. This sense of commonality has been shown to translate into political participation (McClain and Stewart, 2003). Respondents were asked, “Do you feel your fate is linked to the fate of the African American community?” Responses of “yes” are coded one, while responses of “no” 0.

Within the African American community, there is a belief that African Americans are connected due to the struggles the race has encountered. For this reason, respondents were asked, “Do you feel your fate is linked to the fate of the African American community?” As seen in Figure 4, 65.82% (672 people) of respondents felt their fate was linked to the fate of the African American community, while 34.18% (349 people) felt their fate was not linked.

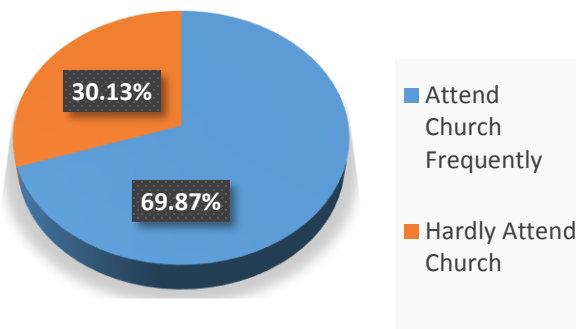
Figure 4: Linked Fate



Church Attendance – Respondents were asked the question, “How often do you attend church?” Respondents were given four answer choices. Individuals who report regularly attending church every week or a few times a month are coded 1. Individuals who report they attend church a few times a year or never are coded 0.

Figure 5 shows respondents answers when asked about church attendance. When asked to report their frequency of church attendance, 69.87% (712 people) reported attending church frequently, while 30.13% (307 people) reported they hardly attended church.

**Figure 5:
Church Attendance**

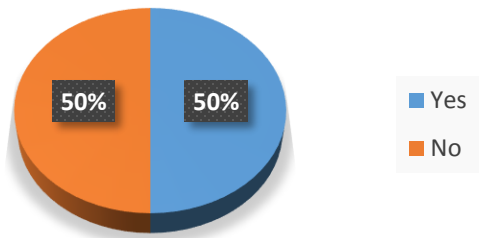


Electoral Church - Since the primary function of a religious institution is worship and fellowship, this variable seeks whether a church is political or not. Since churches are in the saving souls business, they may or may not discuss politics. As a result, one might expect being in a political context is more important than simply attending church. Therefore, respondents were asked

whether their church advocates on behalf of participation in the electoral process. Responses of “yes” are coded 1, while responses of “no” 0.

Respondents were asked whether their pastors advocated on behalf of participating in the electoral process, see Figure 6. For this question, the results were evenly split.

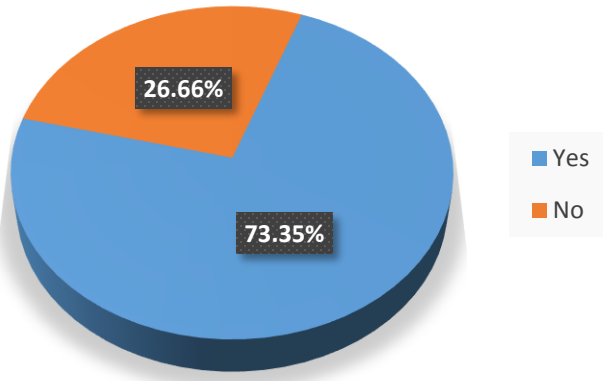
**Figure 6:
Electoral Participation**



Pastor Weight - Respondents were asked, “How much weight do you place on what the pastor preaches from the pulpit?” Answer choices of “a lot” and “some” were coded 1. Answer choices of “a little” or “none” were coded 0.

Figure 7 shows respondents answers when asked whether they placed weight on their pastor’s messages. According to the data, 73.35% (743 people) of respondents reported what their pastors say from the pulpit carries weight with them, while 26.66% (270 people) noted their pastors messages carries no weight with them.

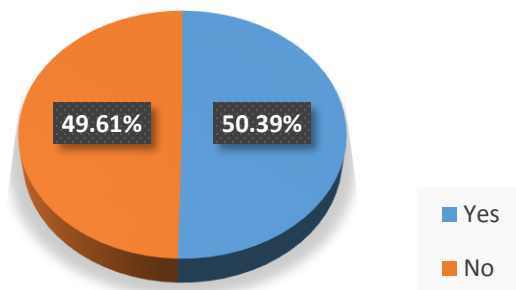
Figure 7: Pastor Weight



Candidates – Respondents were asked, “Does your church allow candidates or city officials to speak to the congregation? Answer choices of “yes” was coded 1, while answer choices of “no” 0.

Figure 8 shows respondents answers when asked whether their church allowed city officials or candidates to speak to the congregation. According to the data, 50.39% (513 people) of respondents their church did allow individuals to speak, while 49.61% (505 people) noted their church did not.

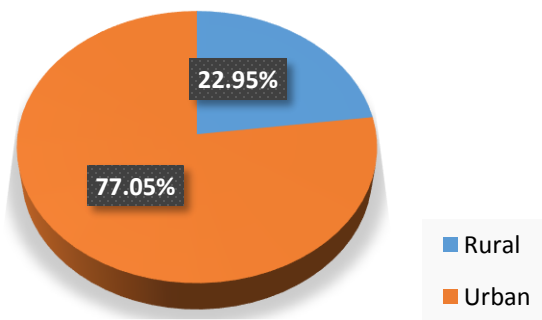
**Figure 8:
Candidates Speak**



Rural - This variable tells the area a person resides in. There is no single universally preferred definition of rural that serves all policy or research purposes. Key considerations for understanding rural definitions include geography and population. For this research, U.S. Census data was used to determine population counts within different zip codes. Once population counts were collected, rural was defined as any county with a population less than 40,000.³⁹ Respondents who live in rural areas are given the value of 1, while respondents who live in urban areas 0.

As shown by Figure 9, when asked one's living location, 22.95% (230 people) of respondents identified rural, while 77.05% (772 people) identified urban. The rural/urban living composition within this study aligns with the U.S. Census which reports more people reside in urban areas within the United States.⁴⁰

Figure 9: Rural



³⁹ The cutoff mark of 40,000 was used after examining and comparing various other cutoff marks between 20,000 and 45,000.

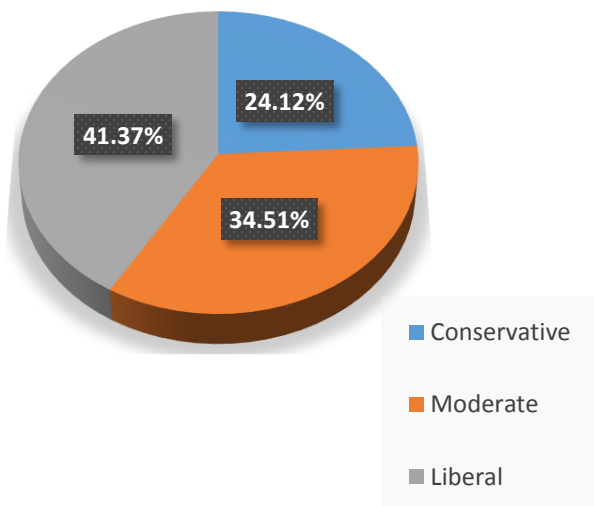
⁴⁰ <https://ask.census.gov/faq.php?id=5000&faqId=5971>

Moving on to the independent variables of interest within the second component of my analysis, in addition to some of the previous independent variables (pastor weight, rural, and church attendance), one additional variable is included.

Racial Matters – Respondents were asked, “On racial matters relating to the black community, which term would best describe you?” Respondents who said “liberal” were coded 1, respondents who said “conservative” were coded 2, and respondents who said “moderate” were coded 3.

Out of three options, -- conservative, liberal, or moderate -- 24.12% (246 people) reported being conservative, 34.51% (352 people) reported being moderate, and 41.37% (422 people) reported being liberal, see Figure 10. Although the respondents are distributed across the three categories, more African Americans consider themselves to be liberal, followed by moderate, and then conservative.

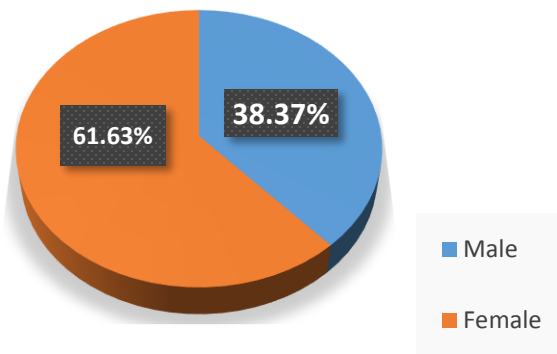
**Figure 10:
Racial Matters**



Control Variables

I control for the standard participation variables – age, gender, income, education and partisanship. Research shows these variables are related to electoral participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1996). In addition, I control for region. As showed by Figure 11, 38.37% (391 individuals) of respondents were male, while 61.63% (628 individuals) were female.⁴¹

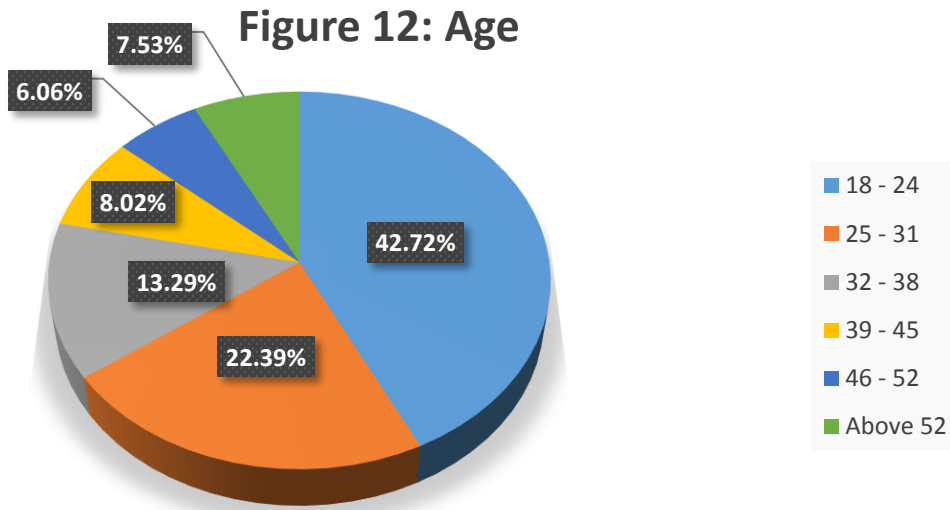
Figure 11: Gender



Considering people of all ages participated in this research, age was broken down into six categories: (1) 18 -24⁴²; (2) 25 – 31; (3) 32 – 38; (4) 39 – 45; (5) 46 – 52; and (6) 52 or above. Of the six categories, 42.72% (437 people) of respondents fell between the ages of 18-24, category 1. Respectively, categories 2-6 were as followed, 22.39% (229 people), 13.29% (136 people), 8.02% (82 people), 6.06% (62 people), and 7.53% (77 people). See Figure 12.

⁴¹ Males were coded 1, while females were coded 0.

⁴² A majority of college students fell into this age group.

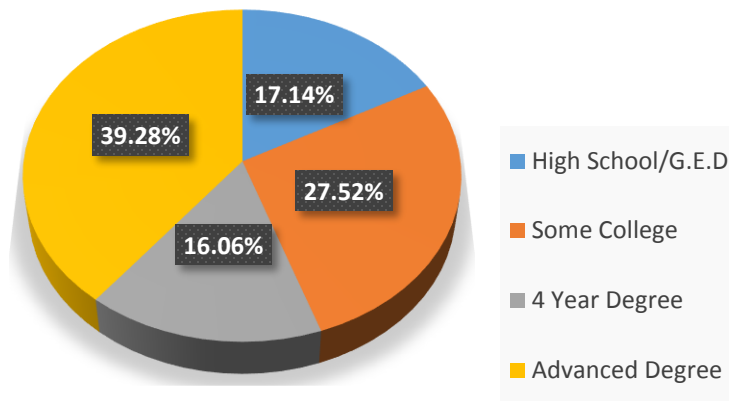


Respondents were asked to report their highest level of academic achievement.

Respondents were given four choices: (1) high school/G.E.D.; (2) some college; (3) four year degree; and (4) advanced degree. Figure 13 shows how respondents fell into each category. Going in order, the respondent breakdown for categories 1- 4 are as followed, 17.14% (175 people), 27.52% (281 people), 16.06% (164 people), and 39.28% (401 people).⁴³

⁴³ Once again, as stated earlier in this chapter, due to the convenient sample, I have an oversample of educated respondents.

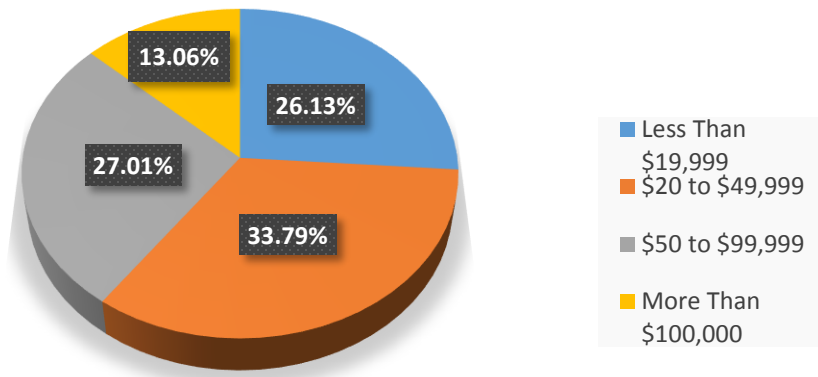
Figure 13: Education



Respondents displayed various levels of economic earnings, see Figure 14. Income categories were broken down as followed: (1) less than \$19,999; (2) \$20,000 to \$49,999; (3) \$50,000 to \$99,999; and (4) \$100,000 or above. However, as expected, most respondents reported incomes in the first two categories. Of the respondents who recorded a response, 26.13% (266 people) reported household incomes below \$19,999, 33.79% (344 people) reported incomes between \$20,000 - \$49,999, 27.01% (275 people) reported incomes between \$50,000 - \$99,999, and 13.06% (133 people) reported incomes above \$100,000. The household income breakdown within this study aligns with reports from the U.S. Census Bureau noting real median incomes for African American households have hovered between \$35,000 and \$40,000 since 2000.⁴⁴

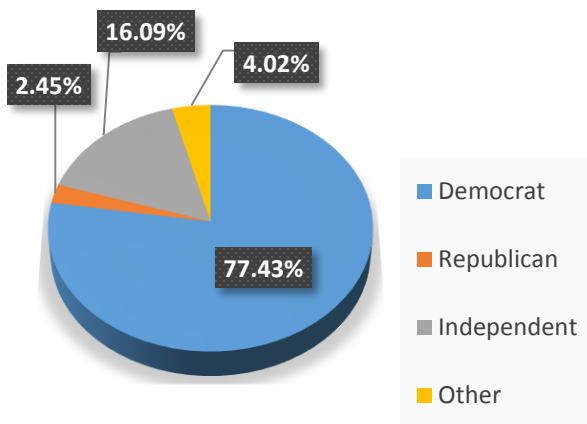
⁴⁴ <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf>

Figure 14: Income



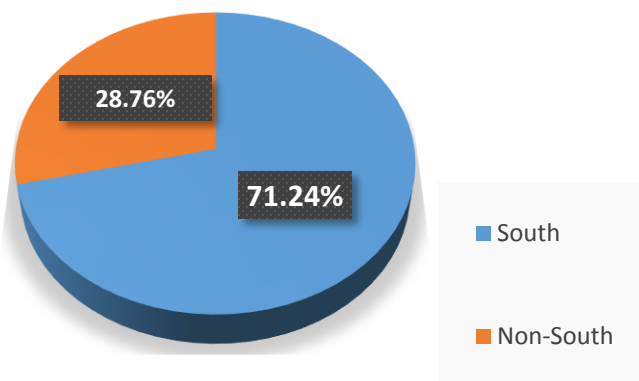
In an attempt to gauge partisanship, respondents were asked, “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent or other?” As expected, an overwhelmingly large amount of African Americans -- 77.43% (789 people) -- identified themselves with the Democratic Party, 2.45% (25 people) identified themselves with the Republican Party, 16.09% (164 people) claimed to hold no parties ties, and 4.02% (41 people) claimed ties to less well known parties. See Figure 15.

Figure 15: Partisanship



When examining the data, three states provided more than 100 respondents each – Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Cumulatively, respondents from these three states totaled 55.93% (570 people) of the respondent pool. As can be seen, these three states are all in the Deep South. When examining the rest of the South, – Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia – the respondent pool jumps to 71.24% (726 people), see Figure 16. Only one state outside the South provided more than 40 respondents, Maryland. Excluding Maryland and the Deep South, the respondents are fairly evenly distributed throughout the nation. However, sixteen states provided ten or fewer respondents each, with Idaho, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and West Virginia only providing one participant each. Overall, I did not receive responses from fourteen states.

Figure 16: Region



This chapter has explained the methodological techniques used to carry out this dissertation. In addition, it has presented a descriptive analysis of the data. In the chapter that follows, the quantitative portion of this dissertation is presented. Within the chapter, the major hypothesis and the results from all regressions are examined. The results indicate some interesting findings. These findings are presented in detail in the proceeding chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

As previously stated, my research question is: “When gauging the political power of the black church, what amount of influence does the church have on individuals within the black community?” In answering the research question, I find myself asking several different questions. For instance, what determines the issue stances an individual takes? Do church related factors help determine issue stances? Does going to church matter in determining ones issue stances? Does attending an electorally active church help determine ones issue stances? Does how congregants view the pastor matter? My belief is the black church can ultimately influence the behavior of African Americans in many different areas of life. Knowing black churches have more roles than a traditional church, I argue the black church has political power.

The questions listed above are some of the very things this analysis is going to answer. Referring back to chapter 3, now that we have a better understanding of how the data was collected and the methodologies used to get to this point, I now seek to explore this empirically and examine the relationship between different factors of the black church (church attendance, weight of the pastor, etc.) on an individual’s social policy views and candidate evaluations. Chapter four is broken down into two sets of analyses – policy regression models and a survey experiment.

Referring back to the research question, the setup of my policy models allows me to examine who is influenced, how they are influenced, and how that influence plays out. By using social issues stances as my dependent variable, I capture the churches influence on an individual's specific policy stance. The results indicate certain issue stances a person takes are greatly influenced by church factors, albeit, to various degrees. Out of three models, there are three common threads concerning the main independent variables. First, church related factors make individuals more likely to take a conservative stance on social issues. Second, living in a rural area makes individuals more likely to take a conservative stance on social issues. Lastly, African Americans who feel their fate is linked with the fate of the African American community are more likely to take conservative stances on social issues. With all this said, I can safely say socioeconomic factors alone cannot fully explain the issue stances African Americans take on social issues. Now that the results of the policy models have been briefly examined, I present an overview of the three issues being examined in this analysis, the various hypotheses surrounding the issue stances, and a detailed examination of each policy stance.

Issue Stances

There are three issue stances examined in this analysis. Two of the issue stances, gay marriage and abortion rights, are examined because of their saliency to the American public. The remaining issue stance, affirmative action, is examined because of its impact on the African American community. With that said, all three issue stances impact African Americans.

The first issue stance examined is gay marriage. As same sex marriage has picked up steam in the public realm over the last ten years, support for gay marriage has traditionally

been mixed within the African American community. However, it has slowly increased over time.⁴⁵ For instance, a March 2013 Pew Center Study found 40% of African Americans support gay marriage, up from 27% in 2003.⁴⁶ A March 2013 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found 51% of African Americans support gay marriage.⁴⁷ What is clear from these polls is African Americans are becoming more receptive to the idea of gay marriage. Many things could possibly explain why some African Americans have shifted their views. For instance, the decision of the Supreme Court to hear Proposition 8, -- California's ban on gay marriage -- and the Defense of Marriage Act. Within the African American community it could even be President Obama's leadership and evolving issue stance on the issue.⁴⁸

The second issue stance examined is abortion rights. Although the issue of abortion has not been the main focus of the media in recent years, African Americans have traditionally favored the legalization of abortion.⁴⁹ In fact, research conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute notes African Americans support abortion by a ratio of 2:1.⁵⁰ What is clear from these numbers is that African Americans do not necessarily perceive abortion rights to be a bad thing. There are many explanations for why African Americans may support abortion rights. Not that all African Americans can explain the background of *Roe v. Wade*, but knowing the Supreme Court legalized abortion and Civil Rights, blacks may link the Supreme

⁴⁵ Let me be clear, not all African Americans are becoming more receptive to gay marriage. However, a gradual shift is occurring within the community.

⁴⁶ http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-detailed_tables/Gay%20marriage%20detailed%20tables.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://firstread.nbcnews.com/news/2013/03/28/17503314-surprising-shifts-in-attitudes-on-same-sex-marriage?lite>

⁴⁸ During President Obama's presidency, he has become more receptive to the idea of gay marriage.

⁴⁹ Beldon Russonello Strategists LLC,. African American Attitudes On Abortion, Contraception And Teen Sexual Health. Washington D.C.: Beldon Russonello Strategists LLC, 2013. Print.

⁵⁰ <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Reproductive-Survey-Report.pdf>

Court to justice and equality for all making them more likely to accept or advance the Supreme Court’s decision concerning abortion rights.

The third issue stance examined is a person’s views toward affirmative action. African Americans have been one of the largest beneficiaries of affirmative action programs. These programs are meant to even the playing field and force the entity at hand to look outside of their comfort zone when making decisions of any sort. These programs tend to focus on employment and education. Historically, African Americans tend to support these programs, while some could argue these programs are largely responsible for any growth blacks have experienced in recent years. This is not to say all African Americans support these programs, as a small segment of the community disagrees with the need of the program. Considering one of the goals of the African American church is to advance the interests of the black community, there is a need for a model to determine what influence, if any, the church might have on a person’s affirmative action stance?

Hypotheses

Table 1

	Pastor Weight	Attendance	Candidates	Electoral Participation	Interaction
Gay Marriage	-	-	Non Directional	-	-
Abortion	-	-	Non Directional	-	-
Affirmative Action	+	+	+	+	+

Chapter two demonstrates how African Americans are cross pressured by the African American church. The church advances Democratic leadership, which tends to hold liberal issue stances, but advances and delivers a year round conservative message on moral and social issues. Thus, African Americans are pulled in two different directions. In order to determine what influence the church has on the stance a individual takes on social issues, five hypotheses were tested. Table 1 displays the directional expectations of the hypotheses

The first hypothesis predicts the relationship between ones issue stance and the weight they place on what a pastor preaches. For the issue stances of gay marriage and abortion rights, I expect the more weight individual's place on what a pastor preaches, the less likely they are to support gay marriage and abortion. I believe these relationships to be negative because in accordance with biblical practices, pastors preach conservative messages from the pulpit noting the evils of gay marriage and killing. As the messages start to add up, congregants who place weight on what their pastors preach should become more conservative making them more likely to favor traditional marriage and the right to life. On the issue stance of affirmative action, I expect the more weight individuals place on what their pastors preach, the more likely they are to support affirmative action. I believe this relationship to be positive because one of the goals of the black church is to advance the needs of the African American community. As such, congregants hear their pastors speaking on racial injustices and the need for outside factors to assist blacks in their journey to prosperity and equality. As a result, congregants should see affirmative action programs as ways to narrow growing disparities within America.

The second hypothesis predicts the relationship between an individual's policy preference and how often they attend church. For the issue stances of gay marriage and abortion rights, I expect the more individuals go to church, the more likely they are to be against gay marriage and abortion rights. I believe this because people adapt to the given norms of their environments. When placed in the context of religious institutions or church, individuals find themselves in an environment where gay marriage and abortion are not favorably looked upon.⁵¹ Regarding affirmative action policy, I expect the more individuals go to church, the more likely they are to support affirmative action because examples of how affirmative action helps African Americans can be heard in black churches.⁵²

The third hypothesis predicts the relationship between one's issue stance and whether they attend a church that allows candidates or city officials to speak. For the issue stances of gay marriage and abortion rights, I do not have directional expectations for how individuals will be influenced.⁵³ For the issue stance of affirmative action, I expect individuals who attend churches where candidates are allowed to speak are more likely to support affirmative action programs. I believe this relationship to be positive because when candidates and city officials speak to the church, they usually provide information about the status of minorities in the community and how times will change drastically if the other candidate was to remain in or

⁵¹ Although the Bible does not speak directly against abortion, when placed in the context of religious institutions or church, individuals find themselves in an environment where killing is shunned upon.

⁵² Pastors have been known to express how affirmative action helps blacks get placed in jobs where they previously would have not been considered.

⁵³ I do not have a directional hypothesis for this because I do not have a competing theoretical expectation for why this relationship would be positive or negative. In theory, candidates speaking to a church could strengthen or strain an individual's support of gay marriage or abortion rights. However, in all of my experiences, when candidates and city officials come to African American churches, they tend to speak on the political history of African Americans and/or problems – crime, education, social programs – within the community they plan on fixing.

get elected to office. Hearing this, congregants are awakened to any social, racial, and economic injustices that may be going on within their communities.

The fourth hypothesis predicts the relationship between ones issue stance and whether they attend a church that advances the need for electoral participation. For the issue stances of gay marriage and abortion rights, I expect individuals who attend churches that advocate on behalf of participating in the electoral process to be less likely to favor same sex marriage and abortion rights. Hypothesis four builds off the belief that individuals who attend electoral active churches are more likely to favor traditional marriage and the right to life because pastors speak about Christianity and urge their congregants to act in accordance with traditional biblical practices.⁵⁴ For the issue stance of affirmative action, I expect Individuals who attend churches that advocate on behalf of participating in the electoral process to be more likely to favor affirmative action. I believe this because individuals who attend politically active churches are more likely to favor affirmative action because pastors speak about injustices and inequalities within the black community and urge congregants to act in ways that benefit the community.

The fifth hypothesis is based on an interaction between church attendance and the weight a person places on what a pastor preaches. For the issue stances of gay marriage and abortion rights, I expect individuals who go to church and place weight on what the pastor preaches to be more likely to be against same sex marriage and abortion rights than people who only attend church or only place weight on what the pastor preaches. The rational is if

⁵⁴ It is true, there are many ways churches can be politically active outside of the voting booth. However, for the purposes of this study, I expect electoral active churches to advance behavior that aligns with biblical principles.

attending church or placing weight on the pastor's messages makes one less likely to support gay marriage or abortion rights by itself, then an individual is even less likely to support gay marriage or abortion rights if they exhibit both traits. For the issue stance of affirmative action, I expect individuals who go to church and place weight on what the pastor preaches are more likely to support affirmative action programs than people who only attend church or only place weight on what the pastor preaches.

Results

Table 2 Model 1: Religious Impact on Gay Marriage	
Weight of Pastor	-0.904*** (.248)
Attendance	-0.651* (.270)
Interaction (Church Attendance x Pastor Weight)	0.490 (.333)
Candidates	-0.103 (.165)
Politically Active Church	0.093 (.175)
Linked Fate	-0.242* (.107)
Income	0.036 (0.81)
Rural	-0.548** (.187)
Male	0.127 (.145)
Education	0.286*** (.079)
Democrat	0.136 (.173)
Age	-0.106 (.057)
South	-0.408* (.167)
Constant	0.423
Observations	979

Logistic Regression; Robust Standard Errors In Parentheses

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001"

Table 2 reports the coefficients of a logistic regression where the dependent variable is the gay marriage policy stance of an individual. The robust standard errors of each variable is recorded in parentheses under each coefficient. Not reported in the table, the model fit statistics indicate the Chi-Square is 85.08.⁵⁵ Referring back to my hypotheses for this model, I find directional support for hypotheses 1 and 2. Not only are hypotheses 1 and 2 headed in the right direction, both are statistically significant. In fact, a pastors message is significant at $P < .001$. Church Attendance is significant at $p < .05$. As such, the gay marriage policy stance an individual takes is influenced by the weight they place on a pastors messages. In addition, attending church makes one more likely to support traditional marriage over gay marriage.

Hypothesis 3, a non-directional hypothesis concerning candidates or city officials speaking to congregants, was not significant. The results show a person's likelihood of supporting gay marriage increases when candidates are allowed to speak to churches. Hypotheses 4 and 5 are not significant and pointed in the wrong direction. Hypothesis 4 noted individuals who attend churches that promote participating in the political arena should be less likely to support gay marriage. However, the results show people who attend churches of this nature actually support gay marriage more. Hypothesis 5 noted there may be an interaction between those who go to church and those that place weight on the pastor's messages. Put simply, the impact of one variable, pastor's weight, could depend on another variable of interest – church attendance. However, due to the interaction variable having no significance, the two variables can stand alone in this model.

⁵⁵ This statistic explains how well the observations explain the overall population.

Examining non-church factors that may influence an individual's policy preference on gay marriage, location (rural vs urban), education, region (South), and a sense of linked fate with African Americans was found to be statistically significant. People who live in the South or in rural areas, and those who feel connected to the African American community are less likely to support gay marriage.⁵⁶ When looking at education, the more education one has, the more likely they are to support gay marriage.⁵⁷

Given the results of the logistic regression measuring the influence of different factors on an individual's policy preference on gay marriage, one may find themselves asking: What does this mean? To provide some substantive meaning to the variables that are statistically significant, Long and Freeze's (2005) method for generating predicted probabilities is used for ease of interpretation. Predicted probabilities allow the reader to understand, when compared to the average person in the participant pool, how any change in a respondent's "X" value ultimately changes the subject of interest, which in this case is an individual's gay marriage policy preference. As such, Table 3 summarizes the average person in this dataset. The average person in this dataset is female, Democratic, lives in the South, college aged (18 – 24), has an advanced degree, resides in an urban area, earns between \$20,000 - \$49,999, places weight on what their pastor says, not only attends church regularly, but attends a church that advocates on behalf of electoral participation and allows candidates to speak, and feels linked to other African Americans.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Statistical significance at either $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$.

⁵⁷ Statistical significance at $p < 0.001$.

⁵⁸ At first glance, one may wonder how the average person in this dataset is a college aged (18 – 24) individual who already holds an advanced degree. This is because the educational attainment of my college aged group is evenly

Table 3: Average Person

Pastor Weight	✓
Attends Church	✓
Candidates Speak Politically Active Church	✓
Linked Fate	✓
Income	\$20,000 - 49,000
Urban	✓
Male	✓
Education	Advanced Degree
Democrat	✓
Age	18-24
South	✓

Table 4: Gay Marriage Significant Predictive Probability Differences

	Average Person 48%	Difference
Pastor Weight = 0	70%	22%
Attendance = 0	64%	16%
Linked Fate = 0	54%	6%
Rural = 1	35%	13%
High School = 1	28%	10%
Some College = 2	34%	14%
4 Year Degree = 3	41%	7%
South = 0	58%	10%

distributed through the four education categories. However, in the remaining age groups, most respondents held advanced degrees.

Table 4 displays the likelihood of an individual supporting gay marriage for any change of “X” in a statistically significant variable, while keeping all other variables at their modes. The average person in this model is 48% likely to support same sex marriage. Once an individual stops placing weight on what a pastor says, their likelihood of supporting gay marriage increases to 70%, a difference of 22%. Once an individual stops attending church, their likelihood of supporting gay marriage increases to 64%, a difference of 16%. If an individual stops attending church and placing weight on what a pastor preaches, the likelihood of them supporting gay marriage jumps to 81%, a difference of 33%. Keeping all things constant, as education goes from the highest to the lowest category, we see a 20% drop in the likelihood of a person supporting same sex marriage. Looking at region, individuals that live outside of the South are 10% more likely to support same sex marriage. If the average person moves to a rural area, the likelihood of them supporting same sex marriage drops to 35%. Lastly, once the average person stops believing their fate is linked to the fate of the African American community, the likelihood of them supporting same sex marriage increases to 54%.

Table 5 Model 2: Religious Impact on Abortion

Weight of Pastor	- 0.282 (.299)
Attendance	- .539 (.305)
Interaction (Church Attendance x Pastor Weight)	- 0.137 (.379)
Candidates	0.351* (.174)
Politically Active Church	0.0570 (.182)
Linked Fate	- 0.234* (.107)
Income	0.0275 (0.855)
Rural	- 1.171*** (.177)
Male	-0.136 (.155)
Education	0.315*** (.0806)
Democrat	0.724*** (.175)
Age	- 0.0233 (.0551)
South	- 0.189 (.192)
Constant	0.631
Observations	978

Logistic Regression; Robust Standard Errors In Parentheses

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001"

Table 6 reports the coefficients of a logistic regression where the dependent variable is the policy stance a person takes towards abortion rights. The Chi-Square for model 2 is 116.4. Referring back to my hypotheses for this model, I find directional support for hypotheses 1, 2, and 5. However, although regularly attending church and placing weight on a pastor's messages makes people less likely to support abortion rights, neither is statistically significant. There could be several reasons for this. First, pastors do not directly state the term abortion a lot in their messages, as I talk about in the next chapter. When they do speak of killing, it is in the context of black on black crime or unfortunate deadly African American encounters with law enforcement. As such, congregants may not connect abortion with heinous killings. In addition, even if a person attends church a lot, since the issue of abortion rights has lost some of its saliency in society due to other issues, discussions around abortion rights may not be occurring within religious institutions or activities. Lastly, it could be that any significance abortion rights may have within the black community is being consumed by other deeper, but broader issues. For instance, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as a race, African American women receive more abortions than any other race. Considering poverty and the lack of accessible health care are issues of importance to African Americans, high abortion rates within African American communities could be consequences of other more prevalent factors. This may be why African Americans support the legalization of abortion by a 2:1 ratio.

Hypothesis 4, which claims attending a church that advances political participation should make one less likely to support abortion, is in the wrong direction and not statistically significant. In fact, attending a church that promotes political participation actually increases

the likelihood of an individual supporting abortion rights. My only theoretical explanation for this is people who attend churches that advance the idea of electoral participation are more likely to vote Democrat considering most African Americans are Democrat to begin with. For this reason, taking cues from the Democratic Party may lead people to support pro-choice agendas. Hypothesis 3 is positive and the only church related variable to be statistically significant, $p < .05$. Candidates speaking within churches makes congregants more likely to support gay marriage. I believe this can be explained by the fact, more times than not, it is Democratic candidates speaking to churches and not Republican candidates.

Examining non-church factors that may influence an individual's policy position on abortion, several factors (region, education, partisanship, and linked fate) were found to be statistically significant. Partisanship, region and education are significant at $p < .001$. As expected, the more education one has, the more likely they are to support abortion rights. In addition, being a Democrat makes one more likely to support abortion. When it comes to where one lives, living in a rural area makes one less likely to support pro-choice agendas. Significant at $p < .05$, having a sense of linked fate makes individuals less likely to support abortion rights.

Knowing this, what substantive conclusions can we make concerning the variables of significance in this model? Referring back to Table 3, the average person in this dataset is female, Democratic, lives in the South, college aged (18 – 24), has an advanced degree, resides in an urban area, earns between \$20,000 - \$49,999, places weight on what their pastor says, not only attends church regularly, but attends a church that advocates on behalf of electoral participation and allows candidates to speak, and feels linked to other African Americans. As

such, the average person in this model has an 84% chance of supporting abortion rights. But what about when the average person's characteristics change? Table 6 displays the likelihood of an individual supporting abortion rights for any change of "X." Keeping all things constant, if a person attends a church that does not allow candidates to speak, the likelihood of them supporting abortion rights drops to 78%. Less of a difference, African Americans who do not feel their fate is connected to the community are 87% likely to support abortion rights, a difference of three points. If the average person moves to a rural area, the likelihood of them supporting abortion rights drops to 62%, while the likelihood of an individual supporting abortion rights decreases to 67% as ones level of education goes from highest to lowest. Lastly, if the average person, in this dataset, changes their partisanship from Democrat to Republican, the likelihood of them supporting abortion rights drops to 72%.

Table 6: Abortion Rights Significant Predictive Probability Differences

	Average Person 84%	Difference
Candidates = 0	78%	6%
Linked Fate = 0	84%	3%
Rural = 1	62%	22%
Rural = 1	35%	13%
High School = 1	67%	17%
Some College = 2	73%	11%
4 Year Degree = 3	79%	5%
Democrat = 0	72%	12%

Table 7 Model 3: Religious Impact on Affirmative Action

Weight of Pastor	0.0732 (0.276)
Attendance	0.187 (0.316)
Interaction (Church Attendance x Pastor Weight)	-0.388 (.382)
Candidates	0.0823 (.181)
Politically Active Church	0.717*** (.186)
Linked Fate	-0.238* (.117)
Income	0.0932 (.0921)
Rural	-0.609** (.190)
Male	-0.00619 (.164)
Education	0.609*** (.0867)
Democrat	0.198 (.185)
Age	0.212*** (.0632)
South	-0.0927 (.202)
Constant	-1.539
Observations	977

Logistic Regression; Robust Standard Errors In Parentheses

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001"

Table 7 reports the coefficients of a logistic regression where the dependent variable is one's affirmative action policy stance. The Chi-Square for model 3 is 185.2. The results for model 3 provide directional support for all hypotheses except hypothesis 5. However, although the model provides directional support for all but one hypothesis, only one church related variable is statistically significant. Holding significance at $p < .001$, individuals who attend churches that advocate on behalf of electoral participation appear to take their teachings into the political realm with them. For this reason, it can safely be said, attending an electorally active church makes one more likely to support affirmative action.

Examining non-church factors that may influence ones policy preference on affirmative action, location, education, age, and a sense of linked fate were found to be statistically significant. Education and age are significant at $p < .001$, and increases the likelihood of an individual supporting affirmative action. Higher levels of education may help individuals better dissect the problems within society affording them the opportunity to recognize any injustices and inequalities within their own communities. As such, they may feel the only way to rid some problems is to even the playing field. When looking at age, as individuals become older and face the job market, they might start to recognize less opportunities for higher placement and acknowledge the need for outside help. What is interesting about the model is that living in a rural location or feeling linked to the African American community makes one less likely to support affirmative action. In reality, the finding that living in a rural area decreases ones likelihood of supporting affirmative action may not be as surprising as first thought. When one considers the type of jobs found in most rural areas – factory, teaching, business owner –, one may notice these are jobs individuals of all backgrounds work. As such, individuals in rural

areas may not see a need for affirmative action programs. Less straightforward is the finding that blacks who feel their fate is linked to the fate of the community support affirmative action programs less.

These results allow us to make several substantive conclusions regarding the model. Referring back to Table 3, we know what the average person in this analysis looks like. As such, the average person in this model is 86% likely to support affirmative action programs. How about when the average person's characteristics change? Table 8 displays the likelihood of an individual supporting affirmative action for any change of "X." Keeping all things constant, compared to individuals who attend churches that advocate on behalf of electoral participation, the likelihood of a person supporting affirmative action drops to 75% when churches do not advocate on behalf of electoral participation. Less of a difference, compared to African Americans who feel their fate is linked to the fate of the community, African Americans who do not feel their fate is connected to the community are 88% likely to support Affirmative Action, a difference of 2 points. If the average person moves to a rural area, the likelihood of them supporting affirmative action drops to 77%. The likelihood of an individual supporting affirmative action decreases from 86% to 67% as ones education level goes from highest to lowest. Lastly, as the age group a person falls in increases, their likelihood of supporting affirmative action rises from 86% to 94%.

Table 8: Affirmative Action Significant Predictive Probability Differences

	Average Person	86%	Difference
Politically Active Church = 0	75%		11%
Linked Fate = 0	88%		2%
Rural = 1	77%		9%
High School = 1	67%		17%
Some College = 2	73%		11%
4 Year Degree = 3	79%		5%
Age (25 - 31) = 2	88%		2%
Age (32 - 38) = 3	90%		4%
Age (39 - 45) = 4	92%		6%
Age (46 - 52) = 5	93%		7%
Age (Above 52) = 6	94%		8%

Discussion

Of the three policy issues that were examined in this analysis, there are several key take away points. First, church attendance and the weight a person places on a pastors messages have direct impacts on the policy stance a person takes on gay marriage. In fact, for people who place great weight in what a pastors says, pastors are most influential in shaping the stance they take on gay marriage. This is an important take away considering gay marriage is a hotly contested issue in society right now. For the issue of abortion rights, an individual’s issue stance is influenced by whether they attend a church that allows candidates to speak. Since more and more states are implementing abortion referendums on election ballots, the church may be able to influence ones vote choice on the matter considering the results show

religious institutions make people more conservative on the issue. As such, the churches conservative environment makes African Americans more conservative. Looking at affirmative action, the church itself still advances the idea of uplifting the black community in all ways. This can be seen by how the stance an individual takes on affirmative action is influenced by whether they attend a church that preaches electoral participation. Lastly, living in a rural area makes people all around more conservative.

Experimental Study

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the second part of the quantitative aspect of my dissertation includes experiments. Experiments are an excellent data collection strategy for those wishing to observe the consequences of very specific actions or stimuli. At their core, they involve taking an action and observing the consequences of that action. By being able to observe the consequences or effects of a certain action (condition), researchers are better able to generalize understandings about the world we live in and their subjects of interest. As a result, a strength of experiments is they allow researchers to test hypotheses under controlled conditions (Campbell and Stanley 1966; Cook and Campbell 1979; Iyengar, Peters and Kinder 1982). This could explain why there has been an increase in the amount of studies, within the field of Political Science, conducting experiments. Following those studies, this dissertation utilizes an experimental design.

As this dissertation seeks to explain and test the amount of influence the African American church has on individuals and the greater community, an experiment needed to be done to control for different factors that may ultimately influence ones behavior. As such, my

motivation for using an experimental design was birthed by this need to explain and test the unknown amount of influence the pastor actually has on individuals. Past research noted voting is positively related to church attendance (Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris, 1994) and endorsements (Ekmeki, 2009; Lupia, 1994; Rapoport et al., 1991); however, no research has yet manipulated pastor endorsements to try to estimate the casual effect of church leaders on candidate support. In addition, church attendance may be correlated with voting, but the bigger question is whether the pastor can influence how one votes or behaves electorally. This is an important question because if the pastor can influence how one votes or alter ones level of candidate support that would translate into the pastor having true electoral power and the ability to change the electoral landscape.

Structure of the Experimental Design

The survey experiment was carried out through the online surveying company Qualtrics. As each respondent began their survey, they were randomly assigned to a different survey treatment. The treatments were designed to be displayed an equal amount of times. As such, respondent one was assigned to treatment one, respondent two was assigned to treatment two, and so on.

The latter half of the survey involved a hypothetical election where respondents were directed to a fictional candidate running for office. In all, respondents were assigned to one of twelve different treatments. All treatments were approximately 85% the same. In an attempt to stop respondents from treating candidates differently based on a candidate's background, each candidate, within all treatments, was given the same background -- 40, the father of

three children, married, and grew up in a household living paycheck to paycheck. This was done because sometimes people support candidates based on candidate images or likeability.⁵⁹ The only differences between the treatments were the candidates name, issue stances, and endorsements. The race of the candidate was randomly assigned to be either black or white.⁶⁰ The issue stances of the candidate were randomly assigned to be either conservative or liberal. The endorsement of the candidate was randomly assigned to be the local political party, local pastor, or no support at all. In sum, this was a 2 (race) x 2 (issues) x 3 (endorsement) experimental design, see Table 9.

Table 9

Race	[Jacob Smith/DeAndre Jackson] is 40 and the father of three children, one boy and two girls.
Issues	He believes [marriage is a union between two individuals and supports legalizing same-sex marriage/in the traditional definition of marriage between a woman and man and is against legalizing same-sex marriage]. He is [pro-choice and supports a woman’s right to decide what happens to her body/ pro-life and believes abortion should be illegal in almost all circumstances].
Endorsement	He is endorsed by [no endorsement (was not actually seen)/several local pastors/several local party members].

⁵⁹ Candidate images consists of the background, experiences, and personal qualities of people running for office.

⁶⁰ In deciding what names to use, I researched the most common names for African Americans and whites. As such, although the excerpts speak nothing of race, based upon the number of names within the country and stereotypes, respondents automatically assign a race. This information can from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Analysis & Evaluation Staff. <http://names.mongabay.com/>

Once respondents read over their assigned treatment, they were asked how likely they were to vote for the candidate. Responses fell on a seven point scale ranging from very unlikely (1) to very likely (7). After stating the likelihood of voting for the candidate, respondents were directed to answer four statements – recording the extent to which they agreed with each. Answers choices fell on a seven point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). All four statements sought to measure real world things people think of when deciding to support a candidate for office. The first statement read, “This candidate has the experience and skills necessary to represent me.” This statement was asked because people may be more likely to support a candidate they feel is qualified for office. The second statement read, “This candidate understands issues that affect people like me.” As issues are seen as a driving force in every election, respondents were asked statement two in an attempt to gauge how their issue stances might align with the stances of the candidate. Respondents whose issue stances do not align with the candidates may be less likely to support that candidate due to a feeling of disconnect. The third statement read, “This candidate would represent me effectivity.” Statement three is asked because people are more likely to support candidates they feel can represent them well over ones they believe cannot. Lastly, the fourth statement read, “This candidate would do a good job as a representative.”

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for the experimental section of this analysis is Candidate Evaluation. As respondents recorded responses to a series of statements concerning the candidate in their respective treatments, an index is created based on all five statements and used as the measurement for the dependent variable. An index is created by way of a factor

analysis. Factor analysis operates on the assumption that measurable and observable variables can be reduced into fewer variables that share a common variance (Bartholomew, Knott, and Moustaki, 2011). Put simply, a factor analysis seeks to describe a collection of observed variables in terms of their correlations. Factor analysis of these five items identified a single underlying component with an eigenvalue greater than 1. Orthogonal varimax rotation was applied and the resulting factor scores were used to predict a summary scale that captures respondents' overall evaluations of the candidate. To ease interpretation, the scale was then transformed to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.⁶¹

Hypotheses

The manipulation of most interest in this dissertation is the variation of pastor endorsements. I now present several hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 – Compared to a candidate with no endorsement, I expect party and pastor endorsements to have a positive impact on a candidate's evaluation.

How do real world voters formulate opinions about candidates? One way is through parties. Not only do parties influence the decisions partisans make, they also influence the process voters go about making decisions. Parties supply clues which voters can use in their evaluations of political matters (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1980). In addition, information about party ties can shape voters opinions (Mondak, 1993). Moving to pastors, they are trusted figures within African American communities. Their role as head of the church gives them influence within the community. As such, when pastors or parties endorse a

⁶¹This is standard use. The benefit is it allows me to better understand the results.

candidate, their endorsement should have a positive impact compared to the evaluation of a candidate with no endorsement.

Hypothesis 2 – People who place more (less) weight on what the pastor says are more (less) likely to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light.

Some individuals listen and follow every word their pastor says, while others listen to a lesser degree, and some completely ignore their pastor. For individuals who place weight on a pastor's messages, they should be positively impacted by their pastor's endorsement of a candidate. This is because they will follow their pastor's word and accept his recommendation. Even if they do not accept their pastor's recommendation, they are more likely to consider that recommendation compared to people who place no weight on what their pastors speak.

Hypothesis 3 – The more (less) people attend church, the more (less) likely they are to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light.

People attend church for many reasons. However, for the ones that keep attending, there is something about their respective church that makes them keep coming back. Whether it is the pastor or not, the pastor is usually the one thing that can make or break a person's decision to keep coming, stop coming, or change church homes all together. Knowing this, if a person keeps attending church, they must approve and trust their pastor in some way. As such, the more individuals attend church, the more likely they are to recognize and consider their pastors endorsement compared to people who attend church less frequently or at all.

Hypothesis 4 – Individuals who live in a rural (urban) area are more (less) likely to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light.

I believe one's social environment can influence their behavior. When comparing rural and urban areas to one another, one can begin to see many differences. Take rural areas first, conventional wisdom says the pace of life is slower. There are few organizations outside of the school house and church. On the other hand, urban areas are fast paced and churches have to compete with many secular organizations. When comparing the two, I expect rural living dwellers to be more impacted by their pastor's endorsement, compared to urban dwellers, since they have less secular influences going against the church.

Hypothesis 5 – Higher (Less) educated individuals are less (more) likely to be impacted by a pastor's endorsement of a candidate.

It is a well-accepted notion that educational attainment is correlated with many things -- political participation (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, 1996), political knowledge (Jennings and Stoker, 2008), and tolerance (Bobo and Licari, 1989). Looking at political knowledge, educated individuals are more likely to know current events and follow politics. Due to the fact educated individuals follow politics and current events to a higher degree, it can be expected they already know a decent amount of information about the candidates. As such, any impact a pastor's endorsement would have on an educated individual should be small compared to the impact of a less educated individual since they are less likely to follow politics.

Hypothesis 6 – On racial issues, compared to liberals or conservatives, moderates are less likely to be impacted by a pastor's endorsement of a candidate.

When dealing with politics, moderates are in the center. In other words, they are not left, nor are they right, but in the middle. Their views are not biased through ideological filters

and any information they receive is digested through their own political expertise or knowledge. As such, when moderates hear their pastor endorse a candidate, they are less likely to be moved in any direction, as the endorsement will not be acknowledged since moderates place less weight on political cues, regardless of the source.

The testing of the hypotheses are be conducted in several stages. First, there is one regression involving the whole sample where the dependent variable is the Candidate Evaluation index (described above) and the independent variables are indicators for the 12 treatment conditions (11 indicator variables with one omitted as the baseline, reference condition). Next, separate regressions are estimated restricting the sample to the characteristics of the individuals that are likely to moderate the effect of the endorsement treatments (as outlined in $H_2 - H_6$).

Analysis and Results

Table 10A

	All	Pas Hi	Pas Lo	Ch Hi	Ch Lo	Rural	Urban	Ed Hi	Ed Lo	Lib	Cons	Mod
Evaluation of Candidate (M=0; SD=1)												
B-C-P	0.036 [.158]	0.016 [0.303]	0.053 [0.184]	-0.024 [0.187]	0.205 [0.295]	-0.265 [0.387]	0.066 [0.172]	-0.267 [0.198]	0.315 [.233]	0.09 [0.223]	0.261 [0.369]	-0.301 [0.218]
B-C-Y	0.374 [0.145]**	0.361 [0.344]	0.365 [0.158]*	0.341 [0.163]*	0.407 [0.298]	0.251 [0.345]	0.315 [0.157]*	0.481 [0.178]**	0.248 [.0242]	0.827 [0.219]**	0.047 [0.325]	-0.083 [0.213]
B-L-N	0.626 [0.153]**	1.087 [0.288]**	0.48 [0.179]**	0.422 [0.191]*	1.101 [0.243]**	-0.338 [0.355]	0.915 [0.164]**	0.706 [0.201]**	0.541 [0.237]*	1.412 [0.211]**	-0.079 [0.328]	0.08 [0.259]
B-L-P	0.571 [0.149]**	0.947 [0.298]**	0.429 [0.173]*	0.4285 [0.174]*	0.896 [0.283]**	-0.373 [0.357]	0.809 [0.161]**	0.876 [0.199]**	0.27 [0.220]	1.311 [0.206]**	-0.181 [0.341]	0.072 [0.234]
B-L-Y	0.643 [0.155]**	0.786 [0.300]**	0.616 [0.184]**	0.443 [0.204]*	1.047 [0.251]**	0.063 [0.385]	0.807 [0.168]**	0.725 [0.212]**	0.546 [0.230]*	1.287 [0.220]**	-0.01 [0.363]	0.241 [0.228]
W-C-N	0.173 [0.155]	0.004 [0.325]	0.227 [0.174]	0.12 [0.171]	0.223 [0.360]	0.203 [0.353]	0.121 [0.170]	-0.014 [0.198]	0.351 [0.235]	0.497 [0.216]*	0.03 [0.392]	-0.216 [0.226]
W-C-P	0.099 [0.152]	0.05 [0.327]	0.117 [0.170]	0.067 [0.172]	0.131 [0.312]	0.372 [0.383]	0.023 [0.158]	0.094 [0.205]	0.139 [0.223]	0.348 [0.223]	0.047 [0.338]	-0.249 [0.223]
W-C-Y	-0.024 [0.157]	-0.066 [0.306]	0.047 [0.182]	0.088 [0.183]	-0.18 [0.280]	-0.078 [0.320]	-0.113 [0.181]	-0.155 [0.214]	0.127 [0.224]	0.16 [0.243]	-0.32 [0.342]	-0.259 [0.220]
W-L-N	0.662 [0.144]**	1.125 [0.278]**	0.493 [0.170]**	0.408 [0.174]*	1.206 [0.250]**	-0.133 [0.380]	0.826 [0.151]**	0.837 [0.185]**	0.419 [0.231]	1.21 [0.205]**	0.019 [0.348]	0.341 [0.202]
W-L-P	0.506 [0.149]**	0.827 [0.303]**	0.398 [0.172]*	0.383 [0.171]*	0.809 [0.296]**	0.055 [0.369]	0.6 [0.164]**	0.794 [0.186]**	0.188 [0.233]	1.33 [0.200]**	-0.391 [0.350]	-0.048 [.223]
W-L-Y	0.63 [0.141]**	0.9 [0.304]**	0.55 [0.158]**	0.417 [0.166]*	1.162 [0.254]**	-0.001 [0.383]	0.797 [0.145]**	0.825 [0.170]**	0.335 [0.254]	1.328 [0.194]**	0.2 [0.326]	-0.048 [0.215]
Constant	-0.36 [0.107]**	-0.615 [0.233]**	-0.283 [0.120]*	-0.249 [0.122]*	-0.629 [0.210]**	0.131 [0.272]	-0.447 [0.116]**	-0.456 [0.143]**	-0.25 [0.162]	-0.846 [0.151]**	0.064 [0.263]	0.057 [0.134]
Observations	1003	269	734	699	304	227	756	556	447	415	240	348
R-squared	0.07	0.2	0.04	0.03	0.22	0.04	0.15	0.18	0.02	0.27	0.03	0.04

Robust Standard Errors in Brackets
*significant at 5%; **significant at 1%

B = Black P= Pastor N =No Endorsement C = Conservative
W=White Y= Party L = Liberal

Table 10B: F – Test equality of the regression coefficients

	All F (p)	Pas Hi F (p)	Pas Lo F (p)	Ch Hi F (p)	Ch Lo F (p)	Rural F (p)	Urban F (p)	Ed Hi F (p)	Ed Lo F (p)	Lib F (p)	Cons F (p)	Mod F (p)
Evaluation of Candidate (M=0; SD=1)												
B-C-P = B-C-Y	4.95 [.0262]	3.23 [.0725]	1.17 [.2813]	4.2 [.0427]	0.47 [.4947]	2.21 [.1387]	2.24 [.1353]	18.74 [.00]	0.08 [.7835]	10.41 [.0014]	0.44 [.5067]	0.83 [.3626]
B-L-N = B-L-P	0.13 [.7181]	0.08 [.7805]	0.31 [.5778]	0 [.9733]	0.83 [.3624]	0.01 [.9138]	0.44 [.5092]	0.75 [.3882]	1.41 [.2351]	0.25 [.6200]	0.12 [.7288]	0 [.9799]
B-L-N = B-L-Y	0.01 [.9119]	0.5 [.4809]	1.41 [.2369]	0.01 [.9248]	0.09 [.7689]	1.27 [.2610]	0.42 [.5161]	0.01 [.9279]	0 [.9834]	0.33 [.5644]	0.05 [.8276]	0.31 [.5770]
B-L-P = B-L-Y	0.22 [.6402]	0.99 [.3195]	0.37 [.5439]	0 [.9444]	0.42 [.5182]	1.49 [.2236]	0 [.9877]	0.53 [.4687]	1.56 [.2130]	0.01 [.9087]	0.27 [.6058]	0.4 [.5279]
W-C-N = W-C-P	0.23 [.6340]	0.4 [.5270]	0.02 [.8862]	0.1 [.7508]	0.06 [.8038]	0.23 [.6304]	0.35 [.5533]	0.29 [.5906]	0.86 [.3547]	0.43 [.5103]	0 [.9617]	0.02 [.8956]
W-C-N = W-C-Y	1.52 [.2182]	0.93 [.3349]	0.05 [.8156]	0.03 [.8591]	1.36 [.2441]	1 [.3191]	1.56 [.2118]	0.46 [.4994]	0.95 [.3291]	1.89 [.1704]	0.92 [.3381]	0.03 [.8638]
W-C-P = W-C-Y	0.62 [.4322]	0.14 [.7037]	0.15 [.7011]	0.01 [.9050]	1.1 [.2943]	2 [.1586]	0.6 [.4400]	1.33 [.2490]	0 [.9553]	0.56 [.4546]	1.45 [.2304]	0 [.9688]
W-L-N = W-L-P	1.23 [.2685]	0.31 [.5787]	1.47 [.2272]	0.02 [.8806]	2.56 [.1108]	0.27 [.6051]	2.21 [.1372]	0.07 [.7954]	0.96 [.3279]	0.39 [.5302]	1.59 [.2085]	2.79 [.0956]
W-L-N = W-L-Y	0.06 [.8102]	0.13 [.7197]	0.83 [.3633]	0 [.9580]	0.05 [.8218]	0.12 [.7264]	0.05 [.8211]	0.01 [.9336]	0.11 [.7432]	0.41 [.5217]	0.37 [.5426]	3 [.0844]
W-L-P = W-L-Y	0.81 [.3675]	0.9 [.3433]	0.07 [.7910]	0.04 [.8325]	1.96 [.1621]	0.02 [.8797]	1.83 [.1763]	0.04 [.8366]	0.32 [.5709]	0 [.9910]	3.87 [.0503]	0 [.9994]

B = Black P = Pastor N = No Endorsement C = Conservative
W = White Y = Party L = Liberal

Table 10A displays the results from twelve separate regressions. First, I go over the regression involving the whole sample where the dependent variable is the Candidate Evaluation index (described above) and the independent variables are indicators for the 12 treatment conditions. The overall regression can be found in the column entitled “All.” Reviewing the whole sample in one regression is important because although there may be differences within groups, those are important for understanding who is moved by the endorsements, but ultimately we also care about the overall effect of the endorsements. After reviewing the overall regression, I then review additional regressions based on different characteristics of the individual according to my hypotheses. All supplementary information⁶² for Tables 10A and 10B are located in the Appendix.

What Is The Overall Net Effect?

Participants in the reference group had a black conservative candidate with no endorsements. Using the control group as my baseline, I compare the effect of different candidate characteristics – race, ideology, endorsements – to this reference group. When examining the overall effect of endorsements, a black conservative candidate is greatly helped by the party cue, and slightly by the pastor cue. Black liberal candidates are evaluated about the same no matter what cue they receive, however, they are graded way higher than black conservatives with no endorsements. A white conservative candidate who has no endorsement or who is endorsed by a pastor fares better than a black conservative with no endorsement. On the contrary, if a party endorses a white conservative, they are viewed

⁶² Mean scores by each condition.

worse than a black conservative with no endorsement. Lastly, no matter what cue white liberals receive, they are evaluated more favorably than black conservatives without endorsements.

The coefficients produced in the regression for the whole sample only tells me how candidates fair in comparison to the candidate of the reference group – a black conservative with no endorsement. However, it does not tell whether the coefficients within the four groups – black conservatives, white conservatives, black liberals, white liberals – are different from one another. Put simply, it fails to tell me whether there is a statistical difference between the types of endorsements within each group. However, within the groups, F-Test scores of the equality of the regression coefficients, Table10B, allow me to gauge whether there is a statistical difference between the types of endorsement a candidate receives. When examining the scores, the only true movement of the endorsement cues we see for the overall regression is for the black conservative candidate ($p = .0262$). Although both liberal candidates, black and white, were evaluated way more favorably compared to the black conservative with no endorsement, F-Test scores for liberal candidates failed to be statistically significant. With that said, there still is reason to believe that pastor endorsements do have influence, but that it pales in comparison to the bigger cues people use – party and ideology.⁶³ As such, Hypothesis 1 is supported – candidates who receive endorsements are viewed more favorably than those without.

⁶³ This is because the results show pastors do influence candidate evaluations, but not as much as other more well-known and used cues.

Who Is Moved Overall By Pastor Endorsements?

Different segments of society react to different things in different ways. Due to this, I now seek to understand who is most influenced by pastor endorsements. Refer to Tables 10A and B. Hypothesis 2 stated people who place more (less) weight on what the pastor says are more (less) likely to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light. When restricting the regression to individuals who place weight on what their pastors says, within all four groups, the candidate endorsed by the pastor is viewed more favorably compared to the candidate in the control group – black conservative with no endorsement.⁶⁴ In addition, in three of the four groups, the pastor cue is stronger than the party cue when comparing against the candidate of the reference group.⁶⁵ When limiting the regression to individuals who place no weight on what the pastors says, within three of the four groups, the candidate endorsed by the pastor did not receive as big as an evaluation boost.⁶⁶ In addition, within two of the four groups, party endorsements are more influential than pastor endorsements. For this reason, hypothesis 2 is supported.⁶⁷

Hypothesis 3 stated the more (less) people attend church, the more (less) likely they are to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light. When restricting the regression by church attendance, the results are surprising and unexpected. In actuality, the influence of pastoral endorsements are negatively correlated with church attendance. When comparing people who attend church frequently to people who seldom or never attend

⁶⁴ Refer to column “Pas Hi” in Table 10A.

⁶⁵ Refer to column “Pas Hi” in Table 10A.

⁶⁶ Refer to column “Pas Low” in Table 10A.

⁶⁷ There were no statistical differences between types of endorsements based on pastor’s weight.

church, pastor endorsements are more influential to the latter in all four groups.⁶⁸ Even more surprising, for frequent church attendees, pastor endorsements can hurt candidate evaluations, at least when the candidate is black and conservative. However, this is not statistically significant. Within seven of the eight groups, party endorsements were more influential than pastor endorsements.⁶⁹ Combining all this together, hypothesis 3 fails to receive support. It should be noted there were no statistical differences between pastor or party endorsements within the groups.

What can possibly explain pastor endorsements are more influential to people who attend church less? One possibility is frequent church goers attend service for religious reasons, more so than political ones.⁷⁰ In fact, if this is the case, the results begin to make sense due to the makeup of the electoral calendar and Sunday morning church service. Unlike religious services which happen every week, elections happen every two years, at least major elections. It could be pastors only discuss politics during election seasons. On the contrary, they discuss religion all year round. Consequently, frequent church goers hear more talk about religious matters over political ones.

Hypothesis 4 stated individuals who live in a rural (urban) area are more (less) likely to evaluate a candidate endorsed by the church in a positive light. The regression results deemed this hypothesis to be incorrect. When restricting the regressions to urban and rural dwellers,

⁶⁸ Refer to columns “Ch Hi” and “Ch Low” in Table 10A.

⁶⁹ Refer to columns “Ch Hi” and “Ch Low” in Table 10A.

⁷⁰ A second possible explanation is different religious denominations.

the results show compared to the reference group, in three of the four groups, urban dwellers react better to pastor endorsements than rural dwellers.⁷¹ In fact, within two different groups, pastor endorsements negatively impacted candidate evaluations of rural dwellers compared to no endorsement. When looking at the influence of party endorsements on rural and urban dwellers, party endorsements also negatively influenced rural dwellers in two groups and urban dwellers in one group. There were no statistical differences between the types of endorsements within each group.⁷²

Why do rural inhabitants react so poorly to pastor and party endorsements? In rural areas, there are few organizations outside of the school house and church. However, although that statement is true, with technological and industrial advances, many rural dwellers spend just as much time in the urban areas around them as they do at home. In addition, with computers becoming more readily available and abundant in households, rural dwellers may not be so far removed from secular distractions. As such, they may face the same level of distractions as urban dwellers.

Hypothesis 5 stated higher (Less) educated individuals are less (more) likely to be impacted by a pastors endorsement of a candidate. Without getting to deep into the regressions, there appears to be some significant statistical differences between levels of education.⁷³ When restricting the regressions to people with higher levels of education, the results present some interesting findings. First, compared to the reference group, pastoral

⁷¹ Refer to columns "Rural" and "Urban" in Table 10A.

⁷² Refer to columns "Rural" and "Urban" in Table 10B.

⁷³ Refer to column "Ed Hi" in Table 10B.

endorsements within three of the four groups had positive impacts on candidate evaluations.⁷⁴ Second, when a white conservative runs for office, the only thing stopping that candidate from receiving a poor evaluation is the endorsement of a pastor. When restricting the regressions to people with lower levels of education, the results show pastor endorsements do give candidates an evaluation boost as well.⁷⁵ Most interesting about the two education levels is that higher educated individuals respond to the party cue more favorably compared to the pastor cue, but lower educated individuals do not. In addition, candidates endorsed by parties and pastors do better than candidates with no endorsement, but just not statistically.

Why might higher educated individuals respond more favorably to party endorsements compared to pastoral ones? One answer may lie in the fact citizens have clear incentives to take political cues from those more knowledgeable, typically experts or elites. As research shows higher educated individuals are more politically knowledgeable of current events and follow politics to a larger degree, higher educated individual's may feel that, at best, pastors are just as knowledgeable as them. For that reason, to obtain any additional information, higher educated individuals would have to consider outside information. More than likely, the only entity to have additional unknown information on a candidate is a party, as they devote a large amount of resources to gather information. As such, higher educated individuals may feel since the party supports them, they must be a good choice and know something they have yet to find out.

⁷⁴ Refer to column "Ed Hi" in Table 10A.

⁷⁵ Refer to column "Ed Low" in Table 10A.

Hypothesis 6 stated on racial issues, compared to liberals and conservatives, moderates are less likely to be impacted by a pastor's endorsement of a candidate. Compared to the control group, within three of the four groups, moderates are negatively impacted by pastoral endorsements.⁷⁶ In fact, in most situations, moderates evaluate all candidates, whether endorsed or not, in a negative light. This occurrence is fascinating since all political endorsement cues give the evaluations of liberals a positive boost. Conservatives, on the other hand, were also a little turned off by pastoral endorsements.⁷⁷ For the reasons listed above, the results make it impossible to either accept or reject hypothesis 6, as it appears conservatives and moderates react about the same.

Although the results make it impossible to either accept or reject hypothesis 6, the results do show liberals are most impacted by pastoral endorsements.⁷⁸ In fact, all endorsement cues impacted liberals greatly compared to conservatives and moderates. Why is that? One potential explanation is that liberals are more open to change and are trusting enough of party leaders and pastors that whoever they endorse automatically are viewed more favorably. This train of thought aligns with McCrae (1996) who notes the willingness of liberals to seek out change politically.

⁷⁶ Refer to column "Mod" in Table 10A.

⁷⁷ Refer to column "Cons" in Table 10A.

⁷⁸ Refer to column "Lib" in Table 10A.

Discussion

Table 11

<u>Candidate</u>	Compared To No Endorsement	
	Pastor Cue	Party Cue
Black Conservative	No difference	Large Increase*
Black Liberal	No difference	No difference
White Conservative	No difference	Slight Decrease
White Liberal	Slight Decrease	No difference

Table 11 provides all substantive information that can be gathered from this analysis. From the larger picture of the dissertation, the experiment provides evidence pastors can influence the feelings a person has concerning a candidate. However, a pastor's endorsement may or may not be able to help a candidate win office, but it definitely can make the candidate more or less competitive in an election. Delving deeper into the data, when examining the impact of pastor endorsements on candidate evaluations, of the four potential candidates, – black liberal, black conservative, white liberal, white conservative -- the black conservative candidate receives the greatest boost. Naturally, that leads one to ask, "Why is this the case?" I believe this to be the case because that is actually where there is some conflicting scenario in peoples mind. The average black is Democratic and liberal. However, here is a candidate that is conservative in two policy areas, but black. At first, African Americans may be confused by the candidate, or even turned off. But then, after finding out the candidate is endorsed by a local pastor or party, potential voters may use that information as helpful and become more

receptive to the idea of a black candidate being conservative.

Conclusion

What exactly does it mean to have influence? What determines the policy preferences an individual takes? Do church related factors help determine issue stances? Does going to church matter in determining ones issue stances? Does attending a politically active church influence ones issue stances? The results of the quantitative portion of this dissertation answer many of the preceding questions. The conservative nature of the black church does make African Americans more conservative on social issues. No matter what reason one decides to attend church, whether a person places weight on what their pastors says or not, just attending church makes one more likely to hold conservative issue stances. For individuals who do place weight on what the pastors says, the results show pastors do influence their policy stances leading them to take more conservative stands. When looking at pastoral endorsements, the endorsement of a pastor can give candidates a ratings boost. In fact, black conservatives are most helped by the endorsements of pastors. In addition, looking past church related factors, there is something about living in a rural environment that makes one more conservative. At the same time, having a sense of linked fate makes African Americans more conservative.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE INFLUENCE OF PASTORS

How does participation in organized bodies shape the political life of congregants?

What elements within the church combine to affect individual attitudes and actions? The goal of this chapter is to understand more clearly what occurs within churches than simply theorize what may be occurring. At first glance, it may be hard to understand certain political consequences of attending a church, as churches are here for spiritual healing and rejuvenation. However, many non-spiritual things are discussed in church. As this dissertation argues the black church can influence the political attitudes of African Americans, it needs to be determined what exactly is being discussed within black churches. Through interviews with different pastors, I find an understanding of the black church and a common ground between black church practices. Interviews allow me ask different questions in an attempt to better understand what pastors are trying to do as the heads of their churches. In addition, they allow me to better understand the social context pastors work in and how it shapes their approach to society.

All information presented in this chapter was gathered through interviews with different pastors and sit-ins during Sunday morning church services. Pastors were told this research was aimed at understanding the significance of the black church to the black community spiritually, socially, economically, and politically. All interviews were either

held in the home or church office of the respective pastor. In total, six interviews were conducted, one per pastor. Three churches were located in Tennessee (Memphis), two in Mississippi (Grenada, Oxford), and one in Texas (Dallas). The denomination of each church is Baptist.⁷⁹ The smallest church had a membership around 300, while the largest church had a membership of over 10,000. Some pastors were relatively young, 31, while others were in their 70s. In addition, one pastor was female.

Selection of Churches/Pastors

For this study to be done, pastors needed to be interviewed to inquire about their daily teachings and beliefs.⁸⁰ In order to make this study as generalizable as possible, church selection was driven by size of church and location of churches.⁸¹ Interviews were secured by reaching out to pastors asking them to assist in my studies.⁸² Using a snowball type process, I was able to secure interviews within the states of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas.

Upon the completion of all interviews, I now had pastors representing small, large, rural, and urban churches. As such, I am attempting to make as generalizable a sample as possible. This sample is generalizable to the whole African American community for a number of reasons. First, black churches have a shared goal – to provide the spiritual gospel. Second, although bigger churches are better able to satisfy the growing economic needs of the

⁷⁹ Not all African Americans are Baptist; however, a Pew Research study conducted in 2009 notes 80% of African Americans identify as Protestant with 40%, a majority, claiming they were Baptist.

⁸⁰ There was no predetermined number of interviews needed, however, the goal was to secure and complete as many as possible.

⁸¹ I sought out rural, urban, large, and small churches. In addition, attempting to vary by region, I attempted to secure a pastor outside of the South (Chicago). However, I was unable.

⁸² Once one said they would interview me, I used a snowball type process where pastors would make contacts with other pastors.

community, all black churches attempt to provide adequate accommodations to its members. Third, as more millennials are moving to urban metropolitan areas, a larger amount of African Americans are joining megachurches. Lastly, churches of all sizes and locations seek to empower African Americans.

Format of Interviews

I allowed pastors to dictate the flow of the interview. On average, the typical interview lasted 47 minutes, with the longest lasting a little over one hour. Any question asked was open ended, but I mostly let the pastors speak, opening doors to potential questions on their own. When needed, pastors were asked to explain more in depth. I came into the interviews with two warm up questions to get things started. The questions are listed below.

- What brought you to ministry?
- What do you feel the role of the black church is?

Participants

A total of six pastors were interviewed for the qualitative part of this analysis. To protect all pastors interviewed throughout this process, no information that can potentially help the reader determine who the pastor is or what church they preside over is provided. In addition, the names of the pastors have been changed to protect their identity. Pastors are now identified as Pastor 1, Pastor 2, and so on.

Pastor 1 – Pastor 1 is a middle aged male. He holds a bachelors in business administration and never grew up wanting to be a preacher. Upon waking up one day, he felt a calling to

preach and decided to go to seminary school. He has pastored at his current church for over 20 years. He presides over a medium size church (700 people).

Pastor 2 – Pastor 2 is a well-seasoned male pastor in his 60s. He was called into ministry at an early age, although he tried to avoid it. He has pastored several different churches within a few states. He has been the pastor of his current church for 7 years, but plans on stepping down within the next year due to health reasons. He presides over a medium size church (700 people).

Pastor 3 – Pastor 3 is in his late 60s and is well-respected within his community. He only preaches because the Lord wrestled with him and won. He grew up in a small town and did not want to be a preacher because they were underpaid and overworked. At the age of 22, he realized he would end up being a pastor one day. Finally at the age of 30, he accepted his calling. He presides over a small church (300 people).

Pastor 4 – Pastor 4 is a middle aged male. He pastors a church within a well-known southern college town. As such, his church has a fairly decent amount of members (about 1000). He has been the head pastor at this church for over 16 years.

Pastor 5 – Pastor 5 is a male well into his late 70s. He has been preaching for over 40 years. He refuses to retire because the Bible speaks nothing of retirement. He decided to join the ministry because he felt a pull on his life and felt the only way to succeed in life was through the gospel ministry. He heard his calling at the age of 7.

Pastor 6 – Pastor 6 is a female in her early 30s. She considers herself a “child genius,” as she graduated college at the age of 19. She recognized God had a calling on her life at

the age of 15. She loves politics and religion and studied Political Science as an undergraduate. She is a pastor of a mega church (over 10,000 members).

“You Heard What Pastor Said”

Into my fourth interview, one common theme became clear, pastors feel a strong need to speak on homosexual relations. Pastor 1 noted, “A lot of T.V., Hollywood, portrays evil so much that society has become tolerant of it. For instance, same sex marriage, we (society) are tolerant now because people want it. By scripture, you don’t have the right to marry the same sex. . . . Even animals have sense. You don’t see a bull looking for another bull for sex. You don’t see a rooster looking for another rooster. In fact, two roosters in the same pen will fight, and if a rooster has sense enough to look for a hen, and a bull a cow, why would a man look for a man. It doesn’t make sense.” The statement expressed by the pastor was made during a conversation about same sex marriage which was initiated by the pastor. While reading the pastors body language, it became apparent the pastor knew this was a major issue within society. Pastor 1 felt not only was it the role of the church, but the job of the church to inform congregants homosexual relationships were unacceptable to God, and that “pastors must stand on the foundation of the Word, regardless of what the Supreme Court does.”

Not only are pastors directly speaking on the issue of gay marriage, but they are even willing to approach legal grounds. Several pastors went on record saying they would not marry same sex couples. Pastor 2 expressed this stance and ended his sentence right away noting “certain things are unacceptable to Christ.” Pastor 5 took gay marriage requests as disrespect since he does not believe in gay marriage. Pastor 1 went as far to say, “My members would

have to take me to court before I married a same sex couple, and then I would tell the judge put me in jail.” In an attempt to be proactive, Pastor 4 told his church his desires to amend the bylaws of the church to outlaw same sex marriages in case the United States Supreme legalized same sex marriage. He notes, “We are in a crises. Gay marriage is slipping up on us in a way that can ultimately end us.....My Bible says homosexuality is wrong, so either stop or start your own religion.”

Pastor 5 noted, “Gay marriage is Satan’s move to tear down the church and family.....gay marriage is not a problem within my church because I present marriage as a man and woman, as God did in the Garden of Eden.” Pastor 3 would never side with gay marriage and the idea turns his stomach. The pastors to this point all feel strongly about the issue of gay marriage and are against it. During the interviews, I could sense the vibes of the conversations taking a turn. It was nothing against me, but the idea of what was going on in society and how it conflicts with the Word hurts, upsets, and even angers pastors.

Although five of the six pastors interviewed highly disagreed with gay marriage, one pastor, pastor 6, took a slightly different tone. In her opinion, preachers should not make gay marriage their primary preaching points. The bigger issue is sexuality. “We need to talk about love and what it means. I don’t think my real issue is what you do at night because it’s none of my business. You make up your own mind on what you feel is best.” Although Pastor 6 is not the senior pastor at her church, her sentiment is shared within the church by other pastors, even her senior pastor, Pastor Senior. In May of 2012, Pastor Senior preached a sermon concerning marginalization. He noted, “I’m sure most of you came here wondering what I would have to say about the president’s comments concerning gay marriage. Well, I agree.

The president enforced the U.S. Constitution. The Declaration of Independence reads we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. Notice it does not say all straight men are created equal, it does not say all men, unless you are gay and lesbian are created equal.” Connecting his sermon back to the Bible, the pastor then goes on to note God fights against injustices and anything that defies equality is an injustice.

What is clear from all six interviews, no matter what stance a pastor takes, pastors feel a need to discuss the issue of gay marriage with their congregants. Not only do they feel a need to talk about gay marriage, they feel they must take a stance and justify it. This is important as my theory argues black churches have power and the power is translated through the pulpit. Although I brought up many things during the interviews, the pastors themselves brought up the issue of gay marriage and homosexuality. Taking a poll, five of the six pastors interviewed frowned upon the idea of gay marriage. As such, pastors are clearly discussing the political topic of gay marriage within their churches. In an attempt to back their stances and potentially influence their members, they are relating the issue back to biblical practices and principles. In the case of Pastor Senior’s sermon, every time he spoke a sentence concerning his stance on gay marriage, he presented biblical references. Referring back to Model 1 of chapter 4, it is clear pastors greatly influence the issue stances of African Americans on gay marriage.

The Influence of a Pastor

Everyone has influence. We all influence someone. And some of us have far more influence than we realize. A second common theme that became apparent within all

interviews is that pastors know they have influence. Pastors are so influential, they must be careful in everything they do, Pastor 4 noted. "When it comes to being a pastor, people examine your every move and dissect your every word. People infer things by what they see me do and say considering people come to church to build a relationship with the Lord and they want me to teach them about our Father." For this reason, the Bible notes pastors are to be held to a higher standard, since their job is to lead the flock.

Pastor 1 noted although he has more influence over some members than others, it is only because some people do not want to be in church. However, for the ones you do have influence over, they love you and do anything for you. He then goes on to note the first time he realized how much influence he had on individuals was when a mother wanted him to appear in court with her family when her son had ran into legal trouble. The mother felt just having the pastor there in court would help her son throughout the legal process and hopefully be judged in a better light by the judge. At the end of the legal proceeding, the judge agreed to make special arrangements if the young man would take the pastor as a mentor.

Pastor 6 feels the main reason a lot of pastors preach is the power that comes with the position. "Pastors know they have influence and only continue to preach because they know it." She then explained to me how one day she had to sit back and acknowledge to herself her words had power when a person came to her stating the only reason they did not commit suicide was because of a sermon she has delivered. The pastor could barely remember the sermon, as the sermon was just another day in the office to her. From that moment on, she made sure she put everything into the rest of her sermons.

Pastor 2 stated not only do pastors have influence within their churches and the community, they have influence over one another. "Pastors have influence, especially well established pastors. I myself have influence on other pastors. When you can go to a district meeting to elect a new moderator, and your input changes the direction of the conversation, you have influence and can sway things off your trust." For that reason, pastors must not only watch what they say and do within the community, they must watch what they say and do in front of other pastors, especially new pastors who are not well studied enough or been around long enough to have confidence to speak on certain things.

Thus, we see pastors have influence, they know it, and even acknowledge it. Pastors are given the job of guiding their congregation, along with the community, with a message. Considering black churches are more than spiritual gathering places, pastors have the ability to influence matters in all realms of life.

Political Activism

One last common theme between all interviews is pastors feel they need to be knowledgeable of politics, but feel the church is not the place for candidates to speak. "I don't have a problem with politics in the church because it is up to the congregation to elect good spiritual folk into office," Pastor 4 noted. "However, I don't think this is the place for them to come speak. The problem is most candidates do not come to visit until election time. If they come, they can sit, but they will not receive no special privileges." Pastor 4 expressed this sentiment after explaining to me over the years he discovered certain candidates he allowed to speak actually took away from service. As a result, he felt if the congregation was to receive

information within a structured church service, it would come from him, as his role is to lead the church.

Pastor 1 expressed to me his belief pastors should be educated on politics, although they are not politicians. He felt this way because people look to the church for answers and pastors should be able to provide those answers to prevent congregants from receiving ill-advised answers from elsewhere. For that reason, pastors need to be educated on policies to determine which politicians truly are for the black community, that is, will actually advance the needs of the community and not provide lip service. He then goes on to note any politician can come to his church, but none can talk, as “people trust their pastors, not politicians.” In his younger days, Pastor 5 admitted he use to tell his congregants how to vote. However, he no longer gives unsolicited advice. He only provides forums for candidates to speak, noting the church has the obligation to present forums where information can be shared and decisions made. For this reason, “during election season, we have meetings where candidates can come speak directly to the members to win support.” Unlike Pastor 5, Pastor 3 does not provide forums for candidates to speak, but when issues need to be discussed, he addresses them from the pulpit.

Pastor 2 felt not only should the church be knowledgeable about politics, the church should be a beacon of knowledge on all things – religious matters, social matters, economical matters, and political matters. Strictly dealing with politics, he is a firm believer pastors should stress the importance of voting to their members and that pastors should remind their members, although we are not in physical chains anymore, we can always go back if we elect the wrong people too many times. He then goes on to note pastors should be proactive in the

situation and provide information freely. “If we want to prevent this, we need to provide the community with the help they need to make conscious decisions. For most people, that means doing the research for them, if not telling them directly what to do.” He even admitted telling his members the black community gives their votes away to the Democratic Party. “The party of Lincoln freed slaves, a Republican. Then blacks started supporting the Democratic Party during the Civil Rights Movement. However, there are some good Republicans out there, just like there are some bad Democrats. Some people dismiss Republican views, but they need to understand not all Republican values are bad. In fact, I feel certain black Republican candidates have done a good job in office, but the label stops most from winning.”

As can be seen, black churches advance the democratic norms of voting and electoral participation. Not all do it the same way, but all are politically active in some manner. Some pastors provide information to their members, while others provide forums where candidates can come to speak. Some have even begun to express to their churches the need for African Americans to stop giving their votes away in exchange for nothing. Seeing pastors are beginning to speak more and more about politics within their churches, if pastors keep this up long enough, they have the ability to awake a sleeping giant.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to understand more clearly what occurs within churches. One finding is political cues are being provided. Political cues can come from many places. However, for people to be influenced by something, they must either hear it or see it. As such, information access within church should greatly influence ones political attitudes.

As this dissertation argues the black church can influence the political attitudes of African Americans, it needed to be determined what exactly was being discussed within black churches. Within the interviews, a major discussion topic within black churches right now is gay marriage. All but one pastor interviewed made it clear to their congregants that not only did they disapprove of gay marriage, but so did God. This is important to understand, as it gives individuals the opportunity to receive a clear message. Considering church related variables turned out to be statically significant in the gay marriage policy model, an argument can be made messages delivered in the church have some effect on an individual's gay marriage policy preference. Unlike gay marriage, no pastors within the interviews brought up the issue of abortion. Coincidentally, this could explain why no church related variables were statistically significant in the abortion policy model. As such, the church may not be sending a clear message on abortion. I believe if this analysis was ran 25 years ago, the results of the abortion and gay marriage policy models would be reversed due to the salience of the issues being reversed.

A second finding is that pastors feel they have a great deal of influence. No doubt they probably do with certain segments of the church, but as my empirical results show, perhaps it is not as strong as they might perceive. However, without a doubt, pastors are thinking about what influence they have and how they can direct that influence. Although the experimental analysis did not show great sums of pastor influence, that does not mean influence is not there – it could be covered up by other well-known political cues. After all, pastors behave like it does, preach like it does, and even run their churches like it does.

Going against initial expectations, another finding that emerged was there may not be great differences between the size of a church or location of a church. I expected to find an urban rural divide between pastors, due to church size. However, pastors within urban and rural areas both spoke on similar issues. The only difference is how they presented it, with rural pastors being more blunt and urban pastors (large churches) avoiding stepping on toes.⁸³ In that way, it may not be smaller rural churches look that different from larger urban churches, but to attract the bigger and more diverse crowds found in urban areas, urban pastors may have to be more subtle in the way they deliver their messages.

⁸³ Although both sets of pastors are giving the same message, they go about it in different ways. Rural pastors are more direct with their congregants. Urban pastors are probably less direct because they have to make more people happy in an attempt to keep larger crowds coming to church on a weekly basis.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The plight African Americans experienced in America is unique. For a long time, African Americans were disenfranchised from all aspects of American life. They had no rights, and were considered property. African Americans could only lean on each other for support and guidance. The only institution African Americans had access to was the black church, and it was invisible. Out of slavery, the church gained prominence and meaning within the community. Once slavery was outlawed, the church continued to build its prominence within the community through various community building and outreach projects. Some of these efforts included building schools, fraternal lodges, banks, burial associations, and other institutions African Americans were disenfranchised from. For this reason, African Americans look to the church for answers and guidance in many aspects of life.

Most interesting about the African American church is throughout the years, the church has started to give other worldly advice. At times the advice takes political tones considering pastors now speak directly on current hot topics and issues within current day society. As such, there is a need to understand the influence of religion on politics within the black community. The point of this research was to analyze that relationship and understand the implications of the black church on the political arena.

In answering this question, the dissertation addressed a major void in the academic literature. Previous studies concerning the African American church explained how the institution could increase the electoral participation rates of African Americans. Previous scholars found the African American church could increase the voting rates of African Americans and their overall level of political knowledge. However, previous scholars had not attempted to explain or analyze the impact of messages being delivered within the church by church leaders, nor had scholars sought to explain the political power of the black church. This study found that: (1) the African American church does send political cues; (2) when the political cues are clear, African Americans are more inclined to hold the stance the church advocates; and (3) church leaders can influence political evaluations, but not to the degree of more well-known political cognitive shortcuts. Expanding on point three, this study found that black churches have the unique ability of influencing how congregants evaluate politicians. This finding is important because research has found individuals tend to use cognitive shortcuts when making political decisions. As such, any influence or impact the church has on political decisions, evaluations, or policy preferences could ultimately alter the political landscape of the U.S. electoral arena.

Prior to this study, the political power of the black church was not tested although the societal environment of the times was perfect. Analyzing two social issues – gay marriage and abortion rights --, we now know the black church plays a major role in shaping the stance African Americans take on gay marriage. In addition, we have reason to believe if this study was done twenty years ago, the black church would play a major role in shaping the stance African Americans take on abortion rights, as well. Although the results of the experiment were not as

expected, the results present evidence that church leaders can influence political evaluations of candidates, especially when the candidate is a black conservative.

Major Contribution and Implications

So what do these findings mean and where do they fit within academic literature concerning religion and politics? One of the major contributions of this study is that it provides scholars with an assessment of how religious institutions can impact the political arena – that is policy stances, and candidate evaluations. Prior to this study, political scientists knew very little concerning how church related factors influence candidate evaluations. Now scholars have reason to extend this research and potentially examine the influence of the Catholic Church on social issue stances considering the current Pope’s attempt to grow the church’s following by welcoming gay marriage equality.

An additional contribution of this dissertation concerns the relevance of conservative issues stances in African American households and communities, and how those issues stances can potentially alter the electoral arena. Now that this research has shown African Americans can be influenced by the church, conservative politicians now have reason to implement a new political strategy to widen their African American following by teaming with African American religious leaders.

One last contribution of this research is its ability to influence the campaigning methods of politicians trying to garner African American support. As the church has influencing power, politicians should come to black churches and deliver specific and focused messages. I recommend politicians coming to black churches speak on issues salient to the black

community. In theory, politicians should build their message around what the pastor is saying or attempt to garner the support of the pastor. Considering the empirics show younger African Americans are more influenced by endorsements and older African Americans by issues, politicians still need to receive pastoral endorsements while speaking on salient issues. Thus, politicians have two campaign strategies, each aimed at a different age group.

Strengths and Weaknesses

This analysis lends itself to a number of strengths and weaknesses. The greatest strength of this analysis is its ability to increase our understanding of how different factors influence the electoral arena. Given African Americans are very religious, it is of utmost importance that we as scholars examine what all political issues the black church can influence. In addition, a second strength of this research is that it opens a window to understanding how the black church influences the political life of African Americans.

A weakness of this research is its limited respondent pool. Smaller respondent pools makes it harder to generalize the findings to the whole African American population. In addition, a second weakness of the research is a large amount of respondents came from southern states. As such, this research could have benefited by a wider geographical distribution of respondents. Another weakness of this research is its oversampling of college age students. An argument could be made that college aged individuals are not representative of the average member of society. In addition, one last weakness of this research is its inability to determine the causal arrow of pastor congregant influence or whether the two feed off the other.

Future Research

The findings in this dissertation raise several interesting questions concerning the political power of the black church. First, now that evidence has presented black churches can influence the policy preferences and candidate evaluations of congregants, scholars must ask themselves which African Americans are more likely to be influenced by the church – younger or older individuals. This question is important because young millennials are more open to gay marriage and are beginning to join the workforce, ultimately giving them more tithing power. If millennials are more open to gay marriage, it could be that pastors are following the political tones of the working population of their congregation. As such, it may need to be determined which direction the causal arrow points.

Second, now that evidence has presented black churches have political power, future research needs to analyze how pastors present their messages. It could be that all pastors are delivering the same messages, but charismatic pastors are better able to pull their following into emotional agreement. Considering there are two types of pastors, those who stand still while preaching and those that skip, jump, and yell while preaching, research has at least two type of pastoring styles to compare against each other.

In conclusion, there is more research to be done on the black church. In fact, it is just beginning. The implications of this research suggest the black church does have power, especially politically. Scholars must continue to examine the impact of the black church on the issue stances and decisions African Americans make in all aspects of life. Not only is there power in the Word, there is power in the church.

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APPENDIX

As part of this research respondents were asked to complete a survey. Within the survey respondents were presented one of twelve experimental conditions.

Background Questions

(1) In which state do you currently reside?

(2) What is your current zip code?

(3) Do you reside in a rural, urban, or suburban area?

- Rural
- Urban
- suburban

(4) What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

(5) What is your current age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 31
- 32 to 38
- 39 to 45
- 46 to 52
- 52 or above

(6) What is your race?

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other

(7) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

8) What is your combined annual household income?

- under \$20,000
- 20,000-29,999
- 30,000-39,999
- 40,000-49,999
- 50,000-59,999
- 60,000-69,999
- 70,000-79,999
- 80,000-89,999
- 90,000-99,999
- 100,000-109,999
- 110,000-119,999
- 120,000-129,999
- 130,000-139,999
- 140,000-149,999
- 150,000+

Political Characteristics

(9) Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other

*****If you choose Democrat, skip question 11 and 12.

*****If you choose Republican, skip question 10 and 12.

*****If you choose Independent, skip question 10 and 11.

(10) Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- Strong Democrat
- Not Very Strong Democrat

(11) Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- Strong Republican
- Not Very Strong Republican

12) As a moderate, are your views closer to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or equally close to both parties?

- Closer to the Democratic Party
- Closer to the Republican Party
- Equally Close to Both Parties

13) Which political party do you feel is most likely to advance the needs of the African American community?

- Democratic
- Republican
- Independent
- Uncertain

14) Which factor is most important in determining your political preferences?

- Issues
- The Candidates
- Party Platforms
- Endorsements of Local Figures

(15) How interested are you in politics and current events?

- Very Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not Interested

(16) Do you feel your fate is linked to the fate of the African American community? If so, how much?

- A Lot
- A Fair Amount
- A Little
- None

(17) Is discrimination a big problem for African Americans in the United States?

- Yes
- No
- No Response/Indifferent

(18) It is believed African Americans in the United States share political interests and goals. Do you think if African Americans work together politically they would be better off, worse off, or it would not make much difference?

- Better Off
- Worse Off
- No Difference

(19) Have you heard of the following political terms? Liberals, Moderates, Conservatives.

- Yes
- No
- I Don't Know

(20) On racial matters relating to the black community, which term would best describe you?

- Extremely Conservative
- Conservative
- Slightly Conservative
- Moderate
- Slightly liberal
- Liberal
- Extremely Liberal

(21) Do you generally favor affirmative action programs?

- Yes
- No
- No Opinion

(22) It is suggested the country is faced with many problems, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. Please tell us whether you think spending should be increased, decreased, or remain the same on welfare programs, such as food stamps, daycare assistance and medical services?

- Increase
- Decrease
- Remain the Same
- No Opinion

(23) Should abortions be allowed?

- Always
- In Most Situations
- Almost Never
- Never

(24) Should marriage be between two people of the same sex?

- Yes
- No
- No Opinion

Church

(25) Are you a member of a church?

- Yes
- No

(26) How often do you attend church?

- At Least Once A week
- Almost Every Week
- About Once A Month
- Seldom
- Never

(27) Compared to today, did you attend church more as a youth?

- Yes
- No
- No Response/Indifference

(28) How important is religion is in your life?

- Very Important
- Fairly Important
- Not Very Important
- Unimportant

(29) Can religion answer most of today's problems?

- Yes
- No
- No Opinion

(30) Does your pastor or the church advocate on behalf of participating in the electoral process?

- Yes
- No
- No Response

(31) Does your church allow candidates or city officials to speak to the congregation?

- Yes
- No
- No Response

(32) How much weight do you place on what the pastor preaches from the pulpit?

- A Lot
- Some
- A Little
- None
- No Response

(33) How much weight do you place on what the pastor preaches from the pulpit?

- A Lot (1)
- Some (2)
- A Little (3)
- None (4)

(34) What is your primary source of political information?

- Church
- Internet
- Television
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Word of Mouth
- Community Organizations

(35) In your opinion, should churches not only focus on spiritual concerns, but also community matters and the ways the community can solve these problems?

- Yes
- No
- No Opinion

Hypothetical Election

[DeAndre Jackson/Jacob Smith] is 40 and the father of three children. He believes [*marriage is a union between two individuals and supports legalizing same-sex marriage/in the traditional definition of marriage between a woman and man and is against legalizing same-sex marriage*]. He is [*pro-choice and supports a woman's right to decide what happens to her body/ pro-life and believes abortion should be illegal in almost all circumstances*]. He is endorsed by [*no endorsement (was not actually seen)/several local pastors/several local party members*].

(36) If you lived in Representative [**Jackson's/Smith's**] district, how likely do you think you would be to vote for him in the 2014 election?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Undecided
- Somewhat Likely
- Likely
- Very Likely

	Disagree Strongly (1)	Disagree Moderately (2)	Disagree a Little (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Agree a Little (5)	Agree Moderately (6)	Agree Strongly (7)
This candidate has the experience and skills necessary to represent me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This candidate understands issues that affect people like me. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This candidate would represent me effectively. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This candidate would do a good job as a representative. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

VITA

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Political Science, University of Mississippi, 2015 (expected).

First Field: American Politics

Second Field: International Relations

M.A. Political Science, University of Mississippi, 2013

B.A. Political Science, Alcorn State University, 2010 (Magna Cum Laude).

Major: Political Science

Minor: Pre-Law

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Independent Instruction

Mississippi University for Women – International Relations – Spring 2015

Mississippi University for Women – Social Science Research Methods – Spring 2015
(Online Course)

University of Mississippi – Intro. To American Politics – Fall 2014

University of Mississippi – Intro. To American Politics – Summer of 2014

Mississippi University for Women – Comparative Politics – Fall 2014

Mississippi University for Women – Intro, to American Political Concepts - Fall 2014
(Online Course)

Teaching Assistant,

Introduction to Politics, Professor John Bruce (Fall 2011)

Introduction to Politics, Professor Heather Ondercin (Spring 2012)

TEACHING INTERESTS

Introduction to American Politics

Lecture and discussion. Dynamics of political institutions and processes, chiefly of the national government. Emphasis on the actual exercise of political power by interest groups, elites, political parties, and public opinion.

Voting and American Political Behavior

Elections and public opinion; history of U.S. electoral politics; the problem of voter participation; partisanship and voting; accounting for voting decisions; explaining and forecasting election outcomes; elections and divided government; money and elections; electoral politics and representative democracy.

Seminar in American Politics

Covers some of the scholarly literature on American Politics and is designed to introduce the student to some of the current theories and debates among scholars of American government and politics.

Race and Ethnicity In American Politics

The course focuses on the historical and contemporary roles of various racial and ethnic groups; and the initiation, demands, leadership and organizational styles, orientation, benefits, and impact on the structures and outputs of governance in the United States

RESEARCH

Dissertation – The Political Power of the Black Church.

Many people call for the separation of church and politics. However, within the black community, the two cannot be separated. For this reason, my research looks at how African American congregants behave after hearing their pastors, and the church itself, preach conservative values on social issues, but yet, advance notions of voting for whoever is on the Democratic ticket, claiming the party of the left is the best way to advance the interests of the black community.

Working Papers

Coalition Building and Hispanic Interests

Research Experience

Research Assistant, Professor Heather Onderin (Spring 2012)

Research Assistant, Professor Connor Dowling (Fall 2013; Spring 2014)

Research Assistant, Professor Douglas Rice (Spring 2014)

Fellowships and Awards

University of Mississippi Doctoral Fellowship (2014-2015)

University of Mississippi Graduate Fellowship (2011-2012; 2013-2014; 2014-2015)

University of Mississippi Minority Fellowship (2010-2011; 2012-2013)

Four years Honor Curriculum Scholarship (2006-2010)

Foundation Scholarship

Honors Endowed Scholarship

Alcorn State University Magna Cum Laude Graduate -- GPA 3.6-3.8

Alcorn State University Deans List (Fall and Spring of 2006, 07, 08, 09)

Alcorn State University Presidents List (Spring 2010)

National Honda All Star Challenge - 2nd place, Alcorn