
Wayne State University Theses

1-1-2015

Efficacy And Voting In The Obama Era

Christian Eli Genesky
Wayne State University,

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Genesky, Christian Eli, "Efficacy And Voting In The Obama Era" (2015). *Wayne State University Theses*. 451.
https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses/451

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wayne State University Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

EFFICACY AND VOTING IN THE OBAMA ERA

by

CHRISTIAN GENESKY

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

2015

MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Neither this project nor my graduate education could have been completed without the supreme help of Drs Krista Brumley and David Merolla, to whom I am eternally grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	3
METHODS	12
RESULTS	16
DISCUSSION	25
CONCLUSION	29
REFERENCES	30
ABSTRACT	34
AUTOBIOGRAHPICAL STATEMENT	36

LIST OF TABLES

List of Efficacy Measures_____	12
Descriptive Statistics_____	16
Generalized Linear Models for Pre-Efficacy Measures_____	18
Logistic Regression Models for Voting_____	20
Generalized Linear Models for Post-Efficacy Measures_____	22

INTRODUCTION

One of the cornerstones of democracy is the opportunity for all citizens to participate in the electoral process, yet national data on political behavior demonstrates that this is not the case. While the average rate of voter turnout among industrialized nations has been estimated as high as 80%, rates in the U.S. are significantly lower (as low as 54%) (Powell 1986). Rates are even lower among certain sectors of the population, such as young voters, who comprised only 29% of all voters in 2014 (File 2015). Some of the largest gaps in voter rates are between racial groups: both Hispanic and non-Hispanic black sub-groups have had lower turnout rates in almost every national election for decades (File 2015). The size of these gaps varies, but is consistently substantial: since 1978, whites have had turnout rates that are between 5 and 11 percent higher than black citizens, for example. One notable exception to this trend was in 2008, when black voters turned out at a higher rate than both white and Hispanic voters for the first time in history (File 2015)..

Additionally, certain sectors of the population are disproportionately represented as political leaders. A recent report found that women make up less than a quarter of the political leadership in every branch of local, state, and federal government in the United States (Lawless and Fox 2012). Meanwhile, “more than 1.2 million African Americans in 175 communities across the country” have been found to be underrepresented in local leadership—that is, their community city councils do not reflect the demographic composition of the community itself. In short, the disproportionate underrepresentation of some groups persists, raising questions of access and opportunity to elections. Scholarship demonstrates close relationships between social and political inequalities, and specifically a number of strong connections between minority status, political efficacy, and participation (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Emig, Hesse, and Fisher 1996; Olsen 1970; Pasek et al. 2008). However, the 2008 presidential election brought with it an unprecedented

consideration— a major party nominee who identified as a racial minority. Racial considerations in the political process are well-documented in the literature (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Emig et al. 1996; Gay 2001; Olsen 1970; Schaffner 2011), but it is unclear how Barack Obama's candidacy and subsequent election have affected black Americans' choice to participate in the political process, as well as their feelings of political efficacy both before and after the election.

The purpose of this project is to explore the ways in which the presence of the first-ever major-party black candidate for president in the U.S. affected well-established patterns in the relationship between race, political efficacy, and political participation. I conducted secondary data analysis using the American National Election Survey's 2008 Time-series pre- and post-election studies. Based on the extant literature on political efficacy, participation, and race, I ask four research questions: 1) How do racial minorities' perceptions of political efficacy compare to those of white individuals?; 2) How does political participation differ between racial minorities and whites?; 3) What is the connection between perceptions of efficacy and political participation?; and 4) How does an individual's choice of candidate affect his or her feelings of political efficacy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Direct and Indirect Effects: Race and Political Efficacy

The use of the term “political efficacy” in the scholarship has been broad and variable. Political efficacy refers to an individual’s “perception of their political capacities” (Beaumont 2011). Scholars usually distinguish between internal and external efficacy (Hayes and Bean 1993; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991). Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991) provide a useful narrative regarding this distinction:

Of the many indicators of general political attitudes developed in the 1950s, sense of political efficacy is one of the most theoretically important and frequently used. At the same time, however, there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the manner in which efficacy is measured. One problem was solved in the 1970s, when scholars (following Lane 1959) came to recognize that political efficacy contains at least two separate components: (1) internal efficacy, referring to beliefs about one's own competence to understand, and to participate effectively in, politics, and (2) external efficacy referring to beliefs about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizen demands. (P. 1407-1408)

The fostering of efficacy has been attributed to a variety of factors, but while there is no primary predictor, the collective literature on the subject clearly shows that individuals of minority races are less likely to feel political efficacy than whites (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Emig, Hesse, and Fisher 1996). A significant body of scholarship specifically highlights how race predicts lower feelings of efficacy among minorities. In a review of 8 surveys measuring political efficacy and trust, Abramson (1972) discover overwhelmingly lower feelings of both among black schoolchildren. Rodgers (1974) discusses this phenomenon with an explanation that focuses on external efficacy:

It is of considerable importance that this study has found that the low political efficacy and high political cynicism of the black respondents does not reflect feelings of personal inadequacy. Instead these attitudes best reflect black evaluations of their position in the political hierarchy. The implications of blacks feeling that their deprivation is a result of systemic rather than personal factors, are obvious. (P. 280)

Limited perceptions of political efficacy among racial minorities can be inferred even in the writings of scholars who do not mention race; many of the non-racial factors relevant to efficacy are historically limited among minority groups. Beaumont (2011), for instance, focuses her research on certain elements of an individual's background, including the role of socioeconomic status, civic resources, and sociopolitical learning, finding that all three of these concepts are positively related to efficacy perceptions. Inequalities in education also exacerbate this political inequality (Beaumont 2011; Pasek et al. 2008): Beaumont emphasizes the democratic benefits of education, but explains that "despite wishful thinking, current education practices do not create an "aristocracy of everyone" (2011: 229). In other words, socioeconomic, civic, and political resources are not equally available to all, and such divisions often occur over racial lines. Inequalities in education lead to such resource advantages, which in turn lead to disparities in political efficacy.

In addition to resources, certain aspects of one's social context, present more in some communities than others, have been demonstrated to play a role in efficacy perceptions (Anderson 2010; Steinberger 1981). Anderson's study, for instance, uses a well-established "sense of community" index popularized in community psychology to demonstrate the strong positive effect that an individual's feeling of community support has on his or her efficacy. Community psychologists have often demonstrated that perceptions of community defined by this index are

racially disparate, and that feelings of community are particularly lower among African-Americans (BeLue et al. 2001; Lambert and Hopkins 1995).

Considering a long history of economic, social, and political adversity, it is unsurprising that Americans from minority groups acknowledge an unfortunate “political reality” (Rodgers, 1974), and become more cynical as a result. The combined effect of this cynicism and the many other predictors is that, as a whole, political efficacy is much lower among racial minorities. To address this issue, I test my first hypothesis: (H1) Racial minorities will have lower perceptions of political efficacy than white respondents.

Unequal Efficacy, Unequal Participation: Race, Efficacy, and Political Participation

It seems only natural to draw a causal connection between this inequality of efficacy and a similar inequality in political behavior—a connection that is supported by an abundant body of literature. Whereas efficacy refers ideas or perceptions, “political participation” or “democratic participation” refers to behavior, and includes any actions that one might take in order to become directly involved in the political sphere, including elections and voting, demonstrations and rallies, canvassing, lobbying, meeting with or working for candidates and political leaders, running for office, among others.

There is a strong connection between perceived efficacy and political participation, which can be seen in explorations of voter decline (such as Cassel and Hill 1981). These studies attribute falling turnout rates to increased apathy about politics (an indicator of low political efficacy) and highlight factors such as education—often found to be responsible for higher levels of political efficacy—as an element that combats decline by boosting voter turnout rates. Similarly, research explores how political participation increases along with similar increases in education (Pasek et

al. 2008) and critical thinking skills, two indirect indicators of internal political efficacy (Guyton 1988).

Scholarship also ties together efficacy and race by arguing that both one's perception of political efficacy and one's racial identity impact the motivation and frequency of an individual's participation in the democratic electoral process (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Cassel and Hill 1981; Emig et al. 1996; Guyton 1988; Pasek et al. 2008). Bobo and Gilliam (1990) use survey data to show higher rates of sociopolitical participation among Black citizens in "high-empowerment areas"—measured by the presence of minority holders of public office, which the authors argue confirms that "a group has achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making" (378). Empowerment defined in this way is no doubt inspired by internal conceptions of efficacy, but, in response to Bobo and Gilliam's findings, Emig et al. (1996) proposed an expanded definition of empowerment that included several more indicators of both internal *and* external political efficacy:

We strongly argue for an expansion and extension of their operational definition to include such factors as (1) black representation below the office of mayor, including appointed as well as elected officials; (2) participation and involvement comparisons; (3) perceptions of local government's responsiveness to various groups' needs; (4) feelings of having personal influence in decision making; and (5) the possibility of strong black support for white incumbents. (P. 274)

It is possible to see how the elements in this expanded definition fall into "internal" and "external" categories of efficacy. Representation, participation, and involvement are all demonstrations of one's confidence in their own ability to affect change, while responsiveness is a perception that relies on the behavior of others. Emig et al. use this expanded definition to conclude that their sample, which according to Bobo and Gilliam would have been considered to have low levels of empowerment, in fact has high levels of empowerment (and therefore efficacy), explaining the

more frequent political participation observed. These studies demonstrate the direct connection between efficacy and participation, and attribute low levels of participation among black citizens to similarly low levels of internal and external political efficacy.

A number of indirect, mediating factors also help to explain racial disparities in political behavior (Milbrath and Goel 1977; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972). Socioeconomic status has often been a point of contention for scholars who debate political trends: Olsen (1970) concludes that blacks are *more likely* to participate in every aspect of the political process if socioeconomic status is controlled for. The strength of socioeconomic status as a predictor of behavior is made clear by research that highlights the unequal distribution of resources to racial groups. Sylvester and McGlynn (2010) elaborate on Beaumont's idea that unequal access is the source of many political inequalities by shedding light on a more recent resource: the internet. Using survey data from a 2007 Pew study, Sylvester and McGlynn conclude that "physical location continues to play a key role in levels of access to broadband technology and that increased home internet use is associated with a significantly higher probability of contacting government officials in various ways" (2010: 64). Not dissimilar is Teney and Hanquinet's (2012) multidimensional analysis of a survey among Belgian youth, in which the authors draw a connection between high social capital and high political participation. Of particular note is their conclusion that youth with a high socioeconomic status and diverse social capital are more likely to engage in political activities (1224).

Olsen's (1970) conclusions about the importance of socioeconomic status to lead to several theoretical explanations for black/white differences in political behavior. He assesses two competing theoretical explanations for the pattern. Olsen first discusses a compensation theory, which argues that African Americans are making up for racial discrimination with increased political participation. On the other hand, the scholar proposes that this pattern of increased

participation among African Americans might be explained by what he calls the “ethnic community” theory of participation, which posits that participation results from an inclination to conform to the behaviors of the community with which they identify (1970: 684). Shingles (1981) clarifies, “the primary reason black consciousness has such a dramatic effect on political participation is that it contributes to the combination of a sense of political efficacy and political mistrust which in turn induces political involvement” (77).

Over time, however, scholars became dissatisfied with explanations of the relationship between race and political participation that relied so heavily on what became referred to as “group solidarity” (Chong and Rogers 2005; Liu, Austin, and Orey 2009; Mattis et al. 2004; Stokes 2003), arguing a decline in the direct relationship between solidarity and voter turnout. Models testing the influence of “racial solidarity” as a quantified predictor variable demonstrate a weakened relationship between the two concepts as time went on. These criticisms have inspired a more detailed exploration of the solidarity concept by Chong and Rogers (2005), distinguishing between group consciousness and group identity, and have redoubled an emphasis specifically on group *consciousness* as a predictor of voting as a form of political participation.

This adjusted theory of race and political participation fits in well with recent empirical findings, such as that of Liu et al. (2009), who conclude that social capital (in the form of church attendance) was the most significant predictor of voting among African-Americans. Accepting as given that increased social capital facilitates racial consciousness, the explanatory power of racial consciousness as a predictor of political participation is clear. This study further shows that social and economic inequalities that often affect racial minorities result in inequalities in the political sphere. Building on this literature, I test two additional hypotheses: (H2) Racial minorities will

have lower rates of political participation than white respondents; and (H3) Respondents' lowered efficacy will result in similarly lowered political participation

The Exception to the Rule: the Role of a Candidate's Minority Status

A summary of the above literature describes a "vicious cycle" with regard to race, political participation, and political efficacy. Literature on political efficacy affirms that social inequalities individuals may confront in the U.S. are most often faced by racial minorities, directly translating into political inequalities. Specifically, racial minorities adopt a pessimistic (albeit, arguably, realistic) perspective on their political position, and have lower levels of trust and efficacy as a result. However, research also finds that perceptions of political efficacy are directly related to participatory actions, and it is perhaps unsurprising that in behavior, too, individuals of minority status are lower than their white counterparts. These findings are particularly discouraging when we consider the capacity for change by political actors, and the resulting implication that racial minorities, who suffer the most at the hands of the status quo, struggle to find the agency or ability to change it. In this way, we see a daunting cycle of low efficacy and low participation that must be broken in order to make social and political change.

One way to break this vicious cycle has presented itself more in recent political elections. Scholars note that increases in black empowerment result in a corresponding shift in traditional black-white differences in political participation. Some literature even suggests that political leaders are in fact more effective if they share minority characteristics with the community that they lead (Mansbridge 1999). Other research examines Obama's candidacy and subsequent election (Block 2011; Powers 2013; Schaffner 2011) most of which primarily discusses the necessity of the black vote during Obama's election to office. Our understanding of the impact of

a president's minority status is limited given the historic and unprecedented nature of Obama's candidacy for president. However, similar research exploring the presence of minority leaders in local and state governments, as well as in other branches of the federal government, supports the insights into the effect that a leader's racial identity has on typical feelings of efficacy and participation. As discussed above, Bobo and Gilliam's (1990) analysis of national sample survey data uses the presence of black elected officials to public office as a metric to demonstrate "high empowerment," and discovers that blacks with high feelings of empowerment have much higher levels of political participation. From this they conclude that "black empowerment, whatever heightened mobilization this feat initially requires, has broad and lasting consequences on how often, and why, blacks become active participants in the political process" (1990: 387). Gay (2001) demonstrates this pattern specifically with regards to voting by examining eight congressional districts in which African Americans are elected to congress, and where levels of voting decline among whites while they increase among blacks. To contribute to this line of research, this study tests a fourth and final hypothesis: (H4) Respondents who voted for Barak Obama in 2008 will have increased levels of political efficacy after the 2008 election.

Conclusions from Literature

The goal of this project was to explore the intersections between race, efficacy, and political behavior. The scholarship outlined above makes certain connections apparent. Minority status has been shown to negatively impact perceptions of political efficacy, both directly, through the harmful stigmas and political inequalities that affect members of racial groups, and indirectly, through the resources that are afforded to some racial groups and not others. Both political efficacy and race have, in turn, been shown to negatively impact political behavior. However, there is also

a body of research that suggests that these well-established trends might be affected by the presence of a candidate who identifies as a member of a minority racial group. So, I tested these connections with four research hypotheses: (H1) Racial minorities will have lower perceptions of political efficacy than white respondents; (H2) Racial minorities will have lower rates of political participation than white respondents; (H3) Respondents' lowered efficacy will result in similarly lowered political participation; (H4) Respondents who voted for Barak Obama in 2008 will have increased levels of political efficacy after the 2008 election. In the section that follows, I outline the methods used to research these hypotheses.

METHODS

Sample

My empirical analyses are based on data from the American National Election Survey's (ANES) 2008 Time-Series study. This survey is conducted through face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of eligible American voters. The Time-Series ANES is especially useful for its implementation of both pre- and post-election surveys, which allows for comparative analyses of respondents' descriptive data. In 2008, the survey was administered to over 2,000 respondents; my analyses restricted to respondents with valid responses on survey items used. Depending on the "group" analyzed (see below) samples sizes are 925 (Group A) 948 (Group B) and a total of 1873 for pooled analyses.

Number	Group	Question Phrasing	Response Phrasing	Concept	Internal/External
1	A	"Sometimes, politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."	"Agree Strongly" to "Disagree Strongly"	Complicated	Internal
2	A	"I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country"	"Agree Strongly" to "Disagree Strongly"	Understand	Internal
3	A	"Public officials don't care much what people like me think"	"Agree Strongly" to "Disagree Strongly"	Care	External
4	A	"People like me don't have any say about what the government does"	"Agree Strongly" to "Disagree Strongly"	Say	Internal
5	B	"How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can't really understand what's going on?"	"All the time" to "Never"	Complicated	Internal
6	B	"How well do you understand the important political issues facing our country?"	"Extremely Well" to "Not Well at All"	Understand	Internal
7	B	"How much do officials care what people like you think?"	"A great deal" to "Not at all"	Care	External
8	B	"How much can people like you affect what the government does?"	"A great deal" to "Not at all"	Say	Internal

Variables

Political efficacy was measured using four survey question in the ANES. The ANES randomly grouped respondents into groups A and groups B. Respondents in each group were asked slightly different versions of the four efficacy items in both the pre-and post-election

surveys. For group A the response categories ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, while for group B responses that ranged from “never” to “all of the time.”

Voting is a binary variable coded “1” for individuals who voted for president in 2008 and “0” for individuals who did not vote in 2008. *Candidate* compares individuals who voted for Obama (coded “1”) to individuals who voted for McCain (coded “0”).

Race is captured with three binary variables. *Black*, *Hispanic* and *other* each compare individuals reporting this respective racial background to white respondents. *Age* is measured in number of years. *Female* compares females (coded “1”) to males. *Married* (coded “1”) compares married respondents to all non-married respondents. *Children* is a count for the number of children each respondent has. *South* compares individuals residing in the southern United States to all other regions.

Based on the literature’s discussion of socioeconomic status’ impact on racial disparities in voting, I also controlled for the concept in some models to estimate the size of this effect. In lieu of a composite socioeconomic status variable, I used three variables that capture different elements of the broader idea: *unemployed* compares individuals who reported not having currently employment (coded “1” to individuals who were currently working. *Income* is an ordinal variable ranging from 1 “Less than \$3,000” to 25 “\$150,000 or more”). Finally, *bachelor’s degree* compares individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher to all others.

Analytic Strategy

I first present descriptive statistics for all analysis variables. Multivariate analyses proceed in three phases. First, I estimate a series of ordinal probit models for pre-election political efficacy.

Because no respondent answered all items, I present eight models, one model for each of the four efficacy items in each group. These models take the general form of:

$$y = \eta = \Phi^{-1}p(t_k < y < t_{k+1}) = B_1(\text{black}) + B_2(\text{Hispanic}) + B_3(\text{Other})\dots + B_k(k)$$

Probit models are appropriate models for ordinal variables such as the efficacy items used here. In equation 1 above, the response (y) is modeled as the inverse of the cumulative distribution function (CDF) that the respondent answered between two model derived thresholds. Essentially, the model assumes an underlying continuous trait that is captured by the ordinal measurement.

Second, I estimate logistic regression models for voting. In these models, I use conditional coding to allow for respondents from both group A and B to be include and maximize the sample size.

$$\log\left(\frac{P}{p-1}\right) = B_1(\text{black}) + B_2(\text{Hispanic}) + B_3(\text{Other}) + B_3(\text{GROUPA} * \text{PreEFFA1}) \\ + B_4(\text{GROUPB} * \text{PreEFFB1})\dots + B_k(K)$$

In equation 2 pre-election efficacy, A1 is entered as in interaction term with a binary variable (group A) that is coded “1” for individuals in group A. Similarly, pre-election efficacy B1 is entered as an interaction with a binary variable coded “1” for individuals in group B. Because individuals in group B have the value of “0” on Group A, B₃ is interpreted as the effect of efficacy 1 on voting probability among respondents in group 1. Similarly, because individuals in Group A have a value of “0” on Group B, B₄ is interpreted as the effect of political efficacy 1 on voting for

individuals in group B. All eight of the efficacy variables are entered into the logistic regressions in this manner.

The final set of multivariate models are probit models predict post-election efficacy using the candidate that individuals voted for as the primary independent variable and controlling for the corresponding time 1 efficacy measure.

$$y = \eta = \Phi^{-1} p(t_k < y > t_{k+1}) = B_1(\text{black}) + B_2(\text{Hispanic}) + B_3(\text{Other}) + B_4(\text{Obama}) \\ \dots + B_k(k)$$

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (N=1420)							
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
White	1873	0	1	.5408	--	--	--
Black	1873	0	1	.2662	--	--	--
Hispanic	1873	0	1	.1606	--	--	--
Other	1873	0	1	.0324	--	--	--
Age	1873	18	93	48.3700	16.6810	.2630	-.6500
Male	1873	0	1	.4162	--	--	--
Female	1873	0	1	.5838	--	--	--
Years of Education	1873	1	17	13.5400	2.4000	-.6360	1.3110
Household Income	1873	1	25	14.4900	5.9750	-.3490	-.4560
Not working full time	1873	0	1	.3697	--	--	--
Not married	1873	0	1	.5458	--	--	--
Number of Children	1869	0	7	.6700	1.0850	1.6420	2.1480
From the South	1873	0	1	.4690	--	--	--
Voted for President in 2008	1873	0	1	.765700	--	--	--
Voted for Obama in 2008	1423	0	1	.6535	--	--	--
Voted for McCain in 2008	1423	0	1	.3317	--	--	--
Efficacy 1	1873	1	999	504.5194	498.4403	-.0160	-2.0010
Efficacy 2	1873	1	999	506.1714	497.6405	-.0190	-2.0010
Efficacy 3	1873	1	999	506.1262	498.3386	-.0220	-2.0010
Efficacy 4	1873	1	999	506.1119	498.1356	-.0210	-2.0010
Efficacy 5	1873	1	999	497.5767	498.0879	.0140	-2.0020
Efficacy 6	1873	1	999	498.2475	498.0610	.0110	-2.0020
Efficacy 7	1873	1	999	498.8704	498.2972	.0080	-2.0020
Efficacy 8	1873	1	999	498.8355	498.1179	.0090	-2.0020

My final sample size for this project was 1420, although sample sizes for some models were smaller. Table 1 shows the range, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of the sample for each variable in question. My final sample was 54.08% white, 26.62% black, 16.06% Hispanic and 3.24% other races. 58.38% of the sample was female. The mean age of the sample was 48.42, the average number of years of education was 13.54, and the mean household income was 14.49. 36.97% of the sample was not working, and 54.58% was not married, while the mean number of children among the sample was .67. Also, 46.9% of the sample indicated that they were

from the south. 75.78% of the sample reported voting in the 2008 presidential election; 65.35% for Barak Obama, and 33.17% for John McCain. Finally, the mean value of my pre-election efficacy questions ranged from 2.31 to 3.02, while the mean of post-efficacy measures ranged from 2.55 to 3.07 that they were from the south.

Predictors of Political Efficacy

To measure the variance in efficacy perceptions explained by my set of independent variables, I ran eight regression models, each of which utilized a different time 1 efficacy measure as its dependent variable. Model 1 measured how independent variables affected whether respondents thought that government was too complicated. In this model, three of my independent variables were statistically significant: Hispanic respondents were less likely to report that government was too complicated than white respondents, and efficacy also increased with increases in education. Mean efficacy in model 1 was lower among female respondents than male respondents. The element of efficacy captured in Model 2 was whether respondents reported that they had a good understanding of political issues. In this model, both black and Hispanic respondents were statistically likely to report higher levels of efficacy than white respondents. Female respondents and respondents with more education also reported similarly. In addition, age was a statistically significant variable, and older respondents had a higher mean efficacy than younger respondents. Model 3 focused on whether respondents believed that public officials cared about what they thought, however no independent variables were found to be

Table 3: Generalized Linear Models for Pre-Efficacy Measures (N=923)

	Model 1: Efficacy 1A		Model 2: Efficacy 2A		Model 3: Efficacy 3A		Model 4: Efficacy 4A		Model 5: Efficacy 1B		Model 6: Efficacy 2B		Model 7: Efficacy 3B		Model 8: Efficacy 4B	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Black	0.071	0.0915	0.418	0.0936 *	-.023	.0899	0.099	0.0897	0.228	0.0909 *	0.305	0.0916 *	0.144	0.0908	0.585	0.0917 *
Hispanic	0.24	0.1027 *	0.247	0.1043 *	-.062	.1019	0.095	0.1017	0.074	0.095	-0.012	0.0957	0.225	0.0954 *	0.547	0.0958 *
Other	-0.032	0.1941	0.265	0.1997	.017	.1911	0.48	0.1939 *	-0.161	0.1882	-0.137	0.189	0.424	0.1897 *	0.349	0.1849
Age	-0.004	0.0026	0.011	0.0026 *	-.004	.0025	-0.003	0.0025	0.003	0.0025	0.004	0.0025 *	0.007	0.0025 *	0.001	0.0025
Female	-0.336	0.0726 *	-0.303	0.074 *	.051	.0713	0.103	0.0713	-0.155	0.0711 *	-0.149	0.0713	-0.087	0.0709	-0.028	0.0706
Education	0.081	0.0158 *	0.058	0.016 *	-.012	.0155	0.055	0.0155 *	0.091	0.0163 *	0.089	0.0164 *	0.002	0.0162	0.037	0.0162 *
Income	0.012	0.0072	0.014	0.0073	.004	.0071	0.01	0.0071	0.016	0.0073	0.01	0.0074	0.015	0.0073 *	0.014	0.0073
Not Working	0.037	0.0863	-0.036	0.0875	-.069	.0851	-0.019	0.0851	-0.004	0.0871	0.092	0.0877	0.037	0.0873	0.069	0.0868
Single	0.099	0.083	-0.067	0.0842	.015	.0817	-0.052	0.0817	-0.008	0.0803	0.036	0.0809	0.156	0.0806	0.075	0.0801
Children	-0.007	0.0346	0.022	0.0351	-.058	.0342	-0.033	0.0344	-0.002	0.0353	0.007	0.0354	0.056	0.0352	0.016	0.0352
From the South	-0.041	0.0728	-0.027	0.074	-.026	.0717	-0.008	0.0716	0.035	0.0701	0.007	0.0706	-0.044	0.0702	0.041	0.0701
<i>Threshold</i>																
1	0.311	0.2767	-0.496	0.2835	-.743	.2720 *	-0.083	0.2714	0.23	0.2747	-0.12	0.2774	-0.367	0.275	-0.171	0.2739
2	1.493	0.2791 *	0.181	0.2791	.212	.2712	0.657	0.2715 *	1.117	0.2755 *	0.777	0.2766 *	0.651	0.2763 *	0.773	0.2751 *
3	1.844	0.2804 *	0.634	0.2794 *	.600	.2716 *	0.932	0.2718 *	1.828	0.2777 *	2.08	0.2814 *	1.708	0.2787 *	1.482	0.2768 *
4	2.48	0.2848 *	2.004	0.2844 *	1.582	.2759 *	1.892	0.2756 *	3.161	0.2872 *	2.982	0.2865 *	2.209	0.2807 *	2.068	0.2783 *

*_significant at the p<.05 level

statistically significant. Model 4 measured variance in how much say respondents believed they had about what government does, and only two variables were found to be statistically significant. Respondents who identified as a part of “other” racial groups reported higher levels of “say in government”, as did respondents with more education.

Model 5 measured a similar “complicated” concept to Model 1. In this model, black respondents reported higher levels of efficacy than white respondents, and the variables for female and education behaved similarly to previous models. Model 6 also measured the “understand” concept measured in Model 2. Similar to previous models, black respondents had a higher mean efficacy than white respondents, as did older respondents and respondents with more years of education. In Model 7, which again measured whether respondents thought that public officials cared what respondents thought, four variables were found to be statistically significant. Both Hispanic respondents and respondents of other races were found to have higher mean responses for this question, as did older respondents. Income was also found to be a significant predictor of this variable, and respondents with more income were found to have higher levels of efficacy. Finally, three variables were found to be statistically significant predictors in model 8, which measured variance in respondents’ perceptions of their say in government. Both black and Hispanic respondents had higher levels of efficacy in this model than white respondents. Also respondents with more education were more likely to report more say in government affairs.

Predictors of Political Participation

I measured the effect of minority status on political participation in four logistic regression models that utilized “voted” as their dependent variable. Each model included race as its primary independent variable and also included a number of other variables to present a well-rounded understanding of the racial effect.

In addition to race, Model 1 included several control variables, including age, sex, number of children, and region. Of these variables, I found black, Hispanic, age, sex, number of children, and region to be statistically significant. Black respondents’ odds of voting were approximately 1.567 times higher than white respondents, while Hispanic respondents’ odds of voting were in fact lower—almost half that of white respondents. Among control variables, respondents’ odds of voting increased with age (odds of voting increased .018 with each additional year), sex (females

Table 4: Logistic Regression Models for Voting (N=923)

	Model 1: Race and Controls		Model 2: Race, Controls, and Efficacy		Model 3: Race, Controls, and SES		Model 4: All Variables	
	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)
Black	0.494 *	1.567	0.402 *	1.495	0.981 *	2.667	0.856 *	2.353
Hispanic	-0.469 *	0.587	-0.526 *	.591	0.006	1.006	-0.104	0.901
Other	-0.350	0.690	-0.426	.653	-0.445	0.641	-0.519	0.595
Age	0.020 *	1.018	0.020 *	1.021	0.029 *	1.029	0.029 *	1.029
Female	0.436 *	1.448	0.563 *	1.756	0.496 *	1.642	0.583 *	1.791
Education	--	--	--	--	0.254 *	1.289	0.221 *	1.247
Income	--	--	--	--	0.062 *	1.064	0.058 *	1.060
Not Working	--	--	--	--	0.132	1.142	0.121	1.129
Single	-0.627 *	0.541	-0.569 *	0.566	-0.271	0.762	-0.259	0.772
Number of Children	-0.084	0.919	-0.072	0.931	-0.067	0.935	-0.056	0.946
From the South	-0.233 *	0.786	-0.253 *	0.777	-0.180	0.836	-0.200	0.818
Efficacy 1	--	--	0.173 *	1.188	--	--	0.096	1.101
Efficacy 2	--	--	0.364 *	1.438	--	--	0.297 *	1.346
Efficacy 3	--	--	-0.087	0.917	--	--	-0.057	0.945
Efficacy 4	--	--	0.286 *	1.331	--	--	0.255 *	1.29
Efficacy 5	--	--	0.317 *	1.373	--	--	0.239 *	1.27
Efficacy 6	--	--	0.455 *	1.576	--	--	0.378 *	1.46
Efficacy 7	--	--	-0.119	0.888	--	--	-0.109	0.897
Efficacy 8	--	--	0.166 *	1.18	--	--	0.144	1.154
Control	0.607 *	0.153	-1.880 *	0.153	-4.399 *	0.012	-5.84 *	0.003

were 1.448 times more likely to vote), but decreased with the respondents' number of children (odds decreased by .81) and region of country (southern respondents' odds of voting were only 78.6% that of respondents from other regions).

In Model 2, I added my 8 efficacy measures as independent variables in addition to race and control measures. Just as in model 1, black and Hispanic variables were statistically significant predictors of voting: black respondents were 1.495 times more likely to vote than white respondents, while Hispanic respondents were only .591 times as likely. Age and sex were also statistically significant, and predicted voting similarly to the first model. Neither number of children nor region predicted voting in model 2, but marital status did: Single people had odds of voting that were 43.4% lower than their married counterparts. Additionally, several efficacy measures (measures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8) were also significant predictors of voting, and all statistically significant efficacy measures behaved in the same way. That is, increases in political efficacy among these variables all correspond with strong increases in odds of voting.

Model 3 was inspired by scholarship that attributed lowered rates of political participation among minorities to minority/white discrepancies in socioeconomic status, and therefore included additional variables to control for income, education, and occupation. Efficacy variables were not considered. In model 3, as in previous models, older respondents and female respondents were more likely to vote. Also, increases in education and income increased respondents' odds of voting by .289 and .064 respectively. Hispanic identification was no longer a significant predictor of voting behavior, but black respondents odds-ratio was even higher in this model than in models 1 and 2—in fact, black respondents were 2.667 times more likely to vote in 2008 according to this model.

Table 5: Generalized Linear Models for Post-Election Efficacy Measures (N=721)

	Model 1: Efficacy 1A		Model 2: Efficacy 2A		Model 3: Efficacy 3A		Model 4: Efficacy 4A		Model 5: Efficacy 1B		Model 6: Efficacy 2B		Model 7: Efficacy 3B		Model 8: Efficacy 4B	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Black	-0.204	0.1179	0.329	0.1233 *	-0.162	0.1155	-0.036	0.1153	-0.152	0.1168	0.023	0.1119	-0.107	0.1164	0.053	0.1177
Hispanic	-0.309	0.1322 *	0.05	0.1361	-0.045	0.1287	0.227	0.1289	-0.137	0.1198	-0.015	0.1216	0.166	0.1191	0.194	0.1198
Other	-0.493	0.2409 *	0.351	0.2489	0.282	0.2315	-0.085	0.2327	-0.383	0.2347	-0.041	0.2406	0.046	0.2331	0.13	0.231
Age	-0.005	0.0031	0.002	0.0032	3.80E-06	0.003	-0.001	0.003	-0.001	0.003	-0.001	0.0031	0	0.003	0.002	0.003
Female	-0.253	0.0864 *	-0.219	0.0901 *	-0.013	0.0837	0.072	0.0836	-0.132	0.0851	-0.251	0.0865 *	-0.051	0.0843	0.007	0.0838
Education	0.066	0.0195 *	0.048	0.0198 *	0.041	0.0188 *	0.055	0.0189 *	0.034	0.0199	0.039	0.02	0.038	0.0195	0.021	0.0195
Income	0.013	0.0087	-0.011	0.009	0.007	0.0085	0.027	0.0086 *	0	0.009	0.009	0.0091	-0.001	0.0089	0.01	0.0089
Not Working	0.001	0.1015	0.187	0.1053	-0.001	0.0998	0.175	0.1001	0.017	0.1048	0.014	0.1065	-0.005	0.1044	-0.086	0.1039
Single	0.034	0.0993	-0.085	0.1027	0.139	0.0968	0.176	0.0972	0.052	0.0969	0.063	0.0983	0.038	0.0964	-0.035	0.0957
Children	-0.031	0.0424	-0.004	0.044	-0.029	0.0416	-0.04	0.0418	0.044	0.0415	0.013	0.042	0.029	0.0411	-0.013	0.0411
South	-0.002	0.086	0.084	0.089	0.023	0.0843	-0.059	0.0841	0.073	0.0834	0.155	0.0848	0.057	0.0828	-0.078	0.0825
Obama	-0.098	0.1039	0.19	0.1079	0.204	0.1023 *	0.115	0.1025	0.045	0.0996	0.059	0.1013	0.242	0.099 *	0.317	0.0984 *
Time-1 Efficacy	0.46	0.038	0.473	0.0488	0.388	0.0357	0.398	0.0327	0.461	0.0409 *	0.672	0.0496	0.418	0.0416	0.484	0.036
Threshold																
1	0.652	0.3614	0.331	0.4046	0.7	0.361	1.393	0.3599 *	0.041	0.3613	0.643	0.3806	0.474	0.3594	0.747	0.3567 *
2	2.172	0.3662 *	1.204	0.3983 *	2.059	0.3654 *	2.48	0.3638 *	1.22	0.3606 *	1.916	0.3771 *	1.705	0.3615 *	1.987	0.3623 *
3	2.59	0.3687 *	1.652	0.3989 *	2.541	0.3684 *	2.773	0.3661 *	2.11	0.3635 *	3.63	0.3918 *	3.045	0.3716 *	2.991	0.3673 *
4	3.304	0.3762 *	3.556	0.4128 *	3.737	0.3812 *	4.066	0.3787 *	3.974	0.3853 *	4.694	0.4025 *	3.635	0.3773 *	3.577	0.3706 *

*-significant at p<.05 level

Finally, model 4 was a full model including race and efficacy variables, as well as both socioeconomic and other control variables. In this model, I found black respondents to be 2.353 times more likely to vote than white respondents. Age, education, income, and sex all behaved similarly to model 3, and there was some statistical significance among the added efficacy variables; efficacy measures 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 were all statistically significant predictors of voting, and respondents who indicated higher perceptions of political efficacy were more likely to vote.

Effect of Candidate Racial Identity

To evaluate how Obama's election affected respondents' perceptions of efficacy, 8 more probit models were run, using the eight time-2 efficacy measures as dependent variables. These were full models that included the all aforementioned independent and control variables, and also controlled for respondents' time-1 efficacy responses. The main focus of these models was to identify whether the respondents' who had voted for Barak Obama were more likely to feel increases in their perceptions of political efficacy.

Overall, statistically significant variables were less common in these models, and trends were ultimately similar to corresponding time-1 efficacy models (described above). For example, the direction of the effect of racial identity was split; both Hispanic respondents and respondents of other races had significantly lowered mean efficacy values in model 1, while black respondents reported higher levels of efficacy in model 2. Sex, education, and income were similarly found to be statistically significant: female respondents reported lower mean efficacy values in models 1, 2, and 6. Respondents with higher income levels reported higher levels of efficacy in model 4. Education was by far the most compelling independent variable in these 8 models—education had a statistically significant positive impact on respondents' efficacy perceptions in models 1, 2, 3,

and 4. Finally, respondents who voted for Barak Obama had perceptions of efficacy that were significantly higher in models 3, 7, and 8.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Racial minorities will have lower perceptions of political efficacy than white respondents. The findings from my study demonstrate a break in the theoretical causal chain that was established in the introduction of this paper. In my literature review, I discussed a series of studies that together posited lower levels of political efficacy among racial minorities, due simultaneously to negatively construed racial identities and to disparately distributed resources among different racial groups. However, my first eight probit models demonstrated that the relationship between race and political efficacy was not quite this simple. In models where racial variables were considered to be statistically significant, they positively influenced dependent efficacy variables. That is, respondents who identified as black, Hispanic, or other were often found to have mean efficacy values that were higher than their white counterparts, in direct contrast to my literature review and my related hypothesis. Thus, while I was able to reject my null hypotheses that there was no statistically significant relationship between race and political efficacy, I had to reject my substantive hypothesis that minority groups would have lower rates of political efficacy than whites.

It is perhaps unsurprising that results were inconsistent across 8 models with different dependent variables. Although I have every confidence that each efficacy measure captured some element of the concept, the various questions might be interpreted in different ways. This is particularly true for the models that used external, rather than internal concepts of efficacy, such as model 3. This model measured how independent variables affected respondents' perceptions of how much their public officials cared about what they thought, but almost no variance was explained by the model, and no coefficients were found to be statistically significant. A great deal more statistical significance was found in those models that used dependent variables measuring

internal efficacy. While this pattern is compelling, it is made less so by the imbalance between internal and external efficacy concepts that are measured by efficacy variables in the dataset.

The indirect connection between racial elements and efficacy perceptions, which was captured by control variables, sheds a little light on the complex relationship between the two concepts. Mainly, the consistent positive effect of my education variable may help to explain this unique pattern. Increases in education resulted in corresponding increases in political efficacy in all but two of my models. In fact, the only models in which this pattern was not present were Models 3 and 7, which were the only two models that used an external efficacy concept as a dependent variable. This positive association is well established in the extant literature, but the relationship may be even stronger than I had previously anticipated. I posit that my choice to control for education is what resulted in the reverse relationship of minority respondents; the uneven distribution of educational resources in the U.S. accounts for disparate levels of political efficacy. Overall, the connection between race and efficacy in my study is difficult to understand without further exploration, but it certainly seems surprising that racial groups tended to report higher efficacy perceptions than the white majority

Hypothesis 2: Racial minorities will have lower rates of political participation than white respondents. This unanticipated relationship between race and efficacy perceptions may be partly responsible for the most compelling, consistent, and surprising finding of my project, which is that black respondents were *much more likely to vote* in 2008 than any other racial group. This increased likelihood was in no way slight or gradual, but rather substantial, with odds that more than doubled in some models. This pattern is in direct opposition to the plethora of studies that posit lower rates of political behavior among minority citizens. That said, my Hispanic dummy variable was found to be significant in two of the models, in which Hispanic respondents had much

lower odds of voting than whites. However, black was a statistically significant variable with a positive coefficient in all models, which means that, while I rejected my null hypothesis that there is no statistical relationship between race and voting behavior, I also did not support my substantive hypothesis that racial minorities were less likely to vote than white respondents.

Often, contrasting literature on race and political behavior attributes lower rates of voter turnout among minority groups to spurious causes, such as lowered socioeconomic status, thus arguing that turnout rates would be different if socioeconomic status were not a factor(). Some of these studies even argue that rates of participation would increase if socioeconomic status was controlled for. According to the logic of these studies, minority respondents should have decreased political participation before socioeconomic status is accounted for, but much higher political participation once these controls are added. My series of logistic regression models demonstrates that this explanation does not properly address the observed phenomenon. Specifically, model 3 shows that black respondents had odds of voting that were over two and a half times higher than white respondents when controlling for socioeconomic status—a positive relationship predicted by the aforementioned literature. But model 1 does not control for socioeconomic status, and still shows that black respondents were much more likely to vote than white respondents.

Hypothesis 3: Respondents' lowered efficacy will result in similarly lowered political participation. These logistic regression models also yielded interesting results for my third hypothesis. A number of efficacy variables were statistically significant, and all had a positive effect on respondents' odds of voting. This was true in all models that included efficacy measures. Thus, I accept my third hypothesis that respondent perceptions of political efficacy have a positive impact on political participation. Once again, the distinction between internal and external efficacy can shed a great deal of light on those efficacy measures that were considered statistically

significant in my logistic regression models. In both models that included efficacy measures, I found almost all internal efficacy variables to be statistically significant, and they all increased respondents' odds of voting. In contrast, external efficacy variables (efficacy measures 3 and 7) were *never* found to be significant predictors of voting. This finding extends research about the positive relationship between efficacy and voting by highlighting the specific effect of internal efficacy as a factor that increases an individual's odds of voting.

Hypothesis 4: Respondents who voted for Barak Obama in 2008 will have increased levels of political efficacy after the 2008 election. It is difficult to tell from this study alone why my findings were so different from past literature, but one of the most prominent differences between this project and those reviewed in my introduction is that the 2008 election introduced a presidential candidate who shared a racial identity with vulnerable minority groups. In my various regression models, I controlled for SES, for efficacy, and for a number of other variables, but my findings seemed consistent: regardless of race, or class, or perceptions of efficacy, black citizens were determined to vote in the 2008 presidential election. That being said, my findings on the role of Obama as a candidate are much murkier. Respondents who voted for Obama were shown to have higher perceptions of political efficacy in three of my eight probit models that explored this hypothesis. Thus, I was able to reject my fourth null hypothesis, that there was no relationship between candidate choice and political efficacy. However, the level of variance explained by these eight models was relatively low, and it is difficult to tell from this analysis whether increases in time-2 efficacy were due mainly to candidate choice or to spurious factors, such as race or socioeconomic status.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationships between race, political efficacy, and political behavior by examining a “causal chain” established in the extant literature. In theory, racial minorities are bound to have lower levels of political efficacy as a result of political stigmatization and lowered access to resources such as education and income. This lowered efficacy would, in turn result in lowered levels of political participation among minority groups. However, the presence of a minority candidate (Barak Obama) in the 2008 presidential election may have affected the traditional relationship between these three concepts. To explore these connections, I tested four hypotheses: (H1) Racial minorities will have lower perceptions of political efficacy than white respondents; (H2) Racial minorities will have lower rates of political participation than white respondents; (H3) Respondents’ lowered efficacy will result in similarly lowered political participation; (H4) Respondents who voted for Barak Obama in 2008 will have increased levels of political efficacy after the 2008 election.

My findings demonstrated that the relationship between race, efficacy, and political behavior was much more complex in 2008 than past research suggests. I was only able to accept two of my four hypotheses, but rejected all four null hypotheses and found that many of my primary independent variables were statistically significant predictors of dependent variables, albeit in the opposite direction to what past literature suggested. This seems to suggest that Obama’s candidacy did indeed affect the attitudes and behaviors of minority voters, although the strength of the impact cannot be known without further research.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Mary R. 2010. "Community Psychology, Political Efficacy, and Trust." *Political Psychology* 31(1):59–84.
- Beaumont, Elizabeth. 2011. "Promoting Political Agency, Addressing Political Inequality: A Multilevel Model of Internal Political Efficacy." *The Journal of Politics* 73(01):216–31.
- BeLue, Rhonda, Kelly Taylor-Richardson, Jin-Mann Lin, Linda McClellan, and Margaret Hargreaves. n.d. "Racial Disparities in Sense of Community and Health Status:... : The Journal of Ambulatory Care Management." *LWW*. Retrieved May 22, 2015 (http://journals.lww.com/ambulatorycaremanagement/Fulltext/2006/04000/Racial_Disparities_in_Sense_of_Community_and.4.aspx).
- Block, Ray. 2011. "Backing Barack Because He's Black: Racially Motivated Voting in the 2008 Election*." *Social Science Quarterly* 92(2):423–46.
- Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin D. Gilliam Jr. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *The American Political Science Review* 84(2):377–93.
- Cassel, Carol A. and David B. Hill. 1981. "Explanations of Turnout Decline A Multivariate Test." *American Politics Research* 9(2):181–95.
- Chong, Dennis and Reuel Rogers. 2005. "Racial Solidarity and Political Participation." *Political Behavior* 27(4):347–74.
- Emig, Arthur G., Michael B. Hesse, and Samuel H. Fisher. 1996. "Black-White Differences in Political Efficacy, Trust, and Sociopolitical Participation A Critique of the Empowerment Hypothesis." *Urban Affairs Review* 32(2):264–76.
- File, Thom. 2015. *Who Votes? Congressional Elections and the American Electorate: 1978-2014*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

- Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* null(03):589–602.
- Guyton, Edith M. 1988. "Critical Thinking and Political Participation: Development and Assessment of a Causal Model." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 16(1):23–49.
- Hayes, Bernadette C. and Clive S. Bean. 1993. "Political Efficacy: A Comparative Study of the United States, West Germany, Great Britain and Australia." *European Journal of Political Research* 23(3):261–80.
- Lambert, Susan J. and Karen Hopkins. 1995. "Occupational Conditions and Workers' Sense of Community: Variations by Gender and Race." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23(2):151–79.
- Lawless, Jennifer and Richard Fox. 2012. *Men Rule: The Continued Under Representation of Women in U.S. Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Women & Politics Institute.
- Liu, Baodong, Sharon D. Wright Austin, and Byron D'Andrá Orey. 2009. "Church Attendance, Social Capital, and Black Voting Participation*." *Social Science Quarterly* 90(3):576–92.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes.'" *The Journal of Politics* 61(3):628–57.
- Mattis, Jacqueline S. et al. 2004. "Who Will Volunteer? Religiosity, Everyday Racism, and Social Participation Among African American Men." *Journal of Adult Development* 11(4):261–72.
- Milbrath, Lester W. and M. Lal Goel. 1977. *Political Participation*. New York: University Press of America.

- Niemi, Richard G., Stephen C. Craig, and Franco Mattei. 1991. "Measuring Internal Political Efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study." *American Political Science Review* 85(04):1407–13.
- Olsen, Marvin E. 1970. "Social and Political Participation of Blacks." *American Sociological Review* 35(4):682–97.
- Pasek, Josh et al. n.d. "Determinants of Turnout and Candidate Choice in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election." Retrieved May 14, 2015 (<http://poq.oxfordjournals.org>).
- Powell, G. Bingham Jr. 1986. "American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 80(01):17–43.
- Powers, John M. 2013. "Statistical Evidence of Racially Polarized Voting in the Obama Elections, and Implications for Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act." *Georgetown Law Journal* 102:881.
- Schaffner, Brian F. 2011. "Racial Salience and the Obama Vote." *Political Psychology* 32(6):963–88.
- Shingles, Richard D. 1981. "Black Consciousness and Political Participation: The Missing Link." *The American Political Science Review* 75(1):76–91.
- Steinberger, Peter J. 1981. "Social Context and Political Efficacy." *Sociology and Social Research* 65(2):129–41.
- Stokes, Atiya Kai. 2003. "Latino Group Consciousness and Political Participation." *American Politics Research* 31(4):361–78.
- Sylvester, Dari E. and Adam J. McGlynn. 2010. "The Digital Divide, Political Participation, and Place." *Social Science Computer Review* 28(1):64–74.

Teney, Celine and Laurie Hanquinet. 2012. "High Political Participation, High Social Capital? A Relational Analysis of Youth Social Capital and Political Participation." *Social Science Research* 41(5):1213–26.

Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America*. New York: Harper & Row.

ABSTRACT**EFFICACY AND VOTING IN THE OBAMA ERA**

by

CHRISTIAN GENESKY**December 2015****Advisor:** David Merolla**Major:** Sociology**Degree:** Master of Arts

In the past 50 years political science and sociological scholarship has demonstrated a consistent white-minority gap in political attitudes and behaviors. However, recent developments in the national political scene have introduced a new element that likely impacts these well-established trends, and must be taken into account: Barak Obama, an individual identifying with a minority group, ran for the office of the president of the United States. To explore the impact of Obama's presence on the political behavior of minorities, I performed a secondary data analysis of variables from both the pre-election and post-election modules of the ANES 2008 Time-Series study, and examined four hypotheses: (H1) Racial minorities will have lower perceptions of political efficacy than white respondents; (H2) Racial minorities will have lower rates of political participation than white respondents; (H3) Respondents' lowered efficacy will result in similarly lowered political participation; (H4) Respondents who voted for Barak Obama in 2008 will have increased levels of political efficacy after the 2008 election. The results are compelling: literature states that many racial differences in efficacy and voting are due to moderating factors such as differences in SES, but I've found that black citizens were in fact far more likely to vote in 2008

regardless of whether or not SES was controlled for. I've also found statistical significance in each of the relationships highlighted in my hypotheses.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Christian Genesky graduated from Central Michigan University with his B.S. in Political Science, Sociology, and Philosophy in May of 2013, and began attending Wayne State University the following August. He is an M.A. candidate in WSU's Sociology Department, and will attain his Master's Degree in December of 2013.