The National Black Election/Politics Studies: Use and Analysis, July 30 to August 3

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Overall Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is twofold. First, it is to increase awareness of the rich complex national surveys of Black Americans collected by scholars directly or indirectly affiliated with the Program for Research on Black Americans, University of Michigan. Second, it is to provide scholars with opportunities to construct their own measures of black common fate or linked fate, black nationalistic sentiments, black church culture and civic engagement. By conducting exploratory data analysis, scholars will have a brief glimpse of the interrelatedness of key measurement constructs across the data sets. This will provide workshop participants with clues about the key scientific questions driving the principal investigators of these studies. Equally important, scholars will have opportunities to consider the degree to which the format of the surveys, question wording, ordering of items, race of the interviewer, length of a particular survey or response rates influences answers provided by respondents. The instructor will provide participants with tables showing prior published work utilizing measures of common fate, linked fate, black nationalistic sentiments, and black political church culture. Considerable time will be devoted to constructing reliable and valid measures of common fate and black nationalistic sentiments, as well as a black church culture. Participants will be afforded time to explore how race or ethnicity influences the relative influence that common fate, black nationalistic sentiments, and political church culture have on the political thinking of Asian, Black, Hispanic and White respondents. Attendees will also explore, to a limited degree, the influence that emotions may have in fostering a strong sense of racial solidarity or common fate among Black American respondents. Finally, guest lecturers, such as Patricia and Jerry Gurin, Katherine Tate, Todd Shaw, Robert Brown, Khari Brown and Vincent Hutchings will enhance workshop participants’ knowledge of the scholarly contribution of particular national surveys.

Methodology and Analysis

The workshop will utilize six national surveys of Black Americans and two national surveys of the American electorate. Workshop attendees will utilize Stata, or where appropriate SPSS, to examine frequencies, construct measures, explore measures of association, construct multivariate models, and determine factor scores.

Schedule

July 30th
The morning session

The class begins with a concise overview of the historical and empirical questions that serve as the foundation for the development of the national surveys of black public opinion conducted by the Program for Research on Black Americans. Researchers will be exposed systematically to the overall designs of the following surveys: a) 1980 National Survey of Black Americans; b) 1984 National Black Election Study; c) 1993-94 National Black Politics Study, d) the 1996 National Black Election Study, and e) the 2004 National Politics Study. The workshop will devote some time to discussing key issues such as survey formats, response rates, incentive pay, expressed interest in surveys among respondents, race, or perceived race of the interviewers, and length of the survey instruments. The instructor will provide workshop scholars with information about the various samples’ representativeness or potential bias.

In addition, the morning session will focus on similarity and differences across surveys on measures of black common fate and black nationalistic sentiments. The instructor will show indicators of black racial common fate and black nationalistic sentiments located within the 1972, 1984, 2004 and 2008 National Election Studies. Participants will thus gain a deeper appreciation of the intellectual interest at the University of Michigan for investigating black group consciousness, as well as how the scholarly understanding of this concept has evolved in survey research.

July 30th

The afternoon session

Participants will be provided with information about the measurement of black common fate and black nationalistic sentiments by Gurin et al (1989), Dawson (2001), Shaw and Brown (2002) and Davis and Brown (2002). Probing for possible influences that question wording or response categories might have on responses to questions is an exercise in the morning session. The instructor will provide some insight into how to think about this particular issue. The instructor will focus on the evolution of measures of common fate identity across the various surveys. Participants will attempt to use similar variables across the various studies to construct reliable and valid measures of racial common fate and black nationalistic sentiments. Scholars will explore the possible influence that demographic forces and survey characteristics have on respondents’ thinking about common fate and black nationalistic sentiments.

Emeritus Professors Patricia Gurin and Jerry Gurin may provide some insight about the importance of doing work on black politics; both were instrumental in establishing the foundation for the empirical study of black politics.

July 31st

The morning session

Students will continue their work on black common fate and black nationalism by exploring the interrelationships between black common fate, black nationalism, perceptions of black
descriptive representation, and support for public policies that increase black political power. We will focus exclusively on the 1996 National Election Studies to examine, specifically, the relative influence that black common fate and black nationalism have on support for race-based public policies, as well as for support of black majority districts. We will spend some time discussing the degree to which some items in the survey are tapping preferences for race-based public policies, or support for a democratic order that seeks to eradicate a racial order.

July 31st
The afternoon session

Scholars will explore the relative influence that black common fate, black nationalism, survey characteristics, demographic information, organizational membership, partisanship, and race of representative have on either political knowledge and political trust or civic engagement in the 1996 National Election Study. We will also explore differences in the pre-election and post election surveys.

Professor Katherine Tate will speak about her initial involvement in the 1984 National Black Election Study, the 1996 National Election Study, and her new research project.

August 1st
The morning session

Workshop attendees will utilize the 2004 National Politics Study to first explore how survey characteristics might influence respondent answers to questions about racial common fate. Secondly, scholars will explore the influence that race or ethnicity has on measures of racial common fate among Blacks, Whites, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Secondly, attendees will explore the relative association that racial common fate has on perceptions of closeness to out-group members, beliefs about systematic discrimination, and American identity.

The afternoon session

Participants will utilize the 2004 and 2008 National Election Studies to explore the influence that racial common fate has on perceptions of out-groups, closeness to out-groups, beliefs about systematic discrimination and American identity.

Professor Todd Shaw and Robert Brown are featured guest speakers in the afternoon session; we will focus on their intellectual contribution to the 1993-94 National Politics Study, and discuss their ideas regarding the measurement of racial common fate and black nationalistic sentiments.

August 2nd
The morning session
The morning session will utilize the 2004 National Politics Study to explore the influence that racial common fate, closeness to out-groups, and religiosity have on the evaluation of the Bush Administration, and the suspension of civil liberties. We will also explore the possible influence that question wording, date of the survey, and placement of questions about President Bush have on respondent answers. Particular attention is devoted to exploring the relative differences and similarities in the descriptive multivariate models of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White self-identified respondents in the survey.

Professor Khari Brown is a featured guest speaker that will explore these relationships during the morning session.

**The afternoon session**

The afternoon session, utilizing the 2004 National Politics Study compares Asian, Blacks, Hispanic and White self-identified respondents, to determine the roles that racial common fate and church political culture have on beliefs about intergroup cooperation and conflict.

Professor Vince Hutchings is the guest speaker in the class.

**August 3rd**

**The morning session**

Workshop attendees will utilize the 2004 National Politics Study to explore the relative influence that racial common fate, church political culture, partisanship, and membership in a civil rights organization have on political knowledge and political trust.

**The afternoon session**

Workshop attendees will utilize the 2004 National Politics Study to explore the relative influence that racial common fate, church political culture, partisanship, and membership in a civil rights organization have on political activism. Attendees will compare the relative influence of group-based resources on the civic engagement of survey respondents.