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The black church and political mobilization of African Americans

Misty Noel Johnson
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

THE BLACK CHURCH AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF AFRICAN AMERCIANS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the political and social activities of black church congregations within a southern community by assessing the effectiveness of three churches in mobilizing their congregations and serving as channels for political communication. The study pays particular attention to the differences between affiliations within the black church, the influence of religious leaders on political involvement, attitudes regarding political involvement and political influences outside of the church.

The thesis begins by placing the black church in its historical context —as a giver of spiritual and community orientation as well as a social and political mobilization agent. Using survey results from Catholic and Protestant congregations, it then considers how members of the Black Church acquire their political information, their political activity and whether members feel that their religious leaders are politically influential. Interviews with religious leaders will also consider if his or her beliefs and motivations equal those of the congregation. The results reveal that while there are variations across congregations, the black church is still politically important today.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Justification for the Study

Since the black church was established in 1774 as the center of social, economic, spiritual and political growth, there has been support on its potential for political mobilization (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). Historically, churches in the African American community have been connected to politics because of slavery and segregation (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Nelsen & Nelsen, 1975). Because African Americans were prohibited from developing or participating in American mainstream institutions the church became the channel for all of social activity in the black community (Frazier, 1964). The church was one of the first independent institutions organized by Africans in the Americas during and after slavery (Gadzekpo, 2001; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).Born out of struggle and oppression, it has been the center for religious practices as well as social and political activity. Basic skills, such as reading and writing, as well as the cultivation of a world view were all provided by the black church (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

The black church, while providing spiritual freedom, has been involved in significant movements for social and political freedom (Mitchell, 2004). Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, African Americans were not permitted to organize for fear of insurrection and rebellion by their white slave owners (Meshack, 1976). There was the outlawing of African ritual dancing, complex drumming codes as communication and medical practices, a knowledge that many slaves brought with them to America (Mitchell, 2004). White Christians attempted to convince blacks that slavery was a divinely-sanctioned institution and that eternal salvation would be a slave's reward for obedience. But even with exposing slaves to their own religious practices, whites

became increasingly antagonistic because of fear of conspiracy. In response to the restriction of their freedom to congregate, slaves established an "invisible institution" as coined by E. Franklin Frazier, for the practice and experience of religion (Frazier, 1963; Calhoun-Brown, 1996).

Due to slavery and segregation limiting the freedoms of African Americans, black denominations were eventually formed and established separately from their white counterparts (Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Sherkat & Ellison, 1991). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, major efforts of evangelical outreach by white missionary Methodists and Baptists led to a dramatic increase of both forms of Protestant faith among blacks (Hunt & Hunt, 2001). Meanwhile, white Christians didn't treat black Christians equally, requiring them to sit on one side of the sanctuary and against the wall (Montgomery, 1993), so free blacks established separate black churches in the North due to the discrimination African Americans faced in predominantly white churches. The first Negro Baptist Church in America was established in Silver Bluff, South Carolina, between 1773 and 1775 (McKinney, 1971). McKinney suggests that the Baptist and Methodist churches had the most appeal to the freedmen because of their simpler service and highly emotional expression. The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, one of the first black churches in the country, opened its doors on July 17, 1794, after seceding from St. George Methodist church in Philadelphia (McKinney, 1971). The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church developed from a congregation formed by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, a group of Philadelphia-area slaves and former slaves who withdrew in 1787 from St. Georges's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia because of discrimination (McKinney, 1970; Sherkat & Ellison, 1991;). The African

Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E.Z.) Church was established in 1820 by James Varick in New York City, who withdrew from the John Street Methodist church; among its members were Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth—all political leaders of their day (McKinney, 1971). Also, William J. Seymour founded Pentecostalism, the only black denomination that didn't originate from a white denomination (Gadzekpo, 2001). Therefore, seven major historically black denominations grew out of the withdrawal of black Christians from white Christian denominations (Gadzekpo, 2001).

Even though there are several denomination, black churches are considered a single institution because they are united by their cultural, historical, social, and spiritual history of fighting racism. They are also united by uplifting the members of their congregation, community and race. During and after slavery, the black church became the base or "safe haven" for religious, social and political activity (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

1.2 Political Behavior and the Black Church

During segregation, the institution increased the power of the group by mobilizing the community towards insisting upon equal rights (Gadzekpo, 2001,). Its social and communication networks provided members with social capital--the tools necessary to be able to coordinate political activities in the black community (Harris, 1993). It is one of the few institutions in the black community that is built, financed and controlled by African Americans (Frazier, 1974; Nelsen & Nelsen, 1975). Because of this, the black church held a unique institutional and political position as an integral part in the black community's development and progress.

Due to the black church's prominent position in the community, well-known black religious leaders throughout history have been able to build a sense of community and group identity as well. This was apparent during the Civil Rights Movement (Gadzekpo, 2001). During this time, the black church's influence increased and its leaders became important politically. Prominent figures such as the Revs. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson and Ralph Abernathy, are a few examples of religious leaders in the black community who became politically active because of their church affiliation (Gadzekpo, 2001; Jelen, 2001). Through the activism of these leaders, the black church became an institution of hope, faith and unity for African Americans.

However, there are several issues that could potentially affect the political and social influence of today's black churches. After the end of segregation, more integrated communities allow for smaller black communities, which could possibly diminish the centrality of the black church Black-on-black crime and the economic disparity that exists between the members of the middle and lower classes of the black community have created a discord within the walls of black religious institutions. The challenge for the churches with predominantly middle and working class is to effectively reach out to the deprived and disadvantaged members of the community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990) and address the conflicts and divisions that exist in the black community.

1.3 Communication Research and the Black Church

A segregated society contributed to the black church's dominant role. The connection between black churches and voters has long been exploited by both major political parties seeking to influence African Americans (Brown & Brown, 2000). The church has been viewed as central for political mobilization in the black community by

researchers, major political parties and others (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). During election campaigns, many political candidates will visit prominent black churches to court the black vote. But only recently have studies suggested the significance of black churches as important political and social entities in the black community (Calhoun-Brown, 2001).

Scholarly research has focused on the political behavior and attitudes of African Americans and the black church (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). Researchers have found that black churches are significantly more active than white churches in partisan politics (i.e., more likely to endorse an electoral candidate or political party), voter registration drives and campaigns to raise public awareness of disease such as AIDS (Losh et al., 1994). It has been demonstrated that group consciousness led by spirituality contributes to political participation in African Americans (Dawson et. al., 1990). Also, there is a positive relationship between members attending a church, political participation and political activity (Calhoun-Brown, 2001; Wilcox, 1990). Studies have shown that religious involvement increases citizen's level of political participation and churches have been given credit for teaching democratic norms, civic skills and political recruitment (Verba, 1995; Walton, 1985). These findings suggest that scholars viewed the church as an elemental unit of political mobilization in the black community (Calhoun-Brown, 2001).

It is important to examine the political activities of today's black church congregations and to measure its effectiveness as a politically mobilizing force. With the many competing outlets of communication that exist today, its important to consider the black church's ability to focus and mobilize on issues such as crime, poverty and breakdown of the family unit and community. It is also significant to examine the individual political participation among African Americans in the black church and the

church as an effective political communication channel. This study is both timely and important for determining the mobilizing potential of the black church to communicate to a large audience. Currently, issues have arisen that deal with religious ideology infusing and mixing into politics. Questions about how members of the black church obtain political information, formulate opinions, process political messages, develop politically motivating factors and behave politically, need to be addressed.

The outcome of this research will help examine the political importance of black churches, and to assess if religious leaders shape the opinions and values of their congregation and mobilize members towards political action. This is of interest to political leaders, community leaders, activists, educators and mass communicators who need to communicate their agendas to the black community.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 History of the Black Church as a Mobilizer

From its inception, the pre-civil war black church was a foundation of power, protest and action. This was the early marks of the black church's uniqueness (Robert, 1980. Religion became a metaphor for freedom, salvation, community and activism. Researchers suggest that Christianity offered a social solidarity to these slaves, since practically all their African religious practices were not allowed to be perpetuated, and salvation was equated with freedom from slavery (Roberts, 1980). The church was used for covert activities such as Underground Railroad stops for abolitionists, transporting 80,000 people into free states (Morrison, 2003). Churches were also used for meeting places to plot slave uprisings, since religious meetings were the only types of gatherings permitted among slaves.

Believing that they were divinely called to lead their people to freedom, many religious slaves, ex-slaves and free men organized their communities with the "invisible institution." These religious leaders led uprisings against white landowners. Leaders such as Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet inspired rebellions against the injustices occurring during this period. Research by Wilmore (1998) suggests that in the Bible, stories of oppression that the slaves learned to read and interpret fueled a revolutionary spirit. White slave-owners feared the insurrections of slaves, and some thought, as Wilmore suggests, that without the Methodist and Quaker missionaries, blacks would not have becomes so infected with the fever for revolt. In the 1800's, Christian slaves such as Gabriel Prosser were believed by their peers to be divinely sanctioned to lead their people from the bonds of slavery. These highly religious

leaders who were activists/radicalists believed it to be their calling to lead their people in a movement towards freedom (Wilmore, 1998).

Churches have a history of playing an important role in cultivating and directing political action among African Americans (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). There was a concept to cultivate "group power" in the black community. "Group power," as perceived by Robert Bierstedt, comes from numbers or size of the group, the degree of the group's social organization, and the amount and types of resources available to the group (as cited in Blackwell, 1975). During the Civil Rights Movement, no other black institution in America had the mobilizing potential or as extensive a constituency as the black church, with its national institutional network and access to organizational and institutional resources (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Therefore, this "group power" structure has elevated the black church as a politically functional entity.

Several researchers use a social capital model to explain the phenomenon of African American churchgoers being more politically active than African American non-churchgoers (Brown & Brown, 2003). The social capital model explains how individuals become aware of information and opportunities that are beneficial to the group, which increases social trust and mutual obligation to those who share a common outlook. It is suggested by Brown and Brown (2000) that being involved in social networks increases a person's awareness of information and opportunities that are beneficial to the group, thereby increasing social trust and mutual obligation to individuals who share a common religious outlook. Also, because many African Americans do not have high-income jobs or associations comparable to whites, church involvement becomes an important means of civic development (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

The development of black secular organizations connected to the black church allowed for the development of other affiliations for African Americans to be politically active. Social organizations like black fraternities and sororities, the National Urban League and the NAACP (founded in 1909 after the Springfield, Illinois race riot) created more secular outlets of social and political mobility. A positive aspect of these particular organizations is that many are based on Christian principles, linking them to the black church. Active members and leaders in these organizations were usually active in the church, creating group norms and attitudes. The NAACP was developed as a means by which black churches and black church people of different denominations could engage themselves in political issues (Baugh, 1993). This organization called for black enfranchisement, educational opportunities, desegregation and racial equality. Before these secular organizations appeared, organizations within the church--Sunday school, men's groups, women's groups, and youth groups--served as a social group outside of worship.

2.2 Public Relations Tactics for the Black Church

Striving for equal social and economic opportunity in the United States, the black church underwent theological and ideological changes, establishing itself as a conscious community and strategic communication channel (West, 1982; Wuthnow, 1988). The institution that was once "invisible" became a major political player in the fight for civil rights. Secular groups derived from the membership of the black church such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Congress of Racial Equality strategically conducted social protests and acts of political

activism. These acts included sit-ins, boycotts, picketing, etc. led by ministers and civic leaders (Hartford, 1999-2006, Morris 1984). The black church gave the movement an ideological framework where collective consciousness supported collective action (Gadzekpo, 2001).

Mass media played an integral part in making America aware of the poor treatment received by African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. Many churches and various other organizations led the charge to influence the public through marches and boycotts to educate the world about the injustices that were taking place in America to African Americans during this period of change (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). *Reporting Civil Rights* recounts examples of how the action and heroism of black leaders were brought home to Americans through newspaper, and later, television reports as their peaceful marches and demonstrations were violently attacked by law enforcement officers armed with batons, bullwhips, fire hoses, and police dogs.

2.3 The Black Clergy as Leaders

As time progressed, there was an increase in the amount of black clergy and black church leaders among elected officials (Gadzekpo, 2001). Traditionally, the black clergy were some of the most educated and articulate people of the community and were natural leaders. People looked to them for leadership, not just in religious matters, but in all areas of life (McKinney, 1971). The Baptist denomination allowed for the greatest amount of freedom in the establishment of churches and the qualifying of ministers than the Catholic Church with its complicated, hierarchical structure. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) describe how the speaking style of black politicians has been influenced by the cadence, repetition and rhythmic delivery of the black preacher. Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr., a Baptist pastor and prominent figure for the civil rights movement, was propelled

into international prominence as the elected leader of the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference. The SCLC as well as several other civil rights activist organizations staged

a series of strategically conducted social protests and political activism, sit-ins, boycotts,

and picketing, called by ministers and civic leaders to promote the nonviolent campaign

for freedom and equality (Morris, 1984). Dr. King rallied with his sermon-like speeches.

Many African American leaders sprung from the ranks of the black church,

beginning their political constituency with their congregation and district. During the

Civil Rights movement, other religious leaders like Adam Clayton Powell and E.L.

Franklin encouraged their congregations to protest unfair treatment such as the denying

of African Americans their voting rights (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Rev. Jesse

Jackson's presidential "candidacy was based on the legitimacy of African American

ministers as political leaders and on the centrality of the African American church as a

facilitator of popular mobilization in the black community" (Calhoun-Brown, 2001, p.

936). By 1982, when the Voting Rights Act came under scrutiny, Rev. Jackson built a

strong African American constituent base from his reputation in the realm of the black

church (Gadzekpo, 2001).

Many pastors of African American churches allow for political messages to

influence their congregation. Studies have shown that high levels of attendance at

politically active churches made African Americans more politically active, primarily

where the congregation heard political announcements and religious messages about

political issues (Brown & Brown, 2003; Tate, 1993). These churches encourage

members to be politically active (Brown & Brown, 2003). Vedlitz, Alston and Pinkele

(1980) suggest that the black church's significance in politics was because of the religious leader's role as political middleman and eventually, more secular social and political institutions placed the religious leaders as primary political cue givers.

2.4 Alternative Views to the Effectiveness of the Black Church

There are several studies that argue that the black church is not an effective mobilizer of the black community. Researchers argue that the black church does not mobilize its congregation, but rather gives them "otherwordly solace for temporal ills" and causes "political quietism" (Frazier, 1974; Lane, 1959; Myrdal, 1944; Reed, 1986). According to some researchers, many black churches have chosen to focus more on religious affairs (Frazier, 1963; Nelson, 1988). Also, in a study by McRoberts (2003), he discusses religious differences and distinguishes between churches like Protestants, who are generally more outward focusing, and Pentecostals who are more inwardly-focusing. Instead of agitating for social change or working toward equality of opportunity, black Pentecostals tended to establish closed communities (McRoberts, 2003).

In every election or movement, Calhoun-Brown (2001) states that the relationship between African Americans and their churches is assumed to lead to political support among congregants to candidates and issues that positively impact the position or influence of African Americans in society. Previous research by Calhoun-Brown (1996) suggests that church attendance is positively related to voting. However, other scholars have found that, "simply attending church does not provide enough social capital resources to propel blacks into voting and nonvoting political activities. In fact, Brown and Brown (2003) note that since few individuals select churches for political reasons and since most churches are involved in low-cost political activities like having

candidates speak during election cycles, simply attending church will not increase involvement in political campaigns, disruptive politics or lobbying efforts. Rather, it is largely those churches that have a culture where members are exposed to political discussions and are encouraged to be activists, that lead to black political engagement (Brown & Brown, 2003).

Another assumption is the reference to all black congregations as the "black church" because of its history, however, changes in society and differences between denominations have brought opposing arguments over the direction of the black church and whether it is a single institution. There has been a recent decline in the activity of major civil rights organizations since segregation ended in the 1960's (Meier & Rudwick, 1975) but there has been a growing sophistication and awareness of the African American voter who can operate politically outside of churches. (Verba & Nie, 1972). Vedlitz, Alston and Pinkele (1980) state that with the growth of black political activity, black religious leaders lost some political influence as other black activists were able to develop their own secular power bases. Studies also suggest that the black church is mentioned less as a political force and now, black leaders seem less affiliated with the church (Vedlitz, Alston & Pinkele, 1980).

There are many studies concerning the process of secularization in black communities diminishing the influence of religion and eroding the central importance of black churches (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). According to Frazier (1963), many black churches have withdrawn from larger community activities to focus more on religious affairs. These inactive church leaders suggest that time is better spent helping the poor, and supporting the spiritual activities of the church (Morrison, 2003). These studies

suggest that the political momentum once exhibited during the Civil Rights Movement has waned.

2.5 The Black Church and the Need for Public Relations

To continue with the tradition of political mobilization in the black church, retention and recruitment are important issues in its survival. Public relations is the management function that examines attitudes and policies of an organization and then plans and executes action to earn acceptance (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000).   There is a "growing impatience with traditional theology and organizational styles of major black denominations" (Sherkat & Ellison, 1991). Historically, the segregated black church was largely Baptist and Methodist congregations in the rural South (Hunt & Hunt, 2000), but some believe that secular gains and political mobilization have led blacks from Baptist and Methodist churches (Frazier, 1964). Some believe that the black church has responded to increasing secular concerns among its congregation and retained membership (Lincoln, 1974).

Sherkat (1998) investigated the difficulty that secularized religious groups have in teaching young people to develop a preference for religious satisfaction rather than worldly satisfaction. Whether these young professionals will join and support the historic black churches, as their parents did, may depend upon how the clergy and the churches respond (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The challenge is for the new predominantly middle and working class black church to effectively reach out and address the conflicts and divisions that exist between denominations and theological ideology in the black community. (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

A recent change in American religion is the emergence of the megachurch. Social scientists define a megachurch as a congregation of more than 3000 members. Although African Americans comprise 12 percent of the population, they constitute 25 percent of its megachurch congregations (Thumma, 1996). These churches boast many ministries and resources for its members, however, they have "obscured the older traditions on which they are built and the deeper networks in which they are embedded—traditions and networks that have historically nurtured and challenged American religious culture" (Gilkes, 1998, p. 102).

2.6 Social Change Pressures

The black church has increasingly been met with the challenge of an ever-evolving community. This evolution includes an increase in economic and educational community along with the schism between middle class and lower class African Americans. These "change pressures," a term used by Cutlip, Center and Broom affect and change organization-publics (2000). If the organizations do not change, then old relationships with their publics become dysfunctional because the old ways become inappropriate to the new circumstances. The black church must understand the needs of its members and adjust to changes in the social conditions. Public relations keeps organizational relations together with the mutual interest and goals of organizations and their publics. The changing conditions of the black community and how it may be transforming the role of the black church is an issue that researchers have been exploring (Calhoun-Brown, 2001; Chaves & Higgins, 1992; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990;).

Research by Barnes (2005) examines the role of the black church as a change agent and how it uses patterns strategies to address social problems in the black

community. "Patterns emerges by which a specific set of devices from the black church tradition – prayer, singing, preaching, scripture and collective worship – are used to garner support and involvement in programs to bring about tangible change" (p.972). Barnes' suggest that the black church culture is a conduit between commonly-held beliefs, rituals and experiences among African Americans and their plans to address pressing social problems.

The black church was once the incubator for most of the economic, educational, and professional advancement in the Black community, but there has become a considerable schism within these communities. African American religious practices were constrained to segregated churches and were isolated from broader public institutions, there was an increased reliance on the church and spiritual beliefs as well as an increase in church participation (Hunt & Hunt, 2001). This is described as the "ethnic community model" by scholars, in which the role of the church enhanced self-worth, and built community through a sense of group identity and collective interest (Taylor, Thorton & Chatters, 1988). Calhoun-Brown (2001) states, as more avenues of opportunities opened to African Americans, the parallel society that the church provided was needed less and less. The opening up of educational, social and financial opportunities since the Civil Rights Movement has increased socioeconomic diversity among African-Americans but now the Black middle-class who benefited from those opportunities is moving further away from its poorer underclass both geographically and socially (Meshack, 1976). Many years ago, W.E.B. Dubois proposed the concept of the "Talented Tenth," the African American elite who would become leaders and models for the larger black community (Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs, 2006). In "The Future

of the Race" by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West (1977), they suggest that the elite have to "accept [their] historical responsibility and live King's credo that none of us is free until each of us is free."

The effort to revitalize the black community from within as W.E.B. Dubois envisioned developed into a different reality. Many members of the black middle class have joined elite black churches to interact with other likeminded African-Americans. Meanwhile, there is large growing sector of underclass black youth, particularly males, that have minimal contact with black churches and clergy (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The increasing levels of economic polarization among black communities and the economic context of inner-city neighborhoods that have been affecting African American churches and their influence (Alex-Assensoh & Assensoh, 2001). Scholars like Gadzekpo (2001) state that the ability of the black church to motivate and encourage middle-class African Americans to participate in the rejuvenation of the society is very important in the future of the black community.

There are a large number of young black males that are inactive in the church, and there are an equally large number of black males in jail (Gates & West, 1997). According to a 2002 Justice Policy Institute report, there were an estimated 791,600 African-American men in prison and 603,000 in higher education (New York Amsterdam News, 2002). This is a sharp increase from five years ago, and now one in three African American men in their 20's and is in jail, prison, on probation or on parole. And nationally, about 1.4 million black men can't vote because of felon disenfranchisement laws (Jones, 2005). Three-quarters of all disenfranchised felons are no longer in prison.

As a result, black communities will continue to face difficulties influencing public policies and funding from declining political power of numbers.

Nearly a quarter of all African Americans suffer from poverty ("The Other America," 2005). In a study by Cohen and Dawson (1993), the study suggested that African Americans who lived in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty were less likely to attend church and also harbored civic attitudes that were different from other African Americans." The study suggests that they were less politically engaged, less involved in organizational activities and less likely to participate in political activities. Scholars have stated that it is the black church that plays the dominant role in socialization in the black community (Walton, 1985), so those in the black community who are less likely to attend church will not benefit from the social capital church attendance provides.

Another influence in the black community that competes with the social capital churches provide is popular culture. Beginning in the 1970's, Black popular music became a new influential medium for political commentary, providing competition for the black church as a catalyst. Society's new popular culture, which has emphasis on conflicting values of the church--moral relativism, materialism and secularism--has also contributed to the diminishing power of the black church by increasing the focus on one's individual success. Much of what comes across in the media concerning African Americans is the hip hop generation's propensity toward wealth and vices (Mahiri & Conner, 2003). The core narratives of "gansta" rap glamorize violence, material consumption, misogyny, and sexual transgression. Stewart's study notes that because anthropologists argue that music plays a functional role in early human development by

facilitating the transmission and retention of information necessary for survival, political commentary in music is a powerful tool that can assist in organizing communities. Stewart's study also notes that many hip hop moguls of today seem oriented towards the pursuit of profit with less concern for social and political content of their products. This possible process of secularization in black communities could be diminishing the influence of religion and eroding the central importance of black churches (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

The end of segregation in residential areas also diminished the black church's physical centrality. Before 1960, African Americans were restricted from living in predominantly white neighborhoods. After adjusting for income and educational differences, racial segregation has been a reality between races for many years in America (Bickford, 2003). Regardless of socioeconomic status, whites tend to live in the suburban areas, while blacks disproportionately inhabit the cities (Bickford, 2003). This trend due to the large urban influx of ethnic minorities, largely Southern blacks, who migrated to the cities seeking employment in wartime factories (Bickford, 2003). As a result, black churches were physically centralized in black communities around the country. After the 1960's where neighborhoods became more desegregated, there was the appearance of a more integrated community. And in recent years, neighborhoods around the country have become increasingly more racially diverse. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) report that some of the elite middle-class black congregations have moved to the suburbs or metropolitan areas and black churches formed in the new black suburban areas are far removed from the inner-city communities lacking a political voice and community infrastructure.

AIDS is another issue negatively affecting the black community that needs to be addressed. From 2000 to 2003, the number of new reported AIDS eases increased 35.6% in the Deep South (Reif, Geonnotti, & Whetten, 2006). In 2000, African Americans made up 13 percent of the population but represented 45 percent of the reported AIDS cases in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2002). The root of the problem is poverty, inadequate health care and a lack of information about safe sex (Reif, Geonnotti, & Whetten, 2006). The problem is that there are African Americans living with AIDS who feel alienated from African American religious congregations (Miller, 2007). These persons experience various homophobic and AIDS-phobic messages that increase their feelings of stigma and castigation (Lima, Lo Presto, Sherman, & Sobelman, 1993), diminish their religious identity, and threaten the loss of cultural and historical resources unique to African American congregations (Miller, 2000).

Black identification has changed in recent years. Jayson (2006) reports that, in the 2000 Census, people were given the option of selecting more than one racial category and more than 6.8 million people, 2.4% of the total U.S. population, indicated a mixed ethnic heritage. The rapid growth of multiracial category may also affect the influence and centrality of the black church because of shift in traditional group identification. A century ago, America enforced and required racial segregation. And traditionally, the "one-drop" rule, made popular during this time, placed all persons with any percentage of African descent into one large category. As a result, those with any African descent were forced to either identify with the black culture or "pass" for white.

2.7 Political Communication in Today's Black Church

Several studies of political mobilization consider the influence of political

discussion in churches (Brown, 2001; Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris 1999). Political

communication, as defined by the American Political Science Association, encompasses

the creation, shaping, dissemination, processing and effects of political information.

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) argue that the black church is far from an anti-political

agency. The history and sociology of black churches indicate that they have played a

very significant role in politics in the past and in the present and will most likely do so in

the future. Research by Brown (2001) showed that church political discourse increased

respondents' political participation levels and included respondents' reports of hearing

political discussions in church, recollection of local leader speaking during service.

Vedlitz, Alston and Pinkele (1980) suggest that the church's significance in politics was

"due to the black religious leader's role as political middleman and, with the passage of

time, more secular social and political institutions placed the religious leaders as "chief

political cue givers." The black church can also serve as a forum for the discussion of

important issues (Morris, 1984). A study by Fitzgerald and Spohn (2005) looks at

political communication within churches to see if it motivates political participation.

Their findings conclude that the church serves as a channel of political messages and

exposure to opportunities for protest only for those black Americans with relatively low

educational achievement and organizational involvement.

2.8   Does Religion Matter?

The black church has been historically linked to two major Protestant

denominations: The Baptists and the Methodists. "In the eighteenth and

nineteenth century, major efforts of evangelical outreach by proselytizing Methodists and Baptists led to a dramatic increase of both forms of Protestant faith among blacks—this legacy continues today; approximately six of every ten African Americans identify themselves as Baptist or Methodist" (Hunt & Hunt, 2000). In a study by Sherkat (2001), he states that "Formerly sectarian African-American groups [Methodists and Baptists] have undergone a radical transformation of message and measure."

Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) suggest that Catholic and Protestant churches have political behavioral differences. Denomination might prove to be a factor because Catholic and Protestant churches develop different levels of civic skills through their associational membership and experiences in church (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Catholics are less likely to receive civic training through their churches and Verba et al. (1995) states that church membership in the black community, which is mostly Non-Catholic, explains why African Americans have greater participation rates than would be expected given their socioeconomic resources. Also, in a study about political differences between denominations, Patterson (2004) states that "Catholics and Protestants differ in a number of basic beliefs and practices regarding their faith, such as levels of church attendance, amount of time spent in prayer and Bible reading, and on a variety of specific items of doctrine such as the authority of scripture, belief in hell and the devil, and the role of clergy" (p. 347). McKinney (1971) stated that blacks have different reasons for joining the Catholic church, mainly enhancing their economic status, the educational quality of parochial schools and mixing racially. The Catholic Church, because it is one of the more hierarchically structured denominations—meaning the

leadership is not decided on by the congregation--is less likely to foster civic involvement among parishioners than most decentralized and democratic denominations with which most black are affiliated (Harris, 1995; Verba et al., 1993). Research has shown that less hierarchical (Non Catholic) denominations encourage more community action as far as civic and social engagement (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1993).

From 1985 to 1990, black Catholics grew from 990,000 to close to two million members, stemming from Caribbean immigrants and black elite seeking parochial educational alternatives to urban public school systems (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990), however, in 1991, the General Social Survey reported that only between seven and eight percent of blacks identify themselves as Catholic (Feigelman et al., 1991). According to the Black National Catholic Conference, the African American population is today 12 percent of the total U.S. population, and it is and always has been overwhelmingly Protestant. Blacks are now about three percent of the total Catholic population (Barna Group, 2004). Today a century later, the Black Catholic population in the United States is somewhere between two million and two and a half million. As a standard of comparison, there are about eleven million members in the two Black Baptist Conventions, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. and the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. The Church of God in Christ, Inc. has about five and a half million. The African Methodist Episcopal Church numbers some three and a half million and the AME Zion Church has a million two hundred thousand members. Black Catholics are about fifth in this list of black churches. With the low numbers of black Catholics in the U.S., there is also a vocational crisis, where there are very few African

Americans going into the priesthood and the sisterhood, and a low number of black

representation in Catholic leadership positions.

Even though it is also a part of a hierarchical church system like the Catholic

Church, United Methodist churches can exercise considerable control over the placement

and rotation of ministers (Cooke, 1992) and some ministers rarely spend more than three

years at one location. There are 423,456 African-American U.S. members of the United

Methodist Church, and there are more than 2,500 of the United Methodist Church's

37,000 congregations that are African-American, however most of those churches have

experienced membership declines since the dismantling of the segregated Central

Jurisdiction in 1968, when the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches

merged (United Methodist Service, 2000).

Louisiana's capital city, Baton Rouge, adds uniqueness to the study of the black

church and political activity. Much of past research on the black church has focused on

black Baptist churches because the majority of African Americans in the U.S. are Baptist

or Methodist (Hunt & Hunt, 2001). This is because, in the eighteenth and nineteenth

century, major efforts of evangelical outreach by missionary Methodists and Baptists led

to a dramatic increase of both forms of Protestant faith among blacks; today, six out of

ten African Americans identify themselves as either Baptist or Methodist (Hunt & Hunt,

2001). The state of Louisiana has a unique history that has allowed for Southern

Louisiana to boast the largest per capita Black Catholic population in the country—Holy

Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, Louisiana, has the largest black Catholic Church in

the United States with over 10,000 members (Evans, Forsyth, Craig, & Bernard, 2002).

And, according to the 2002 Census, the racial makeup of Baton Rouge is 50.02% African

American, many of whom are active in religious, social and political activities.   African

Americans, particularly in the rural South, have more heightened levels of religious

involvement than their northern counterparts (Hunt & Hunt, 2001).

Other factors may affect the responses of the congregations in this study. Political

churches are led by politically active ministers and "the environment is such that electoral

participation is the communicated norm and political activity is facilitated by the

institution itself" (Calhoun-Brown, 1996, p. 942). Education plays a key role in politics,

because it provides the resources, prestige, jobs and organizational affiliation that provide

further resources (Verba et. al, 1995).

2.9 Two-Step Flow Theory

Also, religious leaders acting as political cue-givers have been shown to affect

mobilization in America (Brewer, Kersh & Petersen, 2003). The two-step flow of

communication hypothesis can explain how black clergy are opinion leaders, influential

individuals within the system who provide information and advice to others in the

community (Katz & Lazarfeld, 1955, p. 31-45). This hypothesis originally was to

explain how ideas flowed from radio and print to opinion leaders, and from them to less

politically active populations. A study by Lazarfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) on

decision-making during a Presidential election, in which participants mentioned informal

personal contacts as more influential than radio or newspapers, led to the theory's

development.

The two-step flow theory was popular during the 1950's and 1960's (Smidt,

2003) and assumed that people didn't have time to monitor mass media enough to gather

important political information and didn't possess the analytical skills necessary to

understand complex pieces of political information. Politically active religious leaders can be political conduits--linked by and more exposed to certain interpersonal and mass media networks--thereby enabling them to relay their messages to their congregation, most of whom may be less exposed to outside political information sources.

It should be mentioned that scholars have proposed that the two-step model has its weaknesses, for instance, ignoring the existence of a horizontal flow or "opinion sharing" instead of "opinion giving" as well as other sources and directions of communication flow (Robinson, 1976; Troldahl & Van Dam, 1965;). In the black church, this could mean that information can be passed from congregant to congregant rather than just from religious leader to the congregation, which is more of a horizontal process rather than a vertical pattern. But, according to this two-step model, this filter or sharing of opinions and values may be responsible for most of the attitudes in the congregation (Wright & Cantor, 1967). In a study by Jones-Correa and Leal (2001), education is sighted as playing a key role in the process of resource accumulation. But even with the increase in education and the availability of political information via the television and internet, the political knowledge of U.S. citizens remains at a low level (Bennet, 1989). The explanation is that citizens learn very little from news media and gain more political knowledge from interpersonal communication (Eveland Jr., 2004; Robinson & Levy, 1986).

Clergy have several qualities that give them potential political influence for their congregations, like engaging in more ideological thinking than their congregation and being aware of the moral dimensions of problems in society and framing them (Smidt, 2003). They also garner high levels of respect and trust from their congregations and are

positioned to "create, transmit, and maintain group norms and attitudes" (Wald, Owen, & Hill, 1988). By virtue of their position, clergy are able to possess resources and an opportunity to give political cues, or political communication leading to action, from the pulpit (Beaty and Walter, 1989; Guth et al 2002; Jelen, 1991), Scholars have thought of using opinion leaders to monitor the mass media more closely and purposefully than others because of their social position and their highly developed belief systems. Lin (1973) suggests that opinion leaders use mass media more than the less politically active. This section needs more support.

2.10 Group Consciousness Theory

Another view is that collective interests and motivations are socially constructed by the mobilization process and churches play a role in the creation and interpretation of these motivations (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). This "conformity," as described in the two-step flow theory, can also be described as group consciousness. The concept of group consciousness, as Miller et al. (1981) define it, "involves identification with a group and a political awareness or ideology regarding the group's relative position in society along with a commitment to collective action aimed at realizing the group's interests.

Group consciousness is the central concept in theories of ethnic mobilization (Calhoun-Brown, 2001). Some scholars connect group consciousness and its sense of responsibility for one's race with African American religiosity (Calhoun-Brown, 1996; Harris, 1994) and other studies focused on how blacks who attended political churches had higher levels of group consciousness as well as political effectiveness (Calhoun-Brown, 1996). Research has suggested that black churches socialize individuals to believe that they have a personal and collective obligation to improve the status of the

group through having a sense of group consciousness (Branch, 1988; McAdam, 1982).

As McWilliams describes in his research, the black church and its community have an

idea of fraternity to help them overcome the many obstacles faced throughout history

(McWilliams, 1973).

> Group consciousness incorporates the notion of shared interests and the recognition that the individual's welfare is inseparable from that of the group…Believing that a change in the system rather than a shift in personal expectations is necessary to correct social and political inequities thus leads people who are identified with particular groups to commit themselves and their resources to collective action (Miller et al. 1981).

A study by Chong and Rogers (2005) of the 1984 Presidential election show that racial

identification and consciousness had a modest effect on voter turnout, but a significant

influence on participation in traditional campaign activities. As Chong and Rogers

stated, "consciousness potentially heightens awareness and interest in politics, bolsters

group pride and political efficacy, alters interpretations of group problems, and promotes

support for collective action" (p. 348). This phenomenon of group consciousness

explains why African Americans who are conscious of being members of an oppressed

group, regardless of socioeconomic status, are more likely to participate in campaigns

and cooperative activities (Morrison, 2003).

2.11 Hypotheses and Research Questions

This study will be guided by several hypotheses and research questions that

reflect the two-step flow theory or group consciousness. Previous studies show that

religious individuals participate more in electoral activities (Verba, Schlozman & Brady,

1995) Harris notes that "the social and communication networks in black churches

provide church members with social capital that can be used to coordinate social and

political activities in African American communities throughout the United States"

(Harris, 1999, p. 31). Based on the literature, this study poses the following research questions:

RQ1) How do members of the black church acquire their political information?

RQ2) How does attitudes about one's religious leader's influence differ across congregations?

RQ3) Do political messages in church predict political activity?

Credibility and an idea of group consciousness are necessities of effective black leadership, however, as economic differences increase, the need to maintain the appearance of cultural and ideological conformity also increases (Gates and West, 1997). Based on the literature, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1a) As income levels increase, the number of sources of political information increases,

H1b) As education increases, the number of sources of political information will increase.

(H2a) the political beliefs of the members of a church's congregation are closely aligned with the political beliefs of his or her pastor,

(H2b) the political beliefs of the members of a black church are closely aligned with the political beliefs of his or her congregation,

(H2c) Religious leaders who encourage political activity will have more politically active congregations. If either theory is proven, then it means the black church is still politically important today.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Value of Quantitative Research

Quantitative research, just as qualitative research, shares the values of science by emphasizing truth, consistency, applicability, and neutrality. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Quantitative researchers emphasize standard measures, replicable findings, and comparison for standards. Researchers want to minimize bias and make successful predictions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study the phenomenon of political activity in the black church can be studied using quantitative research, specifically a purposive study to obtain information about this unique set of individuals.

Using Louisiana's capital city, Baton Rouge, adds uniqueness to the study of the black church and political activity. Much of past research on the black church has focused on black Baptist churches because the majority of African Americans in the U.S. are Baptist or Methodist (Hunt & Hunt, 2000). So, by using congregations from two black Protestant religions closely linked to the black church--Baptist and Methodist, as well a Catholic congregation, this study takes into account three major religious affiliations that are present and prominent in the Baton Rouge area and in the South.

3.1.1 Sample

The respective churches were selected because of their importance in the Baton Rouge African American community. They were also chosen because of their size, assuming larger church congregations would help to get a larger response rate. The respondents differed with respect to age, gender, education, denomination, salary group, as well as the number of types of media used to gather political information.

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, located near downtown Baton Rouge is one of

the most active and historical churches in Baton Rouge. The church was organized in 1872, by the late Rev. George Byrd, a native of Virginia. The congregation consists of around 3,000 members and has a broad representation of different socioeconomic, educational and professional backgrounds. The first house of worship was located on Boyd Avenue in a section of this city known at that time as Spanish Town.

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church was the oldest and one of the largest black congregations in the city. The congregation has approximately 550 members, some of them relocating from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. About 87 years ago, the Sisters of the Holy Family—one of the two larger groups of African American Catholic nuns in the US, opened a school in Baton Rouge. The Josephite Fathers and Brothers, an interracial group of priests and brothers who serve the spiritual, educational and social needs of the African American community, opened a church at the same location. St. Francis Xavier has the distinction of having the first parish school in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Camphor is led by Pastor Darlene Moore, which is located in the Scotlandville area of Baton Rouge, next to the nation's largest Historically Black College/University— Southern University. Pastor Moore describes the church as a "university church," with many of her members attending or working for the neighboring university. There are approximately 500 members at Camphor, but only about 200 are active members. Many of the members are business owners in the community.

3.1.2 Sample Demographics

Overall, there are more female respondents as well as older respondents ("55 and older" were 31.9%). This information coincides with the 2002 Census

that reported in Baton Rouge, there are 100 females for every 90.5 males and 30.8% of the 227,818 people are 45 and older. As far as education, many respondents had some college education, about 25.6%. But the highest percentage of respondents had master's degrees (26.3%). Also, the majority of the respondents had an income of 25,001-50,000 (25%). Also, there were approximately 71.4% Catholics and 28.6% Non-Catholics. Overall, the sample represents more female, older, better educated, and higher income individuals than the general population.

3.1.3 Procedure

Throughout June, July and August of 2006, a one-page (front-and-back) descriptive survey was given to the members of the congregations in the sample. The surveys were distributed at the permission of each church's religious leader during auxiliary group meetings, religious service, or other church functions. The members filled out a questionnaire regarding their opinions on their church's religious and political practices and these questionnaires were collected after the service or meeting. Responses were received from the congregations. The final sample size total was 143 (N=143). The number that was distributed was 200. The members completed the surveys in less than 15 minutes. The surveys were either collected immediately after completion or after church services ended.

The quantitative questionnaire contained 25 questions, divided into different sections containing Likert items, two open-ended questions, and some basic demographic scales. The presentation of items as an 'agree-disagree' scale allowed respondents to indicate the strength of their agreement/disagreement by coloring circles.

3.1.4 Independent Variables

An independent variable is a variable that is systematically varied by the researcher (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003). Denominations were either coded as Catholic equals 1, Baptist equals 2, United Methodist equals 3, Nondenominational equals 4, or other equals 5. This was helpful in determining which church the respondent originated from, since only one church of each denomination was surveyed. This is to investigate the denominational influence on political participation. A similar study was done by Craven (2004) to analyze similarities and differences in the social and religious attitudes of modern Catholic and Protestant (Church of Ireland) women in the Republic of Ireland. Because of the difference in hierarchical structure between the churches, as well as the historical differences, there will be an expectation of differences in the responses between churches.

3.1.5 Dependent Variables

A dependent variable is a variable that is observed and whose value is presumed to depend on the independent variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003). On the survey, respondents were asked to name the most important issue that needs to be addressed in the black community to begin the dialogue on whether or not their beliefs closely align with their religious leaders. From those responses, a scale was constructed to measure the type of issues respondents felt were the most important and needed to be addressed by the black community and the black church. The answers were broken down into three categories: church-based issues, collective social issues and individual issues. These were loosely based

issues in the coalition agenda for the nation's black denominations (1984).

Church-based issues are within the realm of religion or religious activities. Some

examples of church-based issues would be shortage of priests and nuns,

spirituality, and church attendance. Collective social issues are those that affect

the black community—churchgoing or nonchurchgoing. Examples of collective

social issues are poverty, crime, division among economic levels, and others.

And finally, individual issues are those that are more personal for members of the

black community or black church. Some examples of individual issues would be

health, breakdown in family or family values, alcoholism, drugs, and others. If a

respondent answered with more than one issue, the first issue was coded. A score

was calculated on whether the respondent's answer dealt with "church-based

issues" and was coded as 1, a "collective social issue" was coded as 2 or an

"individual issue" was coded as 3.

Political Participation Measures. A traditional self-report measure was

employed for this additive index. Six different forms of political participation

were considered and an index was created from responses to questions about

political activities such as contributing to political campaigns, organizing

political meetings, volunteering for a candidate, petitioning a representative,

voting and running for office (McKenzie, 2004). "Yes" responses were coded 1.

"No" responses were coded 0. The index ranged from 0 to 6. Also, the means of

the index and the standard deviation were calculated for the Catholic and Non

Catholic respondents (See Table 1).

Group consciousness. This was a concept based on the study of Chong and Rogers, which found that consciousness promoted voting (2005). Something integral to this study was the measurement of members of the same congregation having similar beliefs due to possible religious leader influence. Included was a question about the respondent's opinions about whether or not his or her congregation have similar beliefs. Also included were questions on whether respondents agreed with their religious leader including political messages in church or putting emphasis on politics before salvation. The question was coded using the 5-point scale, (1) being "Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree.

Religious leader influence index. With questions very similar to Craven's study (2004), a religious leader influence index was created. For this index, a question about whether the respondent agreed that the pastor encouraged members to be involved in politics was included. On the survey were several questions pertaining to congregant's opinions about their religious leader's influence. The index includes the following five items: (1) Important political issues should be addressed in the religious leader's sermons; (2) My religious leader uses his/her position to influence the congregation on public policy by expressing his political positions publicly; (3) Important social issues should be addressed in the pastor's sermons; (4) I do not agree with my pastor expressing his moral and political positions in the pulpit; (5) My pastor encourages members to be involved with political issues. Each item is ranked on the same Likert 5-point scale. Since number 4 is a reversed question, the scoring for this question

was coded as the reverse of the others. Once these are tabulated, the number is divided by the total number of questions. Means and standard deviations are also tabulated (see Table 2).

Political information index. Members of the black church obtain their political information from many sources. An additive index called the political information index was created by asking each respondent how he or she obtained political information. The respondent would check each that applied. The index includes the following: (1) the internet, (2) television, (3) newspaper, (4) magazines, (5) radio, (6) word-of-mouth and (7) organizational newsletters. The number of options selected was the respondent's political index value. Seven was the highest on the political index scale. Means and standard deviations are also calculated (See Table 3).

The demographics were collected by coding the data from the back of the survey. Gender was coded 1 for male, 2 for female. Age was indicated in five intervals: ages 18-25 were coded as 1. Ages 26-35 were coded as 2. Ages 36-45 were coded as 3. Ages 46-55 were coded as 4 and ages 56 and over were coded as 5. Denomination was coded as (1) Catholic and (2) Non Catholic. Education was coded as (1) Less than high school, (2) High school, (3) Some College, (4) Bachelor's degree, (5) Some graduate, (6) Master's, and (7) Ph.D, MD, JD. Combined Household Income was asked and coded. "Under $15,000" was coded as 1. "$15,001-$25,000" was coded as 2. "$25,001-$50,000" was coded as 3. "$50,001-$75,000" was coded as 4. "$75,001-$100,000" was coded as 5. The last category, "over $100,001" was coded as 6. SPSS was used to analyze the data from the collection of surveys. Crosstabs, correlations and differences in means

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were statistical tests that were run between independent and dependent variables derived from the questionnaire.

3.2 Qualitative Research

The product of research can be strengthened by the availability of both quantitative and qualitative data by providing a richer understanding of the perceptions and traditions of certain groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are three approaches to conducting interviews, including informational conversational, the general guide approach, and the open-ended approach (Patton, 2002). The inclusion of a qualitative interview aids in developing detailed descriptions, integrating multiple perspectives and learning how events are interpreted (Weiss, 1994). The advantage of an interview over a survey or questionnaire is that it allows for a wider range of responses.

Glesne (1999) defines an interview as being between two people and notes that during the process of conducting an interview, researchers ask questions for purposes generally only fully known to themselves, and respondents answer questions in the context of motives, values, concerns, and needs. This process finds researchers having to unravel information offered by respondents to make sense out of the answers that are generated by their questions.

Church leaders were interviewed to generate a richer understanding of the phenomenon of the political power of the black church. In particular, leaders were asked about their attitudes toward politics, their congregations, and the history of their respective churches.

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the religious leaders and each leader's answers were recorded with a digital recorder for playback. Making sure each

interviewee was in their comfort zone and briefing each with a detailed description of the survey helped diminish several difficulties that could have occurred during the interview. A study by Weiss (1994) cautions that a subject may be unresponsive because of risk of candidness and my method of using a comfort zone diminished this risk. Several questions were asked of the each of the religious leaders to obtain similar information (see Appendix B). The religious leaders were asked what they felt were the main issues that are important for the church and black community to address. They were coded with the same scale as the respondent's opinion on what issues are important for the church and the community to address

3.3 Site Selection

Several visits were made to each church to discuss the study, interview and then to distribute the surveys at different auxiliary meetings or church service. The Catholic Church's religious leader allowed for the sampling of an actual Sunday service, which allowed for a larger and broader sample of the congregation.   The Methodist and Baptist churches allowed for the sampling of several small auxiliary groups, like the Men's group, which contained mostly well-educated, older members of the congregation.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

4.1 Quantitative Findings

4.1.1 Summary Statistics

In this section, the summary statistics for the demographics were presented for the dependent variables. Overall, there are more female respondents as well as older respondents ("55 and older" were 31.9%). As far as education, many respondents had some college education, about 25.6%. But the highest percentage of respondents had master's degrees (26.3%). Also, the majority of the respondents had an income of 25,001-50,000 (25%). Also, there were approximately 71.4% Catholics and 28.6% Non-Catholics. More specifically, of the Non Catholics, there were 3.8 % Baptist, 20.3 % United Methodist, 3 % Nondenominational and 1.5 % Other. Overall, the sample is more female, older, better educated, and higher income than the general population. This may be partially due to the fact that the Catholic Church's religious leader allowed the sample of an actual Sunday service. This allowed for a larger and broader sample of the congregation. The Methodist and Baptist churches allowed the sampling of several small auxiliary groups, which contained mostly well-educated, older members of the congregation.

Is there a relationship between education and the number of outside political information sources? A correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between these two variables. A positive correlation was found between the variables (r- = .260, p = .002).

Is there a relationship between income and the number of outside political information sources? A correlation analysis was also used to assess the relationship between income and the use of outside political information sources. This relationship was not found to be significant ($r = 1$, $p = 0.172$).

Are there differences in political participation across churches? Political participation in the black church was of primary interest in this study, particularly differences across denominations. The two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether members of denominations are more politically active than others. The variables for political participation are campaigning, contributing money, organizing meetings, volunteering for a candidate, petitioning a representative and voting. Campaigning, contributing money and petitioning representatives were found to be significantly related to denomination, with Non Catholics participating at a higher rate than Catholics. Even though the other variables weren't significantly related, it was interesting to see that the majority of the respondents vote (93.5%), have volunteered time and or services for a candidate (54.9%), and 49.3% of respondents have contributed money to campaigns. Only 12% of the respondents have campaigned for political office and 20% have petitioned a representative about a specific issue concerning his/her community.

A political participation index was also constructed as the sum of each of these individual activities. The reliability for this index was $\alpha=0.736$. Again, the Non Catholic group participated at a higher rate than the Catholic group. Studies like Verba et al. (1995) suggest that Non Catholic churches provide members with

more civic skills--organize to influence policy, understand and participate in one's polity, and think critically about civic and political life, than its Catholic counterpart.

Table 1

Political Participation: Percentages of Affirmative Responses for Catholics and Protestants

Political Participation index	Catholic	Non-Catholic (Protestant)	Significance
Campaign	7.40%	21.10%	0.02*
contribute money	42.10%	63.20%	.03*
org. meetings	18%	27%	0.26
volunteer service	49.50%	63.20%	0.15
petition rep.	37.90%	73.00%	0**
Vote	93.60%	91.90%	0.73
Overall M=2.68(sd=1.7)	M=2.47(sd=1.62)	M=3.34(sd=1.65)	.006**

How does religious leader influence differ across congregations? Of the 143 respondents, about 61% of the Non Catholic respondents agreed that their religious leader uses his or her position to influence the congregation on public policy while 56.3 % of Catholics agreed. Also, 71% of Non-Catholic respondents agree that his or her religious leader encourages members to be involved with political issues while 56.3% of Catholics agree. For Non Catholics, 45.7% did not agree with their religious leader expressing moral or political opinions during service, however, over half (57%) of the Catholic respondents did not agree with the influence. The reliability of the religious leader influence index is α=0.638.

A two-way contingency table analysis (see Table 2) was conducted to evaluate whether members were influenced by their religious leader. This was not a significant finding, which could indicate that religious leader influence may not be the primary cause of political participation. Many members of these selected congregations were very well educated—23.9 % have "Some college" and 28.6% held "Master's degrees." With growing access to many media sources being available, the use of outside political information sources by members of the black church is of interest as well as whether or not these outside political information sources play a role in political participation.

Table 2

Religious leader influence index: Percentages of Affirmative Responses

Religious leader influence index	Catholic	Non Catholic	Significance
Important political issues should be addressed in the religious leader's sermons	55.90%	62.10%	0.95
My religious leader uses his/her position to influence the congregation on public policy by expressing his political positions publicly	56.30%	61%	0.03*
Important social issues should be addressed in the pastor's sermons	62.40%	65.70%	0.27
I do not agree with my pastor expressing his moral and political positions in the pulpit	57.00%	45.70%	.005**
My pastor encourages members to be involved with political issues	56.30%	71%	0.03*
Overall M=3.48(sd=.75)	M=3.5(sd=.70)	M=3.47(sd=.74)	.36

For the political information source index. Another two-way contingency table analysis was created (See Table 3). The significant variables were television and organizational newsletters, about 98.9 % of Catholics used the television to get political information while 89.5% of the Non Catholic used television. Only 33.7% of Catholics and 60.5% of Non Catholics used the organizational

newsletters. These results suggestion members of the black church obtain

political information mostly from television.   Some data that were not significant

but interesting were the use of newspapers (86.4%), radio (76.4%) and word of

mouth (70.7%). The only political information source with a majority not

utilizing it was the organizational newsletter (60% said "no"), X^2(N=133) =

12.719, p=0.013. However, Non Catholics were more reliant than Catholics on

newsletters. The political index number with the highest percentage of black

church members was seven (30%), which was the highest number of outside

political sources. The reliability for this index is α=0.790.

Table 3

Political Information Sources Index: Percentages of Congregants

Political Info sources index	Catholic	Non-Catholic (Protestant)	Significance
television	98.90%	89.50%	0.009**
newspaper	90.50%	86.80%	0.53
org. newsletter	33.70%	60.50%	0.005**
internet	56.80%	63.20%	0.5
magazines	56.80%	74.10%	0.11
radio	81.10%	73.70%	0.35
word-of-mouth	75.80%	68.40%	0.38
Overall M=4.78(sd=2.02)	M=4.94(sd=1.72)	M=5.03(sd=2.10)	.36

Do Black Religious Leaders Set the Agenda for Black Churches?

Father Case from St. Francis Xavier felt that individual issues were most

important to address, while Rev. Smith from Shiloh Baptist Church believed that

church related issues were most important to address, and Rev. Darlene Moore

felt that social issues were the most important issues to address. It is interesting to

note that the respective denominations did not share the same views with their religious leader's opinion about the most important issues to address in the black church. Respondents from the Catholic Church chose social issues to be the most important issues for the black church to address, if only by 38.8%. The respondents who were Baptist chose social issues by 50% and the United Methodist respondents chose both church-based and individual issues, both equaling 34.8%. When looking at the data from a Catholic vs. non-Catholic perspective, which was also not significant but interesting, Catholics chose social issues by 38.7% and non-Catholics also chose social issues by 38.8%. Each group decided that social issues were the most important for the black community to address.

4.2 Denominational Findings

4.2.1 Catholics vs. Non Catholics

In these tables, there are interesting findings in the differences between the denominations—mainly Catholics vs. Non Catholics. A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether members of black Catholic congregations were more politically active than non-Catholic black congregations. The variables for political participation are campaigning, contributing money, organizing meetings, volunteering for a running candidate, petitioning a representative and voting. The mean scores for political participation for Non-Catholics and Catholics are, respectively, (M=3.34 and M=2.47). Non-Catholics participate at a higher rate. Based on the demographics, there is no significant difference in gender, income and education that is present between the groups. As stated by each religious leader in their interviews, all

churches were comprised of a spectrum of the black community—those of different socioeconomic, educational and generational status. This was evidenced by the results. There was a slight difference in the age group most prominent for the Non Catholic group. However, this could be due to the fact that certain auxiliary groups were chosen to survey (as allowed by the religious leader) and participated compared to the church service that was sampled to collect surveys in the Catholic Church (also as allowed by the religious leader). Also, it was also significant that more Non Catholics have petitioned representatives on a specific issue concerning his or her community—about 73% to 37.9%. As far the use of political information sources, it was significant that more Catholics watch television that non-Catholics, 98.9% to 89.5%, x^2(N=133) =6.733, p = 0.009. And, although this was not proven significant, it is interesting to note that Non Catholics used more political sources than Catholics (M=5.03 as opposed to M=4.94). All of this needs a table. This is also quantitative stuff. Keep the numbers together.

A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether Non Catholics were more likely to have similar political stances with their congregation than Catholics. It was found to be significantly related, x^2(N=132) = 10.248, p=.036. About 36% of Non Catholics either agreed or strongly agreed that their congregation had a similar stance in politics. For Catholics, about 26% agreed or strongly agreed. An overwhelming 60.6% of Catholics and 34.2% of Non Catholics remained neutral on the subject. Also, the emphasis on personal salvation instead of social issues was significant between the denominations, x^2 (N=130) = 9.495, p =0.05. About 37.6% of Catholics were neutral on the issue, but a total of 42% were either "strongly disagree" or "disagree." About 43.2%

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were either "strongly disagree" or "disagree" for the Non-Catholics, but only 18.9% were neutral. Another statistically significant finding was that Non Catholics either agree or strongly agree more that their religious leader encourages involvement with political issues than Catholics, x^2(N=132) = 10.716, p = 0.03.

4.3 Qualitative Findings

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. The first church contacted was Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, located near downtown Baton Rouge and led by Rev. Charles Smith. The church has become a beacon of light for many displaced African Americans during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The church housed and provided supportive services for 50 displaced citizens and served 400-500 meals each day. The church was also a goods distribution center to other African-American churches supporting relief efforts in the area. "Its congregation of around 3,000 members has broad representation of different socioeconomic, educational and professional backgrounds," says Rev. Smith. Churches of this nature, says Rev. Smith, have been referred to as "Mass class" churches, with half of that number being active members of the church.

Rev. Smith, who has been at Shiloh for 44 years, said the biggest problem facing the black community today was black-on-black crime. He expressed concern for the widening socioeconomic gap between members of the black community--the "Haves and Have-nots." He also sees the change in political attitudes, primarily in politicians "who want to cling to issues primarily focusing on African American communities rather than those who focus on the larger

community as a whole." He says that there was more unity between local African American politicians in past decades than that which exists today and the rift between what he calls the "Black Bourgeoise" and the "Grassroots community" will ultimately be to the detriment of the black community. E. Franklin Frazier coined the term "Black Bourgeoise" to describe the old black middle class, with their debutants, fraternities and other emulations of white culture in which they are isolated (1957). Rev. Smith uses the term "Grassroots community" to describe the general portion of the black community. Rev. Smith has observed occurrences in the community such as Baton Rouge's city council—mainly the black members who are chosen by their district, and the Mayor, who is also African American, "butting heads." The Mayor's success and broader vision for the city conflicts with the council's focus on their particular district, which are primarily African American. This is an example of what Lui and Vanderleeuw (2000) suggest, which is that white support is important for black candidates who wish to excel in politics above the local level and black candidates who are qualified and sufficiently friendly to white interests will be supported as opposed to a black candidates viewed as a spokesperson for black interests.

Through the many ministries with financial and intellectual resources, Rev. Smith feels that his leadership motivates his congregation towards being productive citizens. He sees his church as having both a motivational and challenging role to his congregation. Both politically active as well as active community members, he says his members are regular voters, with over half of the 3,000 members being college graduates. There are regular voting drives at

Shiloh Baptist Church. Giving over $50,000 in scholarships a year to the college-bound members of its congregation, Shiloh motivates its youth to excel academically by maintaining high grade point averages and being active in high school. Also, elementary school children get a cash award for their excellent academic performance and behavior. There is a 6-week on the job training placement program where students are paid minimum wage to work and are placed in a certain vocation according to the student's interest. The church has its own personal credit union, and child care center. Rev. Smith also considers the church as a black owned business, employing 38 full-time employees and 10 part-time employees. This is more, he says, than most other black owned businesses in the city.

According to Brown and Brown (2003), the most politically astute African American clergy tend to direct their congregations toward low-cost political activism like having candidates speak during election cycles or clergy talking about the importance of voting. Rev. Smith attempts to stay away form any activity that can be construed as political partisanship. Staying neutral towards candidates and certain public policy issues for fear of losing their 501(c)(3) status steers Rev. Smith more towards acknowledging visiting politicians than engaging or endorsing them. Having 501(c)(3) status allows churches and other charitable organizations to be exempt from federal taxes and, in order to keep this status, section 501(c)(3) organizations are restricted in how much political and legislative (*lobbying*) activities they may conduct.

The biggest issue that Rev. Smith sees for the black church today is the conflict and competition between the different denominations within the black church. New theological, philosophical and social changes are being introduced by nondenominational and nontraditional churches, which are competing for a leadership role in the black community. He feels that those churches have shifted an emphasis to "prosperity theology" or focus on wealth rather than the traditional theology of the Baptist church. He also says that Ecclesiastical authority, which is leadership limited to a small group of people, has never existed in the traditional Baptist Church, however, in a "Full Gospel" Baptist church of today, a bishop is the presiding religious leader. Rev. Smith feels that the black church needs to address this issue because the "majority vote" and self-governing that exists in churches without hierarchical clergy are more in tune with the socioeconomic issues of that particular community.

As an undergraduate student, Rev. Smith majored in sociology, and because of this influence, he finds the black church interesting not because of its theology, but because of its sociology. Differences in the classes and skin color between African Americans of different denominations in the past have contributed to his personal issue with the Roman Catholic Church. Despite the existence of established black denominations, he says that many African-Americans remain in denominations that are overwhelmingly white--Episcopal, Lutheran, United Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic.

Rev. Smith has some issues with the Catholic Church and its sociological impact in the black community. He feels that the leadership of the Catholic

Church concentrates solely on theology versus his view of the black Baptist church concentrating on theology centering around the social and economic issues affecting black people. "Creoles," or Louisiana people of African, Spanish and French descent, made up a large population of the Catholic Church during his childhood, he said. He notes, "You could tell if someone was Catholic by how light their skin was or by the straighter texture of their hair." Rev. Smith saw these people as rejecting black leadership, preferring white men to lead the flock, as well as attempting to separate themselves from the darker skinned African Americans in the community. "When I was growing up, the creoles went so far as to request a special section to sit in the movie theatres to separate themselves from the rest of the blacks." He feels that blacks that attend the megachurches today where only 30-40 percent of the congregation is African American and the leadership is white have the same mentality and attitudes about black leadership as the creoles did in the past.

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. Father Case believes that drug addiction, the disintegration of the family unit, lack of parenting skills and lack of employment skills are big issues in the black community. There has been a big push to increase the basic skills of members of the community like math, reading and comprehensive skills. Recently, Father Case has been focusing on involving the men in the community, encouraging the professional African American men to step up and be leaders and role models in the church.

A study by Harris (1999) says that communication networks and the social interaction of political actors mobilize ministers and congregants for political

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action. Father Case considers the congregation of St. Francis Xavier to be politically active. It includes judges, former state senators, political appointees and other political figures as well as many members of the Black Student Union at Louisiana State University. Some members have run for office, are involved in political activity or hold leadership positions and bring politicians to church. Two of the 2006 mayoral candidates from New Orleans, Mitch Landrieu and Ray Nagin, visited the church for Palm Sunday to address the importance of voting.

Father Case believes that one of the big challenges of the Catholic Church is to provide the opportunity to develop individual spirituality. He feels that his church is rivaled by some of the "megachurches," very large churches that boast large membership, in the city. The emotional uplift along with the abundance of available ministries are big competition for St. Francis Xavier, and Rev. Case believes his church can't compete with that or their gospel choirs (gospel music, a black tradition, is not usually present during the Catholic Mass).

Camphor United Methodist Church. A major issue Pastor Moore sees in her community is family issues, rather a breakdown of the family unit with the absence of fathers. Strengthening the family, Pastor Moore believes, will strengthen the community. Pastor Moore also sees education as a major issue affecting the black community, including the lack of mentoring and apprenticeship traditions. She believes that "the village has to raise the children for the children to be able to run the village." Camphor has several services to aid its young and older members--tutoring, hosting a camp for at-risk children, and working with outreach organizations like Habitat for Humanity, the Federation of

Churches, and Interfaith Ministry. Sisters Supporting Sisters, an African American woman's group supporting cancer survivors, is also held at Camphor. Also Camphor has a partnership with the majority white Unitarian church, helping to improve race dialog, race relations, and environmental improvement.

Politically, Pastor Moore maintains that her church is very active. Several political officials attend Camphor representatives attend the church, which she hopes will help her congregation and community become more vocal about issues such as the possible closing of the city's charity hospital, Earl K. Long Hospital. She has been in communication with other religious leaders in the city to find a solution.

Pastor Moore believes that, historically, the black community has never separated "church and state" and the church has been and should be the center of "prayer and action." She believes that she has an influence on her congregation because of her involvement in the community. Voter registration forms are always available at Camphor and when election time comes near, Pastor Moore makes sure an announcement appears in the church bulletin. She also says that many members volunteer at the polling stations.

Some forces that Pastor Moore feels that competing with the black church today are gambling, drugs, apathy and peer pressure--the preference of peers above elders. Also, she says that the sentiment of "it's not my issue" or the lack of group consciousness that is present today in many members of the black community is detrimental to the spirit of the black church. She says that young people seem to no longer be obligated to attend church like their predecessors and

are not present in the pews. Also, Pastor Moore feels that the black church must

now contend with recent issues that have arisen, such as the worshiping of "new

age 'bling bling' fashion." Hip hop culture may be drawing a wedge between the

young generation and the church.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

Scholarly research has focused on the political behavior and attitudes of African Americans and in recent decades, many have concentrated on politics and the black church (Brown & Brown, 2003; Calhoun-Brown, 2001; Ellison & Sherkat, 1990; Harris, 1994; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; McKinney, 1971). But there are few recent studies that look at the differences between the political behavior of black Catholic congregations and Non Catholic congregation (Craven, 2004). This study's aim was to build on past research about the significance of black churches as important political entities in the black community today.

In a study about political differences between denominations, Patterson (2004) states that "Catholics and [Non Catholics] differ in a number of basic beliefs and practices regarding their faith, such as levels of church attendance, amount of time spent in prayer and Bible reading, and on a variety of specific items of doctrine such as the authority of scripture, belief in hell and the devil, and the role of clergy" (p. 347). Non Catholics had a higher political participation rate than Catholics. This is an interesting finding in that, historically, the Baptist denomination has been the major denomination of action and study in political movements such as the Civil Rights Movement.

This study adds to the literature on the black church by examining the outside influential political information sources its members use, perceived religious leader influence and political activity. There is a correlation between education and the number of outside political information sources which members of the black church use. With

the increase of educational opportunity in the black community, there is less of a reliance on the church as a means for political information. Also, one of the research questions of this study was how do members of the black church acquire their political information. The results support findings by McDonald and Reese (1985), who explored television viewing behavior and information-seeking behavior. The 114 respondents in that study consisted of 58 who ranked newspapers as their primary source of news and current events information and 39 who ranked television as their primary source. The remainder of the respondents was split between radio, magazines, and interpersonal sources. Results showed that the group primarily reliant on newspapers tended to be older and better educated, have fewer television sets, watch less television, and watch news programs selectively rather than as a result of lead-out or inertia. These findings suggest members of the black church obtain political information mostly from television. Hardly any respondents utilized the organizational newsletter for their political information. Some data that were not significant but interesting were the use of newspapers (86.4%), radio (76.4%) and word of mouth (70.7%) by black church members. This means that most of black church members are obtaining information from many different outlets and are possibly influenced by many different media channels.

Another research question posed was if black church members with a higher number of outside political sources felt that their religious leader was politically influential. There is a definite difference between Catholics and Non Catholics when it comes to religious leader influence. Non Catholic religious leaders were more likely to use messages during service than Catholic religious leaders. Catholic respondents were not as positive about the use of the pulpit for politics. This is an encouraging finding

because it indicates that a political presence is welcome in black churches among their congregations. It also indicates that Non Catholics seem to have more religious leader involvement when it comes to politics. This could be due to historical prominence of the Baptist denomination in the black community during political movements. So, Non Catholics, who used more outside political sources, had more perceived religious leader influence.

Next, do political messages in church predict political activity? This was not found to be significant. These are questions that will begin the dialogue of whether the black church remains a central politically mobilizing force for its constituents. In these churches selected in this study, many of the members are politically active (30.0% respondents had more than a "6," the highest score on the political index. Non-Catholics participated in political activity in a higher rate than Catholics. Also, Non-Catholics either agree or strongly agree more that their religious leader encourages involvement with political issues than Catholics. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) suggest that Catholic and Protestant churches develop different levels of civic skills through their associational membership and experiences in church. Catholics are less likely to receive civic training through their churches and Verba et al. suggests that church membership in the black community, which is mostly Non-Catholic, explains why African Americans have greater participation rates than would be expected given their socioeconomic resources (1995). Overall, political participation seems to be encouraged and many members have no issue with their religious leader interjecting their political stance on issues in the pulpit.

As far as group consciousness, there was a significant difference between Catholics and Non-Catholics. More Non-Catholics either agreed or strongly agreed that their congregation had a similar stance in politics. For Catholics, most remained neutral on the subject of similar political stance with the congregation. But most of the total respondents from the black church agreed with acknowledging social issues to be the most important issue for the agenda of the black church. Unlike their white counterparts, many black churches have not developed effective centralized bureaucracies and that might play a role in why there is not a consensus on what churches should focus on as a whole. There is no one agenda has been suggested for black churches irrespective of their denominational affiliation, even though they are all serving a common cause.

The qualitative study provided insight into the history and differences in leadership among different denominations in the black community. Background on the political atmosphere of the community as well as the perceived involvement of the congregations were all gathered from these religious leaders. The religious leaders' opinions on challenges facing the black church and the black community gave insight on the issues of identity and focus within the denominations.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Due to the access of members in the Catholic Church, there were an overwhelming amount of respondents from the Catholic Church compared to the other denominations--about 28.6% of the respondents were non-Catholics; the other 71.4% were Catholics. This could have been due to traditional and religious differences that

exist between Catholics and non-Catholics. The lack of an equal number of respondents of different denominations could make generalizing difficult.

Also, the research was limited due to having more female, older, better educated and higher income members of auxiliary groups. This may be partially due to the fact that the Catholic church's religious leader allowed the sample of an actual Sunday service, which allowed for a larger and broader sample of the congregation and the Methodist and Baptist churches allowed the sampling of several small auxiliary groups, which contained mostly well-educated, older members of the congregation. This could have contributed to the limited differences and results of the overall study.

The limitations of qualitative research include the researcher using a purposive sample for the study. This purposive sampling procedure decreases the ability to generalize the findings. Only a small number of churches located in a small southern city were used. Black churches vary in type, size, and location. Consequently, this study may not be generalizable to other situations. Also, a concern of the religious leaders could have been the image and perception that external publics had of their churches, so their answers about their congregations could have been exaggerated for the purposes of the interview.

 5.3 Conclusion

Churches have varied relationships with the urban neighborhoods in which they are situated, and determining how they approach (or should approach) their role in promoting social welfare and community change is complicated. It has been suggested that group consciousness led by religiosity contributes to political participation in African Americans (Dawson et. al., 1990). Also, scholars have proven that there is a positive

relationship between attending a church that promoted political participation and political activity (Calhoun-Brown, 2001; Wilcox, 1990). Some other research debated that some churches are apolitical and these inactive church leaders suggest that time is better spent helping the poor, keeping religious injunctions, and supporting the spiritual activities of the church" (Morrison, 2003). However, the black church is still a primary source of cohesion in the black community.

More studies should be done on how to reach more of the African American community outside of the black church. The most crucial need for the black church is to strengthen the personal and cultural identity and self-esteem of African American youths at every socioeconomic level and provide opportunities for involvement. The challenge is for the predominantly middle and working class black church to effectively reach out to the deprived and disadvantaged members of the community (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990) and address the conflicts and divisions that exist between denominations and theological ideology in the black community. Being role models and providing a link to economic, political and social infrastructure for the unchurched and oppressed is the saving grace that black churches can provide. Today, more than ever, the black church needs to connect with these members by continuing in the tradition of its rich, historical purpose.

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Congregation Questionnaire Summer 2006

What issues are important for the black church to address?

What issues are most affecting the African American community?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think my church makes a good effort in addressing the issues I listed in the previous question	①	②	③	④	⑤
My church makes a large impact on the community	①	②	③	④	⑤
Important political issues should be addressed in the religious leader's sermons.	①	②	③	④	⑤
The church should spend more time emphasizing personal salvation and less time on social issues.	①	②	③	④	⑤
My religious leader uses his position to influence the congregation on public policy by expressing his political positions publicly.	①	②	③	④	⑤
Important social issues should be addressed in the pastor's sermons.	①	②	③	④	⑤
I do not agree with my pastor expressing his moral and political positions in the pulpit.	①	②	③	④	⑤
I believe it is important for your church to have outreach programs.	①	②	③	④	⑤
I volunteer for political activities because I believe it is important.	①	②	③	④	⑤
Most of the members of my church have a similar stance when it comes to issues	①	②	③	④	⑤
My pastor encourages members to be involved with political issues.	①	②	③	④	⑤

	Yes	No
I have campaigned for political office?	①	②
I have contributed money to political campaigns?	①	②
I have organized political meetings for members of my community .	①	②
I have volunteered my time and/or services for a candidate running for office.	①	②
I have petitioned a representative about a specific issue concerning my community	①	②
I vote	①	②

Part II. Demographics

1.) Gender:
_____Male
_____Female

2.) Age:
____18-25
____26-35
____36-45
____46-55
____56 and over

3.) Religious denomination
____Catholic
____Baptist
____United Methodist
____Nondenominational
____Other

4.) Education:
____Less than high school
____High School
____Some College
____Bachelor Degree
____Some graduate
____Masters
____Ph.D

5.) Combined Household Income:
____Under $15,000
____$15,001-$25,000
____$25,001-$50,000
____$50,001-$75,000
____$75,001-$100,000
____over $100,001

6.) How do you obtain political information? (check all that apply)
____internet
____television
____newspaper
____magazines
____radio
____word-of-mouth
____organizational newsletters

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Most Important Issue for the Black Community to address
Q1: What are some of the most important issues plaguing the black community?

Q2: What do you think is the church's role in addressing some of these issues?

Religious Leader Perceptions
Political Activity
Q3: How do you think members view political activity?
      SQ1: Are they politically active?
      SQ2: Have any run for office?

Q4: How do you view political activity?

Q5: What kinds of political activity does your church engage in?
      SQ8: Do you include political messages during service?

Q6: Could you give me a description about your congregation?
      SQ1: How large is your congregation?
      SQ2: How many of those are active?
      SQ3: How educated are they?
      SQ4: What's the majority as far as socioeconomic status?

Q7: Could you give me some history or background about the church and its surrounding area?

Q8: What are some of the social activities that your church engages in?

Q9: What do you see as the biggest competition to the black church?

VITA

Misty Johnson is a graduate student at the Manship School of Mass

Communication at Louisiana State University. She graduated from the Manship School

of Mass Communication in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in print journalism. Her interest

in the black church and political mobilization in the black community stems from her

years of involvement in the black church and her concern for the political interests of the

black community. Upon receiving her Master of Mass Communication in public relations

in May 2007, Ms. Johnson plans to continue to pursue her education.