We Wear the Mask: Exploring the Talented Tenth and African American Political Philosophy in 21st Century Politics

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We Wear the Mask: Exploring the Talented Tenth and African American Political Philosophy in 21st Century Politics

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Political Science

by

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December, 2014
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my “New Orleans Grandmother,” Mother White (Louise C. White), and my God mother, Sister Dean (Idella Brannick), who both died as I was writing this dissertation in 2013. Their constant prayers, daily phone calls, witticisms, and encouragement carried me through my entire academic career. They believed in me and strengthened me with their prayers when I felt like giving up. As women who lived to be 90 years old, their time on this earth was a testament to God’s greatness, love, and grace. Their commitment to education, the written word, and God’s children was unparalleled, making them truly members of the Talented Tenth. I am humbled by their love for me. Their prayers for me have availed and I finally have my “piece of working paper.” I’m sure that they’re in heaven helping to orchestrate the next phase of my life. Whatever’s next, I promise not to take any “wooden nickels” and to remember that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I completed writing the dissertation narrative on the same evening that the Michael Dunn verdict was delivered in Jacksonville, Florida. Therefore, this dissertation is also dedicated to the memory of Jordan Davis, Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, Oscar Grant, Sean Bell, Shulena Weldon, Eric Collins, Aaron Campbell, Alonzo Ashley, Wendell Allen, Jonathan Ferrell, Aiyanna Jones, Rekia Boyd, Darnesha Harris, James Brissette, Ronald Madison, Eric Garner, Mike “Mike Mike” Brown, and the countless other young Black men and women who had the audacity to think that they could remove their masks in the 21st century.
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ABSTRACT

Researchers have suggested that Blacks who express linked racial fate are ideologically liberal. Given the prominence of Black philosophical thought and salience of race, I suggest that linked racial fate results in conservative ideology, which exists on a separate ideological dimension than the traditional conservative ideological dimension. This new ideological dimension, referred to as conservatism among Blacks, is vital to understanding Black political thought in the 21st century. Using data from the 1996 National Black Election Study, 2008 National Annenberg Election Study, and focus group data I argue that the conservative ideas espoused by Blacks, specifically members of the Talented Tenth, actually support Black advancement in the same way that Blacks express support for Democratic candidates or ideals as a result of linked racial fate. Moreover, conservatism among Blacks does not result in a specific partisan identification or support for certain candidates; instead, conservatism results in explicit support for policies and ideas that align with the ideas and philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus M. Garvey. This dissertation fills the gap in the literature that does not utilize Black philosophers, Black political leaders, or college educated Blacks to explain Black political thought and behavior. The study of members of the Talented Tenth provides a framework for understanding how Blacks negotiate various political philosophies, challenging traditional Black American political thought while remaining racially linked to the Black community.

Talented Tenth, Black American Politics, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ideology, Conservatism, Linked Racial Fate

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1 In speaking of the African American community, I do not intend to suggest that this is a politically unified monolithic group; clearly it is not. Yet within the racially stratified United States, African Americans are held together by common interests despite the individual understandings, articulations, and levels of fidelity of individual African Americans of or to those interests. The terms “African American”, “Black”, and “Black American” are used interchangeably. I use “Black American”, specifically, when referring to Blacks from the U.S., Central and South America, the Caribbean, and the continent of Africa.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Strive to make something of yourselves; and then strive to make the most of yourselves: not in selfishness; not for vain display in society or in the world; but for a grand reason which I will at once declare to you. It is this: Because you have great powers. I don't know the capacity of any one of you girls. I have never heard, from any quarter, your standing as scholars. But you are human beings; and therefore I can say, if even you were the humblest of our kind, that you have great powers. You are responsible both for your powers of mind, and responsible for the training of them.

- Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses* (1891)

Reared in a suburb outside of Rochester, New York, I was always the only Black American student in my grammar school classes. Being the one Brown face in a room full of white faces did not bother me much until school events in celebration of Black History Month or Martin Luther King Jr. Day. I recall my teachers passing out the standard biographical sketches on Martin Luther King Jr., and me asking why we weren’t discussing people such as Malcolm X, Ella Fitzgerald, or Harriet Tubman. Although I attended a homogenous grammar school and lived in a rather homogenous neighborhood, on the weekends I attended Girl Scout meetings at a large Baptist church in the city and spent all day Sunday at my family’s all-Black American Holiness Evangelical Church, also in the city. Many of my childhood friends also had similar experiences, in which they were the only students of color in their grammar school classrooms, yet on the weekends were inundated with Black American culture through our extracurricular activities. Along with myself, many of my friends were the children of highly educated Black American parents who matriculated at Ivy League and top historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Our parents held top positions at Rochester’s Fortune 500 Companies, Educational Institutions, and Medical Schools. Needless to say, I was socialized in an environment where successful Black American professionals helped to shape my social and political outlook on life.
Formally educated suburban Black American families constantly negotiated and informed their children’s Black American identity by both explicitly and implicitly discussing Black history, Black American solidarity, and the responsibilities of being a Black American child of some affluence. As children, we did not fully understand these things, but we recognized that there was something important about being “our kind” of Black American. The juxtaposition of class and race caused my friends and me to live in three diverse environments. In one social environment, although we were the only Blacks in our classrooms, we were well-traveled, had remarkable cultural experiences, and lived in grander homes than our White counterparts. In other environments, our parents hosted Kwanzaa parties and we attended “Watch Night” services as a reenactment of New Year’s Eve 1862. Finally, we spent many weekends in the inner city helping tutor other Black children as “helpers” to our parent’s sororities and fraternities. The juxtaposition of our race and class was profound. We were afforded amazing childhood experiences, yet we were constantly negotiating our Black American identities and code switching in both White and Black society, so as not to appear “too White” when interacting with Whites or “too Black” when interacting with Whites. Despite not clearly fitting into either world, as children we realized that we were much more comfortable around other Black American children than we were around the White children on our cul-de-sac.

The negotiation of class and race was a little more difficult for me, having been raised by former pan-Africanist evangelical Christian parents, with one parent identifying as a Republican and the other a Democrat. This intersection of race, class, and political ideology presented me with my first experiences in Black Nationalism at an early age. My father’s bookshelves were lined with the works of Franz Fanon (Wretched of the Earth and Black Skin, White Masks), Kwame Nkrumah (Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism), Stokely Carmichael (Black
Power) and W.E.B. Du Bois (The Souls of Black Folk), while he politically identified as a Republican. When I became interested in politics, after sitting at several voter registration drives hosted by either our local NAACP chapter or my mother’s sorority chapter, I did not understand pan Africanism or how someone could be pro-Black and be a Republican. I recall my father telling me that, “Being pro-Black does not mean that you’re anti-white.”

This Black Nationalist education combined with my religious and class-based extracurricular activities created a space and a social network where class, politics, gender, altruism and even religion were articulated through a racialized lens. I learned early on, through my parents and church, the importance of giving back and uplifting other people (specifically other Blacks), as well as the implications of being a person of African descent in the United States, as a result of the interpretation of Old Testament scripture (Dr. Cornel West refers to this as the focus of the prophetic Black Christian worldview in The Cornel West Reader 1999.) My religious altruism, class, and politics seemed to clash, or rather I became aware that their juxtaposition was precarious, during one of my childhood summers when my parents directed our church’s vacation Bible school. The vacation Bible school offered poor children in the community free meals as well as summer Bible-based activities. Many of the attendees were poor Black American and Hispanic children, who relied upon the Bible school for their summer meals while school was out of session. My parents as well as some of their close friends all ran vacation Bible schools across the city. They enjoyed working with the children, but often expressed a disdain in private for some of the choices the parents of the children had made. They were giving of their time, for it was part of their Christian and racial duty as “their brother’s keeper,” but disagreed with the excuses and personal choices that they felt kept many of the families in poverty.
When I was a graduate student, those vacation Bible school experiences and the development of my own understanding of my socialization came full circle. I returned to a topic that I had subconsciously abandoned having attended an elite all Black undergraduate university. During the course of my matriculation, being the only person of color in all of my classes, my race and class became extremely salient, especially when the discussion turned to Black Americans and how they were deficient as compared to Whites. When engaging in conversations about Black American politics, my classmates often used language that seemed to illustrate a sense of liberal guilt, using vernacular to illustrate that they empathized with the Black American condition, but were not actively trying to dismantle the institutions that created the aforementioned condition. As members of my cohort discussed minority politics and experiences, I found myself wanting to challenge their assertions by sharing my upper middle class Black experiences, while not wanting to disparage other Black Americans. These graduate classes reminded me that there are private settings where it is appropriate to criticize or disagree with the normative thought of Black Americans, while there are also public settings where I must show support for all things and people associated with the African American pan-ethnic group. After speaking with friends who were raised in upper middle class environments and attended historically black colleges for undergraduate studies and then predominately white institutions for graduate school, I learned that I was not alone in my experiences. We were all wearing Paul Laurence Dunbar’s proverbial mask. Dunbar’s *We Wear the Mask* appeared in his first professionally published volume (1896)². Dunbar writes:

---

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,-  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
We wear the mask!

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
We wear the mask.

I began looking for ways to explain these “masked” experiences, implicitly, through my end-of-the-semester seminar papers. At the most basic level, I was interested in how formally educated and affluent Black Americans politically negotiate their ethnicity and how they articulate their politicized identity in white environments. More concretely, I wanted to know how these Black Americans, given their social or economic status, make sense of their association with Blacks of lower social or economic statuses, especially in the context of political discussions. I wanted to answer the following question: How do Black Americans come to grips with the complex modes of Blackness- racialist, ethnic, national, cultural, and kinship modes- within a society and political system that does not clearly understand their political preferences, which are often, based upon their racial experiences?

In this dissertation, using formally educated Black Americans as my subjects, I seek to better understand political discourse among Black Americans and shed light on their interpretation of Black political philosophy. I attempt to determine the extent to which major strands of 20th century Black political thought are reflected in the contemporary political attitudes and preferences of formally educated Black Americans, an understudied group. I further argue that scholarly discourse on political ideology in the United States is insufficient for understanding contemporary political attitudes of Black Americans, largely because it ignores distinctive aspects of Black political thought such as conservatism. As demonstrated in this
project, focus group participants speak in terms that reflect discussions that arguably began in colonial America, if not before. In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, these Black Americans are operating within the realm of “double consciousness” (*The Souls of Black Folk*). Just as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey defined Black American political thought in the early 20th century, as did Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X did in the 1960s, the focus group participants contribute to our understanding of how Black Americans articulate their political philosophies, political ideologies, social standing and racial solidarity. Over time, formally educated Black Americans and the Black American elite have interacted with the political and cultural landscapes of their time - living as free people of color during the antebellum period, leading the charge during civil rights struggles, and in some instances expressing ideals of social and economic conservatism early on.

The narrative expressed by Black American members of the Talented Tenth reveals the political calculus or political heuristics used to make decisions about how and under what circumstances their unique Black political ideology and linked racial fate will be expressed. One of the objectives of this dissertation is to reconcile Michael Dawson’s theory of linked racial fate with the prominence of certain conservative philosophical viewpoints among members of the Talented Tenth. I also hope that this dissertation helps transform the way mainstream scholars of politics understand the political thought of the Talented Tenth and its importance in contemporary politics.

The philosophical focus of this project is a distinctive variety of conservatism that is common among formally educated Blacks. As I will show, conservatism among Blacks is related to Black pride and the political philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus M. Garvey. There is no single, concrete definition of conservatism as it operates within
Black America, but I use a definition that suggests that conservatism among Blacks coalesces around four principles championed by Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey: group solidarity and linked racial fate, support for Black economic independence, social conservatism as a result of religiosity, and the value of education. Presumably, conservatism among Blacks and the interpretation of Black philosophical thought is not monolithic. While the articulation of Black conservative values and philosophies may vary across gender, religious denomination, levels of education, and income, this project seeks to understand the ethnic and racial group as a whole. The first two principles are often conflated with Black Nationalism, more specifically, classical nationalism, Washingtonian conservatism (based upon the theories developed by Booker T. Washington), Black Power, cultural nationalism and identity politics, and the “Black strivings” of Du Boisian theory. These principles are all expressed, to some degree, by focus group participants. I distinguish this conservatism among Blacks from what is often referred to as Black conservatism; Black conservatism is exemplified by high profile Black Americans such as Clarence Thomas and Condoleezza Rice. Black conservatives often oppose programs such as affirmative action, public education, minimum wage laws, ethnic and gendered minority scholarships, and full government involvement in society. Black conservatives deny that the policy positions of white conservatives are racist (Toler 1997). In contrast to Black conservatism, conservatism among Blacks is exemplified by support of Black Nationalism, pro-Black rhetoric, linked racial fate, and a strong sense of Black identity.

Furthermore, this project examines how and under what circumstances members of the 21st century Talented Tenth negotiate and articulate the aforementioned political philosophies as well as group solidarity and linked racial fate. First, I place the Talented Tenth within the prevailing Black American tradition and literature. This is accomplished by isolating the
behavior and beliefs of members of the Talented Tenth within the framework of Black American social and cultural norms, rather than only comparing them to white Americans. Major conceptions of Black American social and cultural norms are examined, in order to better understand Black American political behavior. Next, I explain the strengths of adopting W.E.B. Du Bois’ Talented Tenth moniker for identifying a subgroup of Black Americans who operate outside of the deficit model, a model that is often used to identify and explain the African American experience or “Blackness,” but which may not be appropriate for the study of middle- and upper-class Black Americans. This provides an opportunity to introduce theoretical debates that have persisted in the Black American community, namely between accommodation, confrontation, and separatism. Then, the Black American community and the Talented Tenth subgroup are united using a modified version of Dawson’s theory of linked racial fate. This placement will help illustrate why despite ideological or experiential differences, the Talented Tenth remains loyal to their community and operates within the appropriate Black American social and cultural norms. Finally, I will illustrate that in order to arrive at an appropriate understanding of Black American political and philosophical thought, political science research must build upon and move beyond the traditional understandings of liberal and conservative ideologies, socialization, and identities based upon education or wealth, and explore the unique and significant contributions of Black Americans to the discourse on political thought. I now turn to fleshing out the literature that informs and inspires this inquiry and outline the methodological approaches employed.
Uncle Toms, the Talented Tenth, and Linked Racial Fate

During the early twentieth century, Booker T. Washington was the most influential Black American educator and political leader. Although Washington died in 1915, his educational and political perspectives remained an important influence during the 1930s (Alridge 2011, 362). Washington’s theories were so powerful and befitting of the Black American condition that they connected with his Black philosophical successors. Washington dominated Black philosophical and political debates from 1895 to 1915 (Anderson 1988). A former slave, Washington matriculated at the Hampton Institute (Hampton University) and later headed Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University). Washington rose to national prominence in 1895, when he was invited to speak in front of an integrated audience at the opening of the “Cotton States and International Exposition” held in Atlanta, Georgia. In his speech, now referred to as “The Atlanta Compromise,” Washington called on white America to provide jobs and industrial-agricultural education for Negroes. Washington argued that in exchange, Blacks would give up their demands for social equality and civil rights.

Booker T. Washington’s message to Blacks was that political and social equality were less important as immediate goals than economic independence and respectability. Washington’s argument was not against civil rights and social equality; quite the contrary. Washington believed that social equality and civil rights would be gained as a result of economic opportunities. Washington’s philosophy has been cited as accommodating white oppression (Gaines 1996) and stressing the mutual interdependence of Blacks and whites in the South for mutual progress. Indeed, Washington advocated that Blacks remain in the South, obtain “useful” education in areas such as farming and manual labor, become skilled artisans and continue work
in domestic servitude, in order to ultimately save their earnings and purchase property, but by doing these things, Washington believed that Negroes would “earn” full civil rights.

White Americans responded enthusiastically to Washington’s racial policies and philosophies, making him the national Negro leader of the late nineteenth century in the eyes of whites. There was much opposition to Washington’s philosophies from the Black community, but because his philosophies appeased whites, Washington remained the symbolic “Negro Leader” until his death in 1915. Opposition came to Washington from Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois, with the most heated opposition coming from Du Bois (Hawkins 1974). It is important to note that the opposition that Du Bois had for Washington’s philosophies was not consistent over time. Du Bois favored formal education over vocational and industrial education as a means of social uplift, but he did not categorically deny the importance of vocational and industrial education for the formally educated Negro (Gaines 1996, 2). Du Bois stated, “After we have sent our most promising to college, then not only do the rest, but the college men too, need training in technical schools for the actual technique” (Du Bois 1973).

Prior to his philosophical divergence from Washington, Du Bois made similar statements about the importance of industrial education, which historians as well as advocates of the Talented Tenth concept often overlooked. Du Bois enthusiastically accepted Washington’s “Atlanta Compromise” as sound advice. During the 1890’s, there were several similarities in the philosophies of Du Bois and Washington. Both Washington and Du Bois tended to blame Blacks themselves for their social condition. They placed emphasis on self-help and moral improvement rather than on tangible rights and privileges, while also placing economic advancement ahead of universal manhood suffrage. Du Bois observed that Tuskegee Institute served as a center that trained students in morality, Christianity, the ethics of hard work, and dignified labor, with
academic industrial education absent from the curriculum. Both men strongly believed in racial solidarity, economic cooperation and Black Nationalism, concepts which are now considered to be the underpinning of conservatism among Blacks.

During the first few years of the twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois’s philosophy began to transition. The goals of racial uplift through economic means and hard work were similar, in that both Washington and Du Bois were ultimately concerned with Blacks gaining economic stability and becoming self-sufficient (Alridge 363). But Du Bois differed from Washington over the importance of liberal arts education, especially when Washington’s emphasis on industrial education drew resources and wealthy White donors away from Black liberal arts colleges.

Finally, in 1903 W.E.B. Du Bois launched his initial philosophical attack on Booker T. Washington and Washington’s philosophies in his collection of essays entitled *The Souls of Black Folk*. This publication alone allowed Du Bois to take the reins of the opposition against Washington and begin his protest for Negro civil rights. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois took the position that Black men have a duty to perform: to uplift and lead their communities. In the chapter on “The Talented Tenth” Du Bois wrote:

> If you do not lift them up, they will pull you down. Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work-it must teach life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.

In sum, Du Bois saw the Talented Tenth as college educated African Americans who should socially and politically lead other African Americans as a result of what we now know as linked racial fate. W.E.B. Du Bois believed that persistent agitation of the system, political action and academic education combined, would be the means to achieving full citizenship for
Black Americans. His educational philosophy directly influenced his political approach. He stressed the necessity for liberal arts training because he believed that Black leadership should come from college-trained backgrounds, inclusive of women, expressing an early manifestation of Black feminism. According to Du Bois, in the twentieth century, the problem of the color line would be challenged by the Talented Tenth, the college educated class, who would lead through their knowledge. This knowledge would be used as political capital, paving the way for economic and cultural elevation of the Black masses into the twentieth century.

W.E.B. Du Bois acknowledged that the Talented Tenth existed within the Black American community prior to Reconstruction, challenging the myth that Black Americans had not previously been educated or capable of being educated. He traced the development of the Talented Tenth to the days of slavery, asserting that a number of Black leaders during this time possessed a certain degree of education and leadership skills. Many of these Blacks who were formally educated outside of HBCUs were educated at white Universities in the northern United States, were often socially and culturally isolated from other Blacks. These Blacks were racially linked to other Blacks, but lacked some of the same social experiences. The South often provided no educational opportunities for Blacks. According to Du Bois (1903, 37-38):

> Here and there in the early part of the century came…exceptional men. Some were natural sons of unnatural fathers and were given often liberal training and thus a race of educated mulattoes sprang up to plead for Black men’s rights.

Therefore, in spite of slavery, Du Bois’s Talented Tenth existed prior to Reconstruction. To this point, it appears that the original conceptualization of the Talented Tenth relied heavily on the college educated. The antebellum period’s “educated set” included people such as Alexander Crummell and James McCune Smith, Blacks educated overseas or those who attended Black or white liberal universities in the North, but were active in antislavery societies helping
Blacks in the South. Although the conceptualization and definition of the Talented Tenth has been altered as times and circumstances have changed, the Talented Tenth has always been associated with their racial connectedness or linkedness to other Blacks. Even during Du Bois’s lifetime, he altered the definition of Talented Tenth as he saw fit.

According to authors Battle and Wright (2002), before Du Bois’s death he felt abandoned by the Talented Tenth because of their relative silence during the government’s attempt to brand him a traitor and a Communist while denying him a passport (660). Du Bois asserted that “the intelligentsia, the Talented Tenth, the successful business and professional men, were not, for the most part outspoken in [his] defense. They were silent or actually antagonistic” (1968). Later in his life, Du Bois was able to offer an explanation for the Talented Tenth’s silence during his trial and their refusal or inability to honor the charge placed before them almost fifty years prior (2002, 660), when he wrote:

Negroes of intelligence and prosperity had become American in their acceptance of exploitation as defensible, and in their imitation of American “conspicuous expenditure.” They proposed to make money and spend it as pleased them. They had beautiful homes, large and expensive cars and fur coats. They hated “communism” and “socialism” as much as any white American. Their reaction toward Paul Robeson was typical; they simply could not understand his surrendering a thousand dollars a night for moral conviction (1968, 370-371).

Before his death in 1963, Du Bois had suggested through his writings that the Talented Tenth were becoming members of the Black middle class, and began forsaking their responsibilities to the Black American community in favor of “personal gratification and accomplishments” (Battle and Wright 661). Du Bois suggested that the Talented Tenth was no longer engaged in leadership activities, and no longer felt obligated to serve the Black American community as he prescribed at the turn of the twentieth century. Arguably monetary attainment
or simply using education as a means for the acquisition of wealth corrupted the concept of the Talented Tenth or feelings of social linkedness to other Black Americans. Both Du Bois and Washington agreed upon the importance of self-sufficiency, a trait possessed by many of the early Black American college attendees. As a result, understanding the Talented Tenth in the twenty-first century is rooted at least in part, in an individual’s ability to make great social strides, often measured by their income or educational pursuits. Sometimes these social strides damage the racial and social bonds that link Black Americans to one another.

Unlike Du Bois, I do not believe that members of the Talented Tenth have abandoned their responsibility to other Black Americans. Instead, members of the Talented Tenth have expressed their leadership and activism on behalf of other Blacks in other explicit ways. Since the definition of the Talented Tenth has evolved, here I conceptualize membership in the Talented Tenth as being dependent on two primary concepts: the likelihood to explicitly express linked racial fate and college education; wealth alone does not determine inclusion in the Talented Tenth. For this reason, the Talented Tenth is exclusive of most musical artists, performers and entertainers, many of whom express Black consciousness through their art, but are neither formally education nor feel an obligation as a result of their education to help other Black Americans; these Blacks are often referred to as the Black elite. Author Lawrence Otis Graham’s *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class* (1999) and his forthcoming sequel *The Our Kind of People 800 Register* provide a contemporary illustration of history, culture and traditions of the Black elite. When asked about who would make the registry for the ‘Black elite’, Graham said, ‘Oprah Winfrey, Black Enterprise Publisher Earl Graves and Johnson Publishing's Linda Johnson Rice likely will make the list. Russell Simmons, Michael Jordan and Tyler Perry, three of the richest black men in America, probably won't’ (Roanoke
Times 2008). Graham goes on to say, “People like Oprah and Bill Cosby shouldn't be compared to Jay-Z and Beyoncé. While all the people on the list will be millionaires and billionaires, it is also about where did you go to school? Who are you married to? What med school did your granddaddy go to?” Education, not money or artistic medium, is necessary for membership in the Talented Tenth even if money earned or the artistic medium used expresses Black consciousness or racial linkedness.

Linked Fates, Different Destinies

Many scholars of African American politics and political behavior have used the concept of linked fate to explain group solidarity and political cohesion. Racial solidarity or linked racial fate (Dawson 1994; Gray and Tate 1998; Jaynes and Williams 1989) is defined as an acute sense of awareness and recognition that what happens to the group will also affect the individual member. Linked fate reflects a sense of belonging and conscious loyalty to the specific group. For Black Americans linked fate results from experiencing a long history of discrimination, segregation, and disenfranchisement in the United States (Dawson 1994 and 1997; Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson 1989; Herring, Jankowski and Brown 1999; Tate 1994).

Black political scientists posit that linked fate arises from lived experiences, such as day to day encounters with race oppression and class exploitation (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Feagin and Sikes 1994). A shared experience with racial oppression and class exploitation encourages Black Americans to actively participate in politics. According to Evelyn M. Simien (2005, 530), this stage of identification, whereby individuals come to see themselves as sharing linked fate with other Black Americans, leads to collective action as a necessary form of resistance. Scholars of Black political behavior have observed two phenomena related to linked racial fate: (1) Blacks tend to participate more in political activities than whites when differences in socioeconomic
status are taken into account (Brady et al 1995; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972) and (2) a strong sense of ethnic community or group consciousness is the stimulus to heightened Black participation (Guterbock and London 1983; Shingles 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). This work is more concerned with the latter because it provides a framework for explaining the Talented Tenth's connectedness to other Black Americans.

The phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that while wealthier or more educated Blacks participate in more overtly partisan activities such as belonging to political clubs, attending political meetings and rallies, donating money and time to partisan campaigns, and attempting to influence the opinions of others, even low income Blacks are often involved in community driven political activities including civil rights organizations, tenant associations and church programs. The major difference between Blacks with low levels of income and education and Blacks with high levels of income or education is in their levels of participation in electoral politics (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Verba and Nie (1972) describe the over-representation of Black Americans among political activists, despite income or education level, as “Black consciousness.” For purposes of this study, low income is defined using standard federal guidelines of poverty.

The second phenomenon illustrates that racially linked fate creates a strong sense of identity and community for Black Americans. Although Black Americans may possess differing political ideologies and views based upon varied religious, educational, social, and economic experiences, this strong sense of Black American identity will help motivate them to work for Black causes that may not be individually salient. For example, low income Blacks were noted for being active in the Civil Rights Era although arguably the movement was fought on behalf of
middle and upper middle class Blacks. Research in the 21st century has not devoted attention to these social cleavages.

Verba and Nie (1972) also illustrate that Blacks who are aware of their oppression are much more active than Blacks who are not, and more active than whites of similar socioeconomic status. The empirical case made by Verba and Nie that establishes the relationship between Black consciousness and political participation is impressive, yet they leave a fundamental question unanswered: Why do Blacks with high educational attainment or high income may feel the same sense of oppression as Blacks with low education and low income? Research shows that when race is salient, as measured by indicators of Black consciousness or linked racial fate, high levels of income and education do not result in reduced feelings of oppression (Verba and Nie 1972). If anything, they might reinforce feelings of oppression which also reinforces linked racial fate.

While in general, earning a college or university degree typically leads to greater income, Black Americans with the same amount of formal education as whites are paid less despite having the same degree. This finding is documented by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and is further outlined in Chapter V. The income gap between whites and Blacks continues in the 21st century (Johnson 2011). W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line” (1903). It is sobering that Du Bois’s insight holds true in the 21st century with an addendum: “the problem of the 21st century is the problem of the color line as well as education and income inequality.” While education, accessibility and greater opportunity have resulted in a growing Black middle class whose members are better off than their lower-class Black counterparts, they are still behind whites with similar academic experiences. Even within the top one percent of wage earners in the United States there is a disparity. For example,
the top earning Black households have a median income of $823,000, which is 22% less than white top earners. But this income gap between the top one percent of Black and whites is much smaller than the income gap between the remaining 99% of whites and Blacks (The Grio 2011). Therefore, the connectedness Black Americans feel to one another continues to persist because of the income inequality they experience even after earning a college degree. This income inequality is arguably linked to racial inequality resulting in Blacks exhibiting high levels of linked racial fate as previously discussed.

The Pew Institute’s data, which precedes Johnson’s 2011 study, confirmed that over the last century the increase in the size of the Black middle class has been accompanied by the declining economic status of the Black lower class (Pew Institute 2007). The decline of the Black lower class has not resulted in a Democratic legislative campaign to rebuild the wealth of the Black lower class because the middle class, both Black and white, managed to keep their jobs and a substantial amount of their money as a result of middle class income and employment training, while the poor became poorer (Parent and Stekler 1985).

The income inequality faced by Blacks is another form of oppression further linking Blacks to one another. While racism pervades society and often results in negative outcomes for Blacks, Michael Dawson (1994) argues that Blacks can use their race to contribute to positive outcomes. Dawson argues that race has a great impact on Black political decision making. Black political decision making is measured using the Black Utility Heuristic (BUH). The BUH helps explain Black American support of liberal ideology and Democratic partisanship. This dissertation contributes to the larger body of literature on race and ideology by suggesting that while linked racial fate is at work for members of the Talented Tenth it does not result in liberal ideology as Dawson suggests in Black Visions (2003, 307). Instead, I argue that linked racial fate
results in a distinctive variety of conservative ideology that can be measured using double consciousness and several experiences or beliefs that express racial identity and solidarity. A high score on the double consciousness scale indicates that an individual expresses double consciousness (African American and American/Black and American), while a low score indicates that an individual identifies with solely their nationality (i.e. American).

The manifestations of linked racial fate are influenced by social and economic preferences. While these manifestations can be understood using the traditional ideological dimensions of economic and social conservatism to liberalism, for Black Americans they also illustrate a progression from integrationist to isolationist or separatist theories rooted in accommodation and confrontationist strategies. On this dimension, integrationist theories are identified as more liberal, while isolationist and separatist theories as well as racecentric theories are considered conservative. Although a sense of double consciousness may seemingly predict an integrationist perspective, it is truly confrontational in the shadow of American cultural exceptionalism and Americentrism because Black Americans represent a challenge to American ethnocentrism.
TABLE 1.1
Black Ideological Dimensions (Component Matrix)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>NAES</th>
<th>NBES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral Dimension (1)</td>
<td>Fiscal Dimension (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>-.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Trade</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Borderfence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position on abortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position on gay marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks should build relations</td>
<td>-.353</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Black Economies</td>
<td>-.476</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Black Stores</td>
<td>-.464</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer: Gay/Lesbians</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death penalty</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for food stamps</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for medicare</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrocentric Schools</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for Black Candidates</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items in **bold** indicate the chief components of each dimension

Conservatism among Blacks is able to exist ideologically, even when utilizing moral and fiscal dimensions, because conservatism among Blacks operates on a different dimension than the traditional economic and moral dimensions that are typically used to describe political ideology in the United States. For Blacks, conservatism is understood as a dimension that is an
amalgam of racial solidarity, Black pride, and a sense of ethnic double consciousness as well as a moral and fiscal dimension. The racial solidarity/Black pride dimension does not exist for whites. Therefore, Dawson is correct in his assumptions about linked racial fate keeping well to do Blacks from becoming conservative, but because he does not use the racial solidarity/Black pride dimension, he does not fully explain the consequences of linked racial fate. The moral and fiscal dimensions, as illustrated in Table 1.1, do not alone capture Black American ideology. Therefore, by using a dimension that is a combination of variables related to race as well as moral and fiscal ideology, I am able to better explain Black behavior. The factor analysis used to create the racialized moral and fiscal dimensions are illustrated in Table 1.1. Although these latter two dimensions are further discussed in chapter V it is important to note that race, linked racial fate, and religiosity, as well demographic factors such as income and level of education all contribute to where one falls on the three racialized dimensions.

Conceptually, in this dissertation I make the assumption that conservatism among Blacks operates using a dimension that allows for the inclusion of the various manifestations of linked racial fate and double consciousness. On this dimension, conservatism among Blacks does not result in a specific partisan identification or support for certain candidates; instead, conservatism among Blacks results in explicit support for policies and ideas that align with the ideas and philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus M. Garvey and exemplify feelings of racial linkedness. This is further examined in chapter V.

Although ideology is important to understanding Black American political behavior, using Black philosophical thought to explain this behavior instead of white philosophical thought is just as important. This dissertation fills the gap in a literature that does not sufficiently recognize the importance of Black philosophical thought and political leaders in explaining
Black political thought and behavior. This is achieved by utilizing multiple methodological approaches and involves exploratory and two-stage analysis. One of the important tasks undertaken in this project is to first look at the origins of the unique variety of conservatism in Black political thought.

**The Origins of Conservatism in Black Political Thought**

For the purposes of this study not only do I argue that conservatism among Blacks operates on a different ideological dimension than the one traditionally used, but I also make a clear distinction between the operation of conservatism among Blacks and Blacks who identify as conservatives. There is a void in the literature and lexicon to accurately describe Blacks who express this unique variety of conservatism. The latter are often Republican identifiers, who do not feel racially linked to other Blacks. In contrast, I further explain in Chapter V that conservatism among Blacks refers to the basic tenets of Black political and philosophical thought that results in term that I’ve titled the “Black Value System.” This includes characteristics of Black Nationalism. I also provide examples of Blacks who operate on both the traditional ideological spectrum as well as the uniquely Black manifestation of conservatism.

Blacks who are often referred to as “Black Conservatives” may have some of the same conservative ideological or philosophical leanings as the aforementioned Blacks, but their “Republican” label often expresses their absence of feelings of racially linked fate. Clarence Page (1996) offers a distinction between the expressed conservatism in Black political thought and Blacks who identify as conservatives by categorizing the groups as “Black conservatives” and “conservative Blacks.” Page writes:

I distinguish between “Black conservatives” and “conservative Blacks.” The former is a relatively small, if high profile, movement of avowed conservatives who happen to be Black. The latter best describes the Black masses who harbor many conservative attitudes, but part
company with traditional conservative party lines, especially the line that says Black people make too much of racism (194-195).

Therefore, when referring to conservatism among Blacks I am not only referring to Black Americans who may subscribe to politically conservative beliefs that fall along the traditional ideological spectrum, but also those who have adopted principles and mobilization strategies that are often both rooted in Black American history and Black Nationalism. The philosophical tradition of conservatism for Blacks is associated with Black political solidarity and Black Nationalism. For some, the idea of Black Nationalism is associated with images of the Black Panther Party, the Nation of Islam, and other influential Black Nationalist organizations and leaders of the 1960s and early 1970s. Interestingly, those who exclusively frame Black Nationalism within the confines of the Civil Rights Era often believe that the fight for racial justice has already been won and the problems Black Americans face in the 21st century result from their own “victim’s mentality”; these are often Black conservatives or Black Republican identifiers. In contrast, Black Americans who oppose this view of conservatism tend to frame the ideas of Black Nationalism and conservatism among Blacks in terms of pre- and post-Civil Rights Era issues.

In his essay “Race and Social Theory,” Cornel West refers to the Civil Rights Era reading of oppression as the “conservative view of African American oppression” (1999). Arguably, it is here that “Conservative Blacks” find their ideological home. Here West is using the traditional ideological dimension of conservatism, which excludes race. West argues that the conservative view of African American oppression is the most common perspective held by whites and to a lesser extent some Blacks in the United States, and that it consists of two elements: discrimination in the marketplace and judgments made in the minds of people. In the marketplace, West states, that the differential treatment of Blacks is motivated by what he
describes as the ‘tastes’ of white employers and/or white workers. These tastes are deemed rational by whites and Conservative Blacks, because according to West, whites and Conservative Blacks view white supremacy as a rational behavior; therefore white supremacy is justifiable. I argue that Blacks who accept this view of oppression often have high levels of political efficacy.

Instead of using the aforementioned view of conservatism, this project describes conservatism among Blacks as an ideology rooted in the tenets of Black Nationalism and proceeds to operate as if Black oppression and racism are fixtures in the social life of Americans. Importantly, this conservatism diverges from Black Nationalism because it does not advocate that Black Americans form self-reliant Black communities without making further demands on the state for racial reform, although it possesses some aspects of Black Nationalism. My argument proceeds with the assumption that this conservatism is pro-Black in its political philosophy, and allows for a mix of traditional conservative and liberal ideas as long as the ideas result in Black American social and economic advancement. Ultimately, Cornel West refers to this as the “left-liberal” view (West 1999) for overcoming oppression. This “left-liberal” view is similar to Black Nationalism in stressing Black self-reliance and government action, where public policies for full employment, public works programs and some affirmative action are supported. Although conservatism among Blacks stands in contrast to traditional conservatism, it still fits within the parameters of conservatism as a result of its development out of the Western European political philosophy of classical liberalism (McClain and Tauber 2010). Conservatism among Blacks also has roots within the Hobbesian (The Leviathan 1651) and to a greater extent Lockean (Two Treaties of Government 1689) theory of classical liberalism where “the individual is favored over the group, free market economics are supported, reason is placed before faith, equal opportunity in education and employment, and a guaranteed minimum standard of living”
(McClain and Tauber 9). The theory of classical liberalism has developed into modern values of religious toleration, separation of church and state, freedom of expression, restrictions of police behavior, free elections, and an economic policy aimed at sustained growth on the basis of private ownership. These values align in many ways with the values of Black Nationalism, while supporting the traditionally understood reading of conservatism. These values can therefore be endorsed by Blacks because the saliency of race is not diminished by neoliberal or free market ideology.

Conservatism among Blacks refers specifically to political philosophy and not partisan identification. As it pertains to party identification, I understand conservatism among Blacks to allow for Republican and Democratic identification; however the overwhelming majority of conservative Blacks identify as Democrats or independents in the 21st century (Bartels 2000; Lewis-Beck 2009). In the pre Civil War Era, Black Americans supported the Republican Party because it was seen as most hospitable to the interests of Blacks, especially because of its role in abolishing slavery. Therefore, for Blacks who were able to vote in the early 20th century, the Republican Party was the only alternative. In the South, the Democratic Party had established an all-white primary and instituted poll tax, grandfather clauses, and other forms of voting restrictions (Watson 1998). Although there was a history of Republican affiliation following the Civil War and FDR’s New Deal, African Americans began to vote as Democrats first following the Great Depression and continuing after 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act; this illustrated a victory for Lyndon Johnson and the Democratic Party in solidifying the Black vote or Democratic “capture” of the Black vote (Frymer 2008; 2009).

Black politics scholars agree that the Black American community has a long history of being socially conservative (utilizing the traditional ideological dimension). According to
Elwood Watson (1998), “African Americans share a tradition of being churchgoers, of building cohesive family units through their reliance on extended family and kinship networks, and of adhering to other principles that have been identified as conservative. This sort of social conservatism among many Blacks [is] pertinent for survival (75).” This social conservatism dimension is not influenced by high income or education. Therefore, the unique variety of conservatism used in this project does not reflect this traditional reading of social conservatism although I do find that religion is extremely important to Black social or moral ideological development.

Certainly, there are Black Americans who are neither socially conservative nor support the Democratic Party; not all Black Americans are practitioners of Abrahamic religions, and some Blacks do support Republican candidates. There are also major regional differences that contribute to the manifestation of political ideology and modes for political participation. How do I explain Blacks who are religious and socially conservative overwhelmingly supporting the Democratic Party rather than the religious right Republican Party? In one phrase: linked racial fate. Over the years, those who subscribe to this racialized view of conservatism, but do not associate with the Republican Party have become increasingly disenchanted with what they perceive as “the increasing acrimonious posture of mainstream conservatism” (Watson 88).

Conservatism among Blacks and Class Divisions

Members of the Talented Tenth include middle, upper middle, upper, and in the 21st century, even working class Blacks. In the case of middle, upper middle, and upper class Talented Tenth members, they have incentives for being fiscally conservative. Fiscal conservatism may allow them to retain some of their wealth obtained through Washington’s
“boot strap” philosophy. Economic conservatism often advocates for free trade, deregulation of the economy, and lower taxes as seen in the 1980s policies of President Ronald Reagan, which many higher income Blacks supported (Robinson 1982). As a result of their income and wealth the upper middle class Blacks and members of the Talented Tenth are often associated with Republicanism by scholars outside of the Black American community (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1987), but there are historical and contemporary reasons that Republicans have not gained the support of many Talented Tenth and non-Talented Tenth members of the middle, upper middle, or upper class Blacks in recent years.

First, the Black middle class is defined, in many ways, by their racial and class identity. Studies on the Black middle and upper middle class surfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, just as scholars were beginning to study Black conservatives as well (Jencks and Peterson 1991; Moore and Pinderhughes 1993; Marks 1991). The literature on middle class Blacks has focused on four areas: studies of racial and class-based residential segregation, the comparative well-being of Black and white middle class neighborhoods, neighborhood racial preferences, and Black suburbanization. A fifth and fledgling area of scholarship in this area was an interest in the movement of non-Talented Tenth middle and upper class Blacks and members of the Talented Tenth back to poor Black neighborhoods (Pattillo 2005). This phenomenon is often referred to as Black gentrification, which helps inform my understanding of conservatism among Blacks by connecting linked racial fate and conservative ideological beliefs.

Gentrification by Black American Talented Tenth members has resulted in residential segregation. Often gentrification is discussed in terms of whites moving into Black neighborhoods, but in some cases middle and upper middle class Blacks and Talented Tenth members are gentrifying poor and working class Black neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993
and 1988; Farley and Allen 1989; Galster 1988; Massey and Fischer 1999; Pattillo 1999). This phenomenon explains selective segregation as collective in nature, reflecting the social status of Black Americans in a racially and ethnically stratified society. This approach is long-standing and can be traced back to the origins of segregation studies in the research of the schools in the city of Chicago (Luppescu et al 2011).

The continuing importance of race in the daily lives of members of the Talented Tenth and middle class Blacks often challenges the impact of income, and presents challenges for interpreting typical class indicators (Feagin 1991; Hughes and Thomas 1998; Thomas and Hughes 1986). Authors Cole and Omari (2003) illustrate that an intersectional model of race and class does not always assume that class categories have the same meaning for Black Americans as they do whites. A review of the class divisions within the African American community, paying close attention to the widening divide between the Black middle class and working class, illustrates that these class divisions have long existed in the African American community (Frazier 1957; Graham 1999) despite residing side by side in Black neighborhoods.

Class divisions within the African American community existed prior to, and began to widen following, the emancipation of slaves. These class divisions began as a segment of the Black population, who by virtue of their light skin and blood relations to the white slave-owning class, received benefits such as assignment of choice work tasks, training in skilled occupations, and, for some, freedom (Frazier 1957; Hughes and Hertel 1990). During the period following emancipation, this group attempted to “maintain their privilege and elite status by segregating themselves from the rest of the Black community, maintaining their proximity to whites” (Cole and Omari 2003, 787). Members of this group formed what became known as the “old guard,” the Black upper class (and later the Talented Tenth), which included reverends, entrepreneurs,
bankers, funeral home owners, and other formally educated professionals. By virtue of their social status, their ideological outlook began to shift, although their commitment or ethnic identification as African American kept them racially linked to other Black Americans. This also reflects some of the early manifestations of this unique conservatism among Blacks and Black Nationalism.

**Race “Colors” (Almost) Everything**

Members of the Talented Tenth as well as Black American non-members often negotiate their race, religiosity, education, income and class differently and under different circumstances than whites. The differences between these identities and Black American social norms dictate that the expressed political ideology of the Black voting bloc will also be negotiated differently than the white voting bloc. This results in differences in political behavior and ideological articulation within sub-groups of the African American community, based upon class or other experiential capabilities (such as differences in socialization). Many of these differences can be attributed to the class-based socialization of Black Americans as well as the historical experiences of Blacks as oppressed racial minorities in the United States. Therefore, their conservatism is not expressed in the same way as conservatism is expressed by white Americans, even on similar political issues, especially on issues that are rooted in race and the Black American experience in the United States. For example, many social conservatives oppose gun control. While white social conservatives may oppose gun control for protection from or fear of (Black) violence, Blacks who express conservatism may oppose gun control for protection from police brutality. Both examples are rooted in unique racialized histories and experiences in the United States (Winkler 2011).
The contemporary research that misconceives Black American conservatives as Republican identifiers does not account for the particular varieties of conservatism that are reflective of Black Nationalism or unique Black American experiences. Rather, it uses Black Americans’ opinions on social issues, such as opposing gay marriage, to classify Black Americans as socially conservative. Although Blacks are typically considered socially conservative as a result of their overwhelming religiosity, the media and researchers don’t fully understand the impact of Black American economic conservatism. Public opinion polls (Gallup) typically illustrate that Black Americans support Democratic candidates as a result of Democrats’ support of state intervention in the economy and support for government spending. As Talented Tenth and non-member focus group participants will articulate in the upcoming chapters, electoral support for Democratic candidates does not suggest indisputable support for Democratic policies. Such polls do not account for the Black Nationalist manifestation of conservatism that supports lower taxes, the establishment of private self-help programs, and as the Black Panther Party advocated, “the power to determine the destiny of the Black and oppressed communities.”

There are racialized consequences for paying higher taxes and for government interference in a country where deep racial inequalities exist in education, employment, and the acquisition of wealth. As a result, although conservatism among Black Americans typically manifests in support for some fiscally liberal programs to diminish the effects of inequality, it also suggests support for fiscal conservatism to the extent that it incorporates Black Nationalism, allowing them to disentangle themselves from a system that is still inequitable in the 21st century. This support for fiscal conservatism can be seen in the writings and speeches of Malcolm X after
he disassociated himself with the Nation of Islam. In Malcolm X’s “Ballot or the Bullet” speech (Cleveland, Ohio April 3, 1964) he states:

The economic philosophy of Black Nationalism is pure and simple. It only means that we should control the economy of our community. Why should white people be running all the stores in our community? Why should white people be running the banks of our community? Why should the economy of our community be in the hands of the white man? Why? If a black man can't move his store into a white community, you tell me why a white man should move his store into a black community. The philosophy of Black Nationalism involves a re-education program in the black community in regards to economics. Our people have to be made to see that any time you take your dollar out of your community and spend it in a community where you don't live, the community where you live will get poorer and poorer, and the community where you spend your money will get richer and richer.

Then you wonder why where you live is always a ghetto or a slum area. And where you and I are concerned, not only do we lose it when we spend it out of the community, but the white man has got all our stores in the community tied up; so that though we spend it in the community, at sundown the man who runs the store takes it over across town somewhere. He's got us in a vise. So the economic philosophy of black nationalism means in every church, in every civic organization, in every fraternal order, it's time now for our people to become conscious of the importance of controlling the economy of our community. If we own the stores, if we operate the businesses, if we try and establish some industry in our own community, then we're developing to the position where we are creating employment for our own kind. Once you gain control of the economy of your own community, then you don't have to picket and boycott and beg some cracker downtown for a job in his business.

However, in this same speech Malcolm X seems to advocate, to a certain extent, for the intervention of the U.S. government, saying:

The same government that you go abroad to fight for and die for is the government that is in a conspiracy to deprive you of your voting rights, deprive you of your economic opportunities, deprive you of decent housing, deprive you of decent education. You don't need to go to the employer alone, it is the government itself, the government of America that is responsible for the oppression and exploitation and degradation of black people in this country. And you should drop it in their lap. This government has failed the Negro. This so-called democracy has failed the Negro. And all these white liberals have definitely failed the Negro.

Again, fiscal conservatism is closely linked to the tenets of Black Nationalist religions and organizations, and therefore manifests differently in the African American community than in the white community. In the contemporary sense, Black Nationalism has been seen as a source
of opposition to Western culture and values; however Black Nationalism is arguably the ideal manifestation of economic independence from the white establishment. Although most early Black Nationalists defined economic independence to only be attainable through emigration and activism, scholars have employed a more expansive meaning to include political independence as well. Many Black Nationalist groups argued that Black Americans needed to develop their own businesses, institutions, and organizations in order to sustain themselves without aid from the government. Carlos Cooks’ “Buy Black” Campaign of the 1950’s was believed to make the Black community behave like the other racial and ethnic groups and “… have Blacks own and control the businesses in Black neighborhoods” (1977).

The economic independence principle has been quite successful in Afrocentric neighborhoods and organizations, and has been used by religious Black Nationalist groups such as the Nation of Islam to promote the development of independent businesses to their members and engage in entrepreneurial development. Black economic independence also includes community control of schools and institutions that serve as socializing agents for children and adults (Price 2009), reflecting some of the same methods used by members of the Christian Right (Wilcox and Robinson 2011, 41). During the Black Power era, the Black Panthers developed social programs such as free clinics, clothing and food drives, and free breakfast programs to provide a model for community self-help and economic independence from the government; limited government assistance with all programming facilitated and sponsored by community organizations.

As suggested earlier, Black American religious values and religiosity are associated with the traditional reading of conservatism among Blacks by politics scholars, but increased income is also associated with an increased tendency to have conservative economic values regardless of
race (Huber and Form 1973; Johnson and Tamney 2001). This increased income and religiosity is often discussed in terms of the Talented Tenth, Black upper class, Black elite, and in some cases Evangelical Christians. During the mid-1980s and continuing into the 21st century, scholars began to follow this group, that they would label “Black Conservatives.” The term was rather premature, for the aforementioned label did not account for a racialized political experience influencing fiscal and social ideology. Scholars who studied economic influences on voting behavior failed to account for the saliency of race and feelings of linked fate.

Individuals who were associated with the “Black Conservative” movement espoused a message of equal opportunity, self-reliance, and individual initiative, standing in contrast to the message of conservatism described earlier. From a white racialized perspective these values were deemed as traditionally conservative and associated with the Republican Party. However, as stated previously, conservatism among Blacks does not always translate into Black Republican identifiers. Indeed, only three percent of Black Americans consider themselves Republicans, while almost 40% identify as holding broad conservative values (Selzter and Smith 1985; Gurin et al 1989; Bolce et al 1992; Sahgal and Smith 2009; Pew Institute 2009). I argue that Black Americans are invoking Black conservative values instead of traditional conservative values when asked about conservatism. It is important to note, however, that linking conservatism among Blacks with Republicanism is not a completely absurd task. For prior to the mid-1950s, most registered Black Americans, including celebrated author Zora Neale Hurston, philosopher Booker T. Washington, baseball great Jackie Robinson and even Rev. Martin Luther King (Robinson 1972) were Republicans. Unfortunately, the Republican Party of the post Civil Rights Era has factions that have transformed its values and not allowed for the presence of racialized conservatism.
The American Dilemma

Given the many ideologies held by Black Americans, it is important to outline the reasons for focusing on a racialized conservative ideology and the manifestation of this ideology. Does it deserve a more important status than other ideological strains within the African American community? Arguably, yes because a great deal of attention has been paid to liberal ideology and it alone is not sufficient for understanding Black American political philosophy or ideological formation. There are several justifications for examining conservatism through a racial lens. First, although U.S. political scientists may be expected to be at the center of debates on questions of race, racial injustice, and racial pathologies that influence the extensive study of the Black American political experience, they are often guilty of approaching the study of Black Americans as the “American Dilemma,” and therefore deracializing their experiences (King and Smith 2005, 75). When Desmond King and Rodgers Smith refer to Black Americans as the “American Dilemma” they suggest that leaders and academics admit that Black Americans face issues as a result of their race, but have inadequately dealt with resolving these issues. They further argue that studies on racial issues lack clear theoretical accounts of the relationship between race and politics. As a result of this omission, King and Smith argue that any analysis of American politics is insufficient and gives the illusion that race is not a dilemma in America. Therefore, it is important to infuse race into all political discussions about American politics in order to ensure that the discussions reflect both the ethnic diversity and the racialized experiences of all Americans. While some political science studies tend to over-generalize the political behavior of Black Americans or compare their behavior to that of whites (Ericson 1999; Greenstone 1993; Orren and Skowronek 2004), this study deliberately uses a racialized lens to ensure that impact of race is understood for various political behaviors and decisions. In this
study, Black Americans are no longer a “dilemma,” but rather a solution for helping understand political motivations.

In contrast, I explore how race, class, political culture and ideology are situated within Black American politics in general, and the Talented Tenth, in particular; I situate the Talented Tenth within Black American politics. This work further explores how race, class, political culture, and ideology results in a heterogeneous ethnic group powerfully connected to the general Black American community by linked racial fate. This linked racial fate is articulated explicitly in conversation, utilizing language that reflects various manifestations of Black solidarity. Furthermore, this research explores how both members of the Talented Tenth and non-members articulate their unique brand of racialized conservatism, while using language that does not disparage Democrats or liberal policies. I believe that this implicit support of Democrats and some liberal policies is used in order to align members of the Talented Tenth with the national Black agenda and showcases their linked racial fate. As such, I hope that this work increases our understanding of how this explicit declaration of support for the national Black agenda is consistent with studies of Black political behavior (e.g. National Black Election Studies), but does accounts for the prevalence of conservatism.

Second, despite increases in education, income and employment status, members of the Talented Tenth continue to see themselves defined by their racial, rather than socioeconomic, identity. As a result, the best way to understand Black political thought and ideology is to understand the impact of race. The impact of race, racial motivations for voting, and ideological formation have gone without extensive examination. This work desires to fill a gap in the literature by exploring Black political motivations and the nuances of conservative ideology among Blacks without always comparing Blacks to whites. While Black philosophers and
leaders have struggled with the idea of how Blacks should respond to the political institutions of the United States, this research hopes to provide some insight for those interested in different Black voting blocs. Furthermore, by studying the Talented Tenth, I am able to illustrate how the Talented Tenth understands their linkedness to the non-Talented Tenth members, while remaining “True to [their] God, True to [their] native land” (James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing”).

**Accommodation: Rationale for Exploring the Talented Tenth**

Given the unique political culture and experience of Black Americans in the United States, it is important to provide an outline of the reasons why the Talented Tenth is chosen for exploration in this study. It is not sufficient to say that Black Americans have had a unique political experience in the United States, nor is it enough to simply attribute the lack of homogeneity in Black American politics to geographical location, individual socialization, education or occupation. Do members of the Talented Tenth deserve more attention than the Black American working poor or members of Black Nationalist groups? No. However, there are several justifications for the claim that examining the Talented Tenth in the 21st century is particularly important and enhances the discourse on Black American politics.

Members of the Talented Tenth are neither more conservative than other Black Americans nor do they possess a greater degree of linked racial fate than non-Talented Tenth members. Instead, members of the Talented Tenth are able to articulate the alternative dimensions in which their conservatism and linked racial fate operate using language that reflects their college socialization and education. I argue that conservatism among Black Americans is not motivated by education, but rather the oppression and marginalization that Blacks have faced
in the United States as a result of their race. Conservatism among Blacks is an outgrowth of separatism, Black pride, and self-sufficiency. Therefore, by virtue of their race, members of the Talented Tenth possess a certain degree of conservatism. Likewise, linked racial fate operates for Black Americans notwithstanding their membership in the Talented Tenth. However, because education may result in greater income or employment opportunities members of the Talented Tenth may possess different social or economic indicators from non-Talented Tenth members that may alter their conservatism or linked racial fate. As the focus group narratives will reveal, both members and non-Talented Tenth members articulate conservatism and linked racial fate, but members of the Talented Tenth use language that explicitly indicates this conservatism and linked racial fate; while non-Talented Tenth members are unable to discuss conservatism among Blacks and linked racial fate using alternative ideological dimension language. The latter’s difficulty in describing this alternative dimension may simply reflect their unfamiliarity with the theoretical concepts.

The Talented Tenth illustrates Black America’s success. Members of the Talented Tenth are the manifestation of the Black community’s promotion of upward mobility for Blacks. Their method for upward mobility includes, in the following order: earning a college degree, getting a “good” job, and “moving on up” out of Black American working and lower middle class neighborhoods. Earning a college degree and getting a “good job” would seemingly result in a network of Blacks who could, if they so desired, help the struggling lower classes of Blacks into new areas or prosperity, through either their monetary and/or academic achievements. Sadly, as a result of the tremendous success of celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey and Beyoncé Knowles Carter, the academic and monetary achievements of the Talented Tenth are being overshadowed. With the increase of multimillionaire and billionaire businessmen and women, less attention is
being paid to members of the Talented Tenth who began as chauffeurs, porters, teachers, clergy, and physicians. This is evidenced, in part, by the value and “celebrity” surrounding entertainers and not educators and physicians. The bastardization of the Talented Tenth has consequently resulted in the diminishing role of the Talented Tenth in Black American culture and society. The role of the Talented Tenth, which was once looked to with a sense of agency in saving other Black Americans, has weakened, resulting in less attention being paid to the role of the Talented Tenth and their influence on the African American community. For this reason, I am providing the Talented Tenth with another opportunity “to be great again”, to paraphrase Marcus M. Garvey.

Data from the Pew Research Center reveals that Black Americans up and down the economic scale are not seeing the kind of forward economic momentum they saw in earlier generations (2007). A cursory look at this research would suggest that the Talented Tenth may be becoming more fragile. Talented Tenth families are having difficulty passing on their upper middle and middle income status to their children due to underemployment and income disparities. According to William Reed of Black Press International, about 45% of Talented Tenth children who grow up in middle class families will fall into a lower income bracket in adulthood. This suggests that the Black elite, who were once established based upon their pedigree (education and in some cases income), may be losing ground. The Black American elite, who are often wrongly associated with the moniker “Talented Tenth,” represent a small minority of wealthy Black American individuals. Although the Black American elite are not the main focus of this project, they often represent the intersection of membership in the Talented Tenth and wealth and are therefore included.

**The Talented Tenth: Accommodationists?**
Cathy Cohen’s *Boundaries of Blackness* (1999), which illustrates advanced marginalization in the African American community, suggests that attempting to understand Black American politics from the perspective of in-group minorities is quite useful in articulating the manner in which the political priorities of a certain subset of a racial group are privileged over others. Taking this into account, Black American politics can be viewed as a set of strong experiences allowing for the articulation of diverse political experiences and ideologies representing the Black American experience. Adolph Reed (2004) argues that the focus on Black American politics is:

embedded within the common sense of Black political discourse and practice in the segregation era- most crucially, the presumption that Black political activity reduces to a generic politics of racial advancement that dissolves or transcends more particularistic interests and programs. (106-107)

The Talented Tenth has served as the ideological and social alter ego of the African American community and its conservatism. At every historical moment, Black Americans and their leaders have been placed in two categories, accommodationists and separatists, with varying degrees of adherence to each in theory and practice (i.e. from the NAACP to Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Black Panther Party). Both of these categories can be linked to conservatism as it operates within the Black community. Accordingly, the ideological debates that have developed have polarized the discourse related to the formation of Black American leadership, the appropriate strategies for economic and social empowerment, and what constitutes Black American authenticity. In fact, various Black American leaders and their differing strategies for Black American advancement have demonstrated that the accommodationist and separatist ideologies have manifested in a cyclical fashion throughout Black American history. At different points in time, one ideology has been dominant and more
accepted by Black Americans, while the other remained subordinate. Historically, Black Americans subscribed to either ideology based upon their individual experiences and life pursuits. Accommodation has been the most widely accepted ideological viewpoint as evidenced by African American separatism never being fully developed, and has been supported by the Talented Tenth of Black American society, prior to the subgroup being branded as such (Winch 1988; McCartney 1993; Jordan 1995).

In the African American community accommodation has been championed even by those who are regarded as defenders of separatism or who express a message of color blindness based upon justice for all. Accommodation, which is often identified by its conservative principles, was championed by Booker T. Washington. Washington presented Black American southerners with a strategy for survival, self-respect and individual improvement. His strategy of accommodation was criticized as not presenting a realistic strategy for breaking the chains of racism and poverty that shackled the great mass of Black Americans in the late 19th century.

It is instructive to look at the writings and speeches of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, whose message moved beyond race towards colorblindness in regards to justice, often combining both the accommodationist and confrontationist approaches. Dr. King operated as an accommodationist because his status as a clergy member dictated this behavior; however he did not accept the status quo for Blacks and the poor, challenging the system through his writings and organizing efforts. Therefore he operated as a confrontationist as well (West 1999, 425-434). Interestingly, Dr. King could be characterized as culturally and socially conservative, despite his becoming more radical about economic policy as he championed a poor people’s campaign (Jones 2013, 187). King’s later writings have often been compared to A. Philip Randolph, a Black socialist (187). Dr. King employed a type of accommodation that was a multifaceted in
technique using boycotts, marches, protests and civil disobedience to challenge injustice in the
United States.

Dr. King’s adherence to accommodation illustrates that not all accommodation is the
same. Although he was adamant that structural change was necessary, he drew from culturally
and socially conservative logic and argued that change hinged upon Black Americans
“transmogrifying their own personal standards” (187). King argued that as the structural barriers
were being removed, Black Americans needed to seize the new opportunities. He suggested that
they do so by transforming themselves individually and culturally, beginning with hard work and
delaying gratification. King said, “I look and I see how much money we spend on liquor and on
beer and on all of these alcoholic beverages. Right here in Alabama we spend enough money on
liquor to endow three or four colleges” (King 1968). King, like many of the philosophers that
preceded him such as Du Bois, called for a hybrid strategy of change which incorporated
structural, individual, and cultural change (Jones 187).

Using the Civil Rights Movement as evidence that even the most progressive social and
ideological movements are manifestations of accommodation further illustrates that
accommodation is not foreign to Black American politics or the development of Black American
leaders; instead accommodation has been the norm with the exception of various Black power
movements throughout history. Thus the Talented Tenth, despite being viewed as an elite
subgroup of Black Americans, is able to coexist in the ethnic community because the U.S.
political system is conducive to their type of conservative politics (King and Smith 2005, 78).
Therefore, the politics of the Talented Tenth are not different from other Black Americans.
Instead, their politics are negotiated or operate differently as a result of their possible access to
disposable income, extensive networks as a result of education, and ability to articulate their concerns.

In many ways the Talented Tenth represents what all subgroups within the African American community aspire to be; developing a system for upwards mobility, while remaining true to the Black American establishment or agenda that supported and nurtured them. All Black American subgroups have been socialized to recognize that despite their achievements or mobility, that they remain members of the African American community. Michael Dawson (1994) notes that middle class Black Americans, who may physically remove themselves from the center of the African American community or neighborhoods when they gain affluence, often maintain physical and psychic connections to African American communities through church activities, barbershop or hair appointments, and interaction with relatives who remain in such environments. This practice illustrates how accommodation is easier than separatism, even when separatism is the desired goal.

Despite the fact that political science scholars agree that working within and through the system to change it can result in positive outcomes, generally, Black Americans and Black political scientists often view accommodation with disdain, and it receives substantially less scholarly focus than methods that mobilize large numbers of Black Americans to turn out to vote, march, or boycott (Morrison 1987; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Calhoun-Brown 1996). The relative lack of scholarship on the benefits of conservatism and accommodation has resulted in poorer understandings of how and why individuals become subscribers of racialized conservatism and accommodation while remaining true to their ethnic communities. Anecdotally, some “real” Black Americans, those described as having “the real African American experience” or wholeheartedly supporting the Black agenda, often refer to members of
the Talented Tenth as “sellouts,” “Uncle Toms,” and “Coons” for exposing conservative ideas (Bogle 2001; Givens and Monahan 2005). Unfortunately, these “real” Black Americans misunderstand conservatism among Blacks. Conservatism among many members of the Talented Tenth is the manifestation of Dawson’s linked racial fate. Members of the Talented Tenth express racial pride and solidarity as a tool for overcoming oppression.

The Black American mantra of “we’re all in this together” only holds true if the act of accommodating results in a shared sacrifice and suffering in victory and defeat. This racial solidarity has been described by journalist Danielle Belton (The Root 2012) as akin to the gun toting abolitionist, Harriet Tubman; Tubman would shoot any slave she was helping escape who stepped out of line. According to Belton, the African American community is holding the proverbial gun to the heads of Black Americans, often including members of the Talented Tenth, who dare not support the “Black American Agenda” or choose to accommodate outside of the boundaries created by Black American leadership. Belton further describes the crime of stepping out of line with Black American solidarity deserving of a proverbial shooting as mercenary behavior that misrepresents one’s culture because:

it implies a deliberate, volitional act. Many so-called “coons,” “Toms,” “sellouts” are simply ignorant of themselves, their history and the impact of what they do. I believe when they are educated, then they change. They “do better, when they know better.” However, when you deliberately do things that cast yourself, or your people in terrible light--especially before the majority who definitely has no true understanding of your background and culture--and do so in the name of the almighty dollar,, trying to justify it through ratings, “harmlessness,” “it's what the public wants,” etc., I think you're “cooning,” you're “selling out.”

**Having Our Say: Creating a Space for the Talented Tenth’s Narrative**

In part, this work examines the extent to which the development of the Talented Tenth is a logical manifestation of the political, ideological, cultural, and economic development of any
group of people that have been marginalized for centuries. The Talented Tenth’s expressed conservatism often illustrates a break with the 21st century Black American agenda because it is seemingly too radical for the traditional ideological dimension. Therefore it has not been a major focus of the study of Black politics, behavior and social thought (Abramson 1977; Walton 1985). As part of a generalized ideology of marginalization and deprivation, the images of members of the Talented Tenth take on a special meaning because they represent a major instrument of political power. Where previous research has looked at Black American political ideologies and the process of forming these ideologies (Dawson 2003; King and Smith 2005; Hutchings and Valentino 2004), this work seeks to further explore these political philosophies and political experiences by creating a space in which to explain how these political ideologies and behaviors can still be expressed, but with different motives. Additionally, this research responds to the general misunderstanding of conservatism among Black Americans and the belief that a single methodological approach can be used to understand Black American political thought.

Black American political thought can be understood using the political philosophies and socialization processes of Black Americans, which often influence individual and group thinking and actions (Du Bois 1899; Myrdal 1944). Political thought does not operate within an isolated temporal and physical space. By understanding where and how thought develops, the development and negotiation of political ideology and philosophies can be better explained. The political thinking of the Talented Tenth reflects the theories used to explain the exploitation of Black peoples; initially Blacks were exploited as an economic necessity and later justification was found in alleged claims of phenotypical and cultural superiority. The Talented Tenth reflects a population that lives with a heightened Black American identity finding solace in its mimicry and emulation of white high society, illustrated by membership in Greek letter organizations,
participation in cotillion balls and vacationing on the bluffs (e.g. Oak Bluffs, Martha’s Vineyard). This is why members of the Talented Tenth take pride in being both Black and American, utilizing the hyphenated identity of African-American or Black-American (Chapter IV discusses this double consciousness).

The fairly recent trends of great economic and academic gains in the Black American community have led to intra-racism and a disconnect between members of the Talented Tenth and non-members. The gap between the Talented Tenth and other Black American non-members is increasing, and many think that successful Black Americans do too little for the poor (Hochschild 1995). Although this gap may indeed be increasing, this work seeks to illustrate that the Talented Tenth is consciously attempting to bridge that gap and show their racial solidarity and linked racial fate through racialized language, which is explicitly expressed in focus groups. On its surface, this language appears to be the Talented Tenth articulating support for the same agenda that the non-Talented Tenth members support.

By digging deeper, I hypothesize that:

H1: Members of the Talented Tenth will express higher levels of linked racial fate than Black Americans who are not members of the Talented Tenth,

H2: Members of the Talented Tenth will display higher levels of conservatism among Blacks- a dimension of ideology distinct from fiscal and moral conservatism- than non-members,

H3: Racialized ideology (conservatism among Blacks) will be associated with lower levels of support for Democrats or Democratic policy, even if average levels of support for the Democratic Party remain high, and
H₄: Due to the Talented Tenth’s religiosity/Black liberation theology, higher levels of religiosity will be associated with higher levels of conservatism among Blacks.

The Talented Tenth may consciously use racialized language in order to appear in solidarity with other Black Americans or it may simply result from feelings of linked racial fate. In a society in which racial residential segregation is less common than it once was, and there is less overtly racist legislation and policy coming from Congress, the bonds that tie Black Americans are the ties of race and cultural behavior, often expressed through explicit language. Echoing the words of Malcolm X, the Talented Tenth is socialized to be economically and culturally progressive, while maintaining a relationship with the African American community “by any means necessary.”

There is no lack of race-baiting language or policies in the post Civil Rights Era, meaning that Black American solidarity is needed as much today as it was sixty years ago. The introduction of “post-racial” ideas has enabled whites to maintain and defend the persistence of their significant social and economic advantages over Blacks (Doane 2007, 162). Recent research has demonstrated that despite sharing some attitudes that are consistent with the Republican Party, Black Americans still tend to support Democratic candidates (Kidd et al 2007). The “anti-everything” approach of certain factions within the Republican Party has further isolated it from many Black Americans, who are traditionally Democrats. Although not definitively expressed, Black Americans across social lines recognize that racism exists (Austin 2006).

One must then ask, how should Black Americans respond to color-blindness when their racial experience dictates a racialized response? The Talented Tenth must use their connections to Black American culture and society in order to provide non-Talented Tenth members with
alternative ideological and philosophical approaches for understanding politics. Through the Talented Tenth’s support of the Black American community’s preferred ideological preferences and in some cases, their Democratic candidates, the Talented Tenth exhibits their commitment and racial linkedness to their community and Black culture. I show that the shared experiences of oppression, racism, and inequality within Black American culture results in the Talented Tenth having political preferences that are based upon race. This project hopes to illustrate that members of the Talented Tenth expresses support for the advancement of Black Americans, especially when utilizing racialized conservative language.

**Methodological Approach**

This work explores more than how members of the Talented Tenth deal with enduring themes of Black American political marginalization and linked racial fate, and further hypothesizes that the conservatism espoused by members of the Talented Tenth is rooted in Black (Nationalism) philosophical thought of the 20th century. The Talented Tenth’s specific type of conservatism allows them to support Democratic candidates and liberal policies as long as they advance Black American causes. This hypothesis is tested using a series of focus group questions which ask specifically about various Black philosophical debates such as support for accommodation, separatism, confrontation, linked racial fate, Black political candidates, and Black leadership in both political parties. These questions are used because the Black American intelligentsia, who both support and reject the status quo of the Black American political discourse, have begun to both challenge and outline their own theoretical positions and policy solutions as they relate to Black American authenticity, politics and preferred political ideology.
Political scientists generally know much less about the nature and behavior of the Black American intelligentsia and Talented Tenth than about the broad Black American citizenry in general, as seen in the limited the publications devoted to these groups. A cursory search of political science literature on upper middle class and college educated Blacks as well as the Black American intelligentsia returns void. In the post-Civil Rights Era, the Talented Tenth represents a segment of the Black American population who have the resources and opportunity to alter the discourse on Black American politics and challenge political leaders, from both sides of the aisle, to listen to their political demands. This work uses their voices to better understand the political nuances of everyday college educated Black Americans. This work also helps scholars better understand how, in this new political and racial climate, the Talented Tenth presents a challenge to the Black American political discourse and challenges the conceptions of racialized political ideology.

As it is important to utilize multiple methodological approaches in order to draw sound conclusions, this work involves exploratory and quantitative analysis. This approach allows me to draw conclusions about racial affiliation, identification, and political ideology of the Talented Tenth helping to explain how college educated Black Americans express linked racial fate. Survey research in Black American politics is relatively limited, and therefore this project attempts to explain the nuances of the Talented Tenth’s racialized conservatism and linked racial fate. By choosing the Talented Tenth, I hope to provide an in depth analysis of one unique segment within a much larger ethnic group. Interpretation of background data along with focus group analysis will help explain the Talented Tenth’s ideological and philosophical dualism as well as their motivations for this behavior.
Moving beyond the traditional deficit model and liberal ideologies often associated with the modern Black American political discourse presents a major challenge. Many Black Americans will not explicitly express having “conservative political views”, for these views challenge the current dominant Black American political discourse and are often measured using the traditional ideological dimension. Therefore, I introduce conservatism to focus group participants through Black Nationalism and the theory of linked racial fate, which are used in my measure of conservatism among Blacks. Analysis of surveys and focus group discussions represents only one way of understanding the importance and vitality of Black American norms and racially linked fate in explaining the Talented Tenth’s philosophical formation and political ideology. Therefore, future research could build upon this research by employing other methods.

The data from the 1996 National Black Election Study (NBES) and 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), which corresponds to questions asked of focus group members and survey respondents, are analyzed in order to establish quantitative manifestations of linked racial fate and predicts Black adherence to this new ideological dimension. The NBES and NAES provide a portrait of members of the African American community and their ideological beliefs in addition to my survey data. Both data sets include an index related to current issues-opinions and perceptions, party identification and ideology, overall perceptions of race and gender relations, as well as sociodemographic indicators. By analyzing this data, I am able to generalize about Talented Tenth political preferences. The questions are limited in scope, but provide insight into the discourse surrounding political ideology and linked racial fate. Additionally, the NBES and NAES provide more quantitative data with which to study Black Americans.
To supplement the analysis of the survey data, focus group discussions were also employed and analyzed. A survey was created (Appendix F) to recruit participants for focus group sessions (and control group sessions). Prior to the dissemination of the surveys, each organization or chapter received a flyer briefly explaining my project and requesting their participation in helping me conduct this research. The surveys were disseminated to adults at predetermined affluent Black American churches, National Pan Hellenic Council (NPHC) fraternity and sorority general meetings, the Links Inc., and Boulé (Sigma Pi Phi) general meetings. NPHC alumni organizations were contacted because per organizational requirements all members must be college educated or joined while pursuing a four year college degree. As a result, all NPHC members are also members of the Talented Tenth, although not all identify as African or Black American (ethnicity), most members identify as Black (race). Likewise, the Links Inc and Boulé (Sigma Pi Phi) are both Black professional organizations with a membership that includes the nation’s top attorneys, physicians, and scholars. Contact was made with chapter presidents and the community outreach/involvement committees of NPHC, the Links Inc, and Boulé chapters. Surveys were printed and provided to presidents/community outreach chairs and collected at the end of the general or ministry meetings. I had a working relationship with all of the NPHC chapters as well as the local Links Inc. chapters in the cities of Rochester, NY and New Orleans. Surveys were also sent to one NPHC chapter in Detroit, Michigan, after I was contacted by other NPHC presidents who heard about my research. The surveys completed by the Boulé chapters were emailed to their presidents and completed at their general meetings. I provided all presidents with an envelope with paid postage to return the completed surveys to me.
The same process was used for dissemination of surveys at affluent Black American churches. The affluent churches were determined based upon their membership (significant number of members who are physicians, attorneys, professors, etc.), denomination, church theology and mission, and the Black American public discourse regarding each church. Affluent churches were identified as those more likely than those of the lower classes to have a moral code that affirms the following: “relativity is valued, particularism is condemned, anything limiting individual freedom or blocking individual opportunity is likely to be defined as fundamentally evil, and divergent thinking and individualism is encouraged” (Bromley 2013).

The aforementioned moral code identifies these churches as affluent because it represents a theological outlook which moves beyond traditional “pie in the sky” Black American theological thought to one that encourages social and political activism as well as community involvement. Members of affluent churches often support programs that challenge the status quo and are contrary to their own economic self-interests. Churches that meet these requirements, as determined after reviewing their mission or theological statements and have a majority Black American membership were coded as “affluent” and the survey was disseminated to various ministries and collected after meetings in New Orleans, Louisiana and Rochester, New York.

After the surveys were collected, they were reviewed. Points were assigned to various responses on the survey. If a participant received a score of eleven or higher and indicated on the survey that they desired to participate in a focus group, their name was added to a list of “Talented Tenth members.” Any participant that identified as “white” was automatically excluded from the focus group listing. Survey respondents from churches who indicated that they had less than a college education, but were willing to participate in a focus group were used to form a control group (non-Talented Tenth members). Members of the control group resulted
solely from the surveys disseminated at affluent churches. Willing participants were contacted to participate in focus and control group sessions via telephone and email, providing them with information on when they would meet for their focus group discussion. The groups were an amalgam of survey respondents from churches, NPHC organizations, and the Links Inc. and the Boulé. A total of 234 surveys were completed. During each focus group session participants were directed to enjoy refreshments, and I opened the focus group session using the established focus group narrative (Appendix G). After the opening narrative and having participants read the consent forms (Appendix E), I proceeded through the questions. At the end of the discussion, I closed the session using the text from the script. All sessions were audio taped. I used two research assistants to take written notes in case of audiotape malfunction.

The focus group data was then interpreted using the qualitative method of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information from respondents as they share their stories or experiences explicitly (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). The number assigned to each survey was used to identify focus group participant comments. The data was transcribed using a transcriber from the University of Rochester (Shirley Graham) and coded using seven different categories illustrative of the major themes of the study, which establishes the deductive codes. There were discussion points that did not match with the questions or designated themes identified in the conceptualization of the research; these were discarded. The data was then reduced through data analysis and the use of a concept map to in order to create more specific themes or inductive codes, which came directly from respondents’ narratives. Finally, survey responses were coded and inserted into IBM SPSS. I used IBM SPSS to run descriptive statistical and other quantitative tests on this data as well as NBES and NAES data that corresponded to my survey questions.
Chapter Outline

This work follows a fairly simple outline. Chapter II (Black Like Us? Reconciling Race, Social Status, and Linked Racial Fate) provides a historical overview of the conservative philosophical debates that define modern Black American political thought, politics, and the new ideological dimension. These philosophical debates are then juxtaposed with the political science theories used to understand Black American political thought and behavior. This ultimately results in a new understanding of Black American political thought and politics, using a Black American political framework, which is different from the typical American political framework used in the political science discipline. This new political framework is then applied to the Talented Tenth, a political subset of Black Americans. This is all accomplished by presenting a thorough explication of the major conservative political philosophies, theories, and debates, which will be used later to explain the development of the Talented Tenth’s political ideology.

Chapter III (Beyond Du Bois and Washington: The Talented Tenth’s Perceptions of Black American Political Philosophy) uses focus group data analysis to explore the support or opposition of members of the Talented Tenth in relation to the major African American political philosophies of the 20th century. This chapter is an outgrowth of a cursory look at Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus M. Garvey. Despite the early contributions of Anna Julia Cooper and other women to the formation of Black American political thought, this research and this chapter is devoid of gender specific research or theoretical development. There is danger in excluding any consideration of Black female agency, but before the Talented Tenth female narrative can be further explored I must gain entry by first understanding the Talented Tenth as a whole. Furthermore, the framework used to better understand the Talented Tenth was developed by men and is reflective of the patriarchal society in which they operated. Because
Alexander Crummell and W.E.B. Du Bois are cited as both early Black male feminists and contributors to modern Black political thought, their narratives are sufficient for the purposes of this research and at least acknowledge the need to recognize the agency of Black women. Chapter IV highlights this narrative, in part, through the discussion of Ella Baker.

The focus group discussions highlighted in Chapter III are developed asking respondents about their knowledge of the lives and conservative philosophies of Washington, Garvey, and Du Bois because 1) respondents were familiar with these men (per preliminary findings via test groups), 2) these leaders are identifiable across multiple generations of respondents, and 3) these leaders represent alternative ways of thinking about modern Black American conservatism, political thought, and politics. This chapter illustrates that the oppositional portrayals of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois have resulted in the framing of Washington as an “Uncle Tom,” a sell-out, and ultimately an accommodationist by some members of the intelligentsia, but surprisingly not by focus group participants. I hypothesized that by beginning with Booker T. Washington, participants would describe his philosophy in contrast to that of W.E.B. Du Bois, not being fully aware of Washington’s entire political trajectory. From here, the chapter quickly moves to a discussion of how participants view the current political landscape, African American politics, and culture.

Chapter IV (Black Skin, Black Masks: Measuring and the Meaning of the Talented Tenth’s Political Ideology and Linked Racial Fate) moves beyond Washingtonian, Du Boisian, and Garveyist conservative political philosophy, to their conservative and Black Nationalist philosophical predecessors. Using the theories posited by Alexander Crummell and other philosophical debates about Black political agency in the United States, I try to trace the development of Du Bois’s Talented Tenth theory from earlier 19th century conceptions by earlier
philosophers to Du Bois in the 20th century. Since the development of the Talented Tenth is predicated, at least in part, by its connection to the African American experience and racial unity, I then illustrate how educational attainment is not the only way to explain the Talented Tenth. By using formal education as well as church or religious experiences, I attempt to show how Black American spiritual understanding can also explain the development of the Talented Tenth and their unique conservatism. Although members of the Talented Tenth are not necessarily rooted in the “Black church” and Afrocentric education, both provide a sense of Black pride which is in part based upon a racialized experience in the United States. The juxtaposition of race and education speaks not only to the development of conservative political ideology or racial linkedness to other Black Americans, but allows us to better understand how pride for one’s race or ethnicity can be influenced by the aforementioned experiences. Using focus group data I provide a descriptive analysis of the Talented Tenth and how their commitment to non-Talented Tenth members as well as their Black pride is developed in the university or college setting. I also use the survey data and Katherine Tate’s National Black Election Study and the University of Pennsylvania’s National Annenberg Election Study to provide a statistical analysis of the variables used.

Chapter V (The Quest of the Silver Fleece: Talented Tenth Conservatism Understood) argues for a new understanding of the Talented Tenth and political leaders belonging to the Talented Tenth in the Post Civil Rights Era 21st century. Using W.E.B. Du Bois’s first fictional novel, The Quest of the Silver Fleece (1911), I try to illustrate the inner dissension within subgroups of Black Americans such as the Talented Tenth. The Talented Tenth demonstrates that even within subgroups which are seemingly homogenous, there may be conflict. I provide a literary analysis of The Quest of the Silver Fleece in an effort to show that although this work is a
fictional romance novel it ultimately contributes to Du Bois’s conservative philosophical trajectory especially as it relates to Black American and more specifically the Talented Tenth’s obligation to the rest of Black society; this is illustrated in Du Bois’s protagonist Zora.

Using characters Zora and Bles I further illustrate in Chapter V how community support, religion, income, employment, and education actualize social progress for Black Americans, and are also representative of the conservative political typologies among Black people. I offer a unique reading of the way in which religion, specifically the “Black Value System,” influences conservatism among members of the Talented Tenth and non-Talented Tenth members. Focusing on the influence of the Black American religious experience, the chapter allows for a more in depth analysis of conservatism among African American communities and explains Black American support for racialized conservatism.

The chapter simultaneously explores 21st century Black American leadership in the face of economic, employment, and income inequality. Using focus group discussions about Black elected officials, I attempt to show that Talented Tenth members are supportive of Black American candidates, regardless of party affiliation, as long as the candidates are still connected to the general Black American population, at least symbolically. I utilize available empirical evidence to show that Black identity, which includes religiosity, impacts the manifestation of conservatism among Blacks. I attempt to explain the Talented Tenth’s support for the Democratic Party as a result of their Talented Tenth membership.

The Conclusion places the dissertation research within the current discourse on race, education, and political thought allowing for the presentation for recommendation for the political science community, African American community, members of the Talented Tenth, and
white and Black political leadership. In the Conclusion I highlight some of the dissertation’s major findings and explain methodological issues.
Chapter I (Introduction) References


CHAPTER II. BLACK LIKE US? RECONCILING RACE, SOCIAL STATUS, AND LINKED RACIAL FATE

Men of America, the problem is plain before you. Here is a race transplanted through the criminal foolishness of your fathers. Whether you like it or not the millions are here, and here they will remain. If you do not lift them up, they will pull you down. Education and work are levers to uplift people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work - it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.


Linked Racial Fate and the Development of Black American Identity

Linked racial fate and arguably Black American identity are rooted in historical experiences of oppression and disenfranchisement, resilience and resistance, mobilization and activism, as well as race and religiosity. But what does it mean to be Black American or a member of the Talented Tenth in the United States in the 21st century? As critically acclaimed film producer, director, and writer Spike Lee succinctly states, “We've gone through the names-Negro, African American, African, Black. For me that's an indication of a people still trying to find their identity. Who determines what is Black?” (*Esquire* Magazine 1992) In this project, I define the African American/Black American ethnic group based on the external cultural factors which are grounded in a people’s history of interactions with others, a view advocated in the religious group identity work by Akeel Bilgrami (1995). Bilgrami’s research seeks to answer the question, “what is a Muslim”? Departing from the Western caricatures and misconceptions of Islam, Bilgrami explains what it means to be Muslim, without comparing it to Western religions; instead he illustrates that Islam in and of itself is sufficient on its own. This same technique of better understanding religious groups based upon isolation can be applied to ethnic groups in the United States, for the commitments of group members determine their collective identity as members of that group.
Before I explain what “African American” or “Black American” means descriptively, I must note that it is a socially constructed ethnic term that has a political reality shaped by colonialism and the white supremacist structure that advanced the institutions of the United States. The terms “African American” and “Black American” implicitly operate within a white supremacist framework, where identity as an “African American” or “Black American” means struggling to form an identity within a system that does not accept them on their own terms, instead denouncing them as not good enough because they are not white. Therefore, to identify as African American or Black American means to find an identity within a system that has continuously rejected them. Often forced to assimilate, resulting in Blacks losing their own culture and identity, Black Americans respond to supremacy through specific mannerisms, behaviors, and even mimicry of white society, culture, and epistemology. The white supremacist structure means that Black American identity is understood in terms of how it is dissimilar to whiteness, often explaining the differentness of Black Americans as deficient when compared to whites. In other words, Black American identity means being non-white (Ogbu 1990).

Interestingly, this is a difficult concept for Black West Indian immigrants in the United States to comprehend, coming from countries where Blacks are the majority and where white is therefore seen as deficient to Black.

I consider Black Americans to include members of the African diasporic community who are either descendants of the 400 million peoples originally from West and Central Africa who were enslaved in the Americas, or immigrants from sub Saharan African, Caribbean/West Indian, Central and South American countries and their descendants. Arguably, the Black American ethnicity is an amalgam of various ethnicities that have coalesced in the United States as well as those who either self identify or are arbitrarily placed in the pan ethnic group.
Following the meeting of experts on the Definition of the African Diaspora held in 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the African Union defines the African Diaspora as follows:

The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.

Although African Americans are members of the African diaspora not all Black Americans are committed to or willing to contribute to the development of the continent of Africa and building the African Union. Instead, I will later illustrate that as members of the African diaspora that Black Americans are willing to contribute to the development and betterment of other members of the African diaspora here in the United States as a result of feeling racially linked to them. Members of the Talented Tenth belong to this African diasporic grouping.

Often, Black Americans are identified by institutions and agencies for counting purposes (i.e. the decennial census), which do not always inquire about individual racial or ethnic identification preferences. The pan-ethnic terminology of Black American does not account for differences in national origin and the perceptions of race and ethnicity; meaning all West and East Africans as well as English speakers from Central America and the Caribbean are counted as Black American in the U.S. As a result of the “one drop rule”\(^3\) in the United States, “Black American” describes all people of the African diaspora, whether they like it or not, based upon certain phenotypical standards such as course hair texture, arbitrarily assigned African facial features, or skin complexion. It just so happens that these “Black Americans” have all faced

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\(^3\) Although a sociological principle the one drop rule was once a legal principle for racial classification. The rule asserted that a person with at least one ancestor of sub-Saharan (African) ancestry was considered Black.
similar experiences of racial oppression and what happens to a Black individual is felt by others in the racial group.

Traditionally, Black Americans are defined based upon a shared historical-political experience within the United States, although many people of the African diaspora faced similar experiences in other nations within the Americas. These historical-political experiences can be better understood using the colonialism lens. The colonialism model or lens asserts that there have been two distinct groups of people— a dominant group and a subordinate group; the powerful and the powerless (King 2010, 17). In this model, the powerful or dominant groups are able to control the powerless or subordinate group through force, if necessary, as well as through the use of punishment and sanctions (17). Black Americans who have experienced life under colonial and post-colonial conditions for many generations, have also experienced a legitimate government that works to maintain the existing power relationships between Black Americans and whites by manipulating and controlling the political, economic, and sociocultural structures of the nation.

Socially, Black Americans can be understood using the conception of racially linked fate. Racial solidarity or linked racial fate (Dawson 1994; Gray and Tate 1998; Jaynes and Williams 1989) is defined as an acute sense of awareness and recognition that what happens to the group will also affect the individual member. Linked fate reflects a sense of belonging and conscious loyalty to a specific group. For Black Americans, linked fate results from a long history of discrimination, segregation, and disenfranchisement in the United States (Dawson 1994 and 1997; Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson 1989; Herring, Jankowski and Brown 1999; Tate 1994). Black political scientists posit that linked fate arises from lived experiences, such as day
to day encounters with racial oppression and class exploitation (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Feagin and Sikes 1994).

Noted scholar Alain Locke (1924) helps explain why the term African American is widely accepted as the default ethnic identity of Blacks in the United States with his essay “The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture.” The overall argument put forth in Locke’s essay is that race and culture are not in a fixed relationship, meaning race and culture are fluid. Faced with the opposition between race and culture, “where race is traditionally presented as determining culture, [Locke] reversed the hierarchy, presenting race as a product of culture (Bernasconi 2007, 127).” Reversing the hierarchy of race and culture, Alain Locke referred to himself as a cultural pluralist. As a cultural pluralist Locke believed that race was a sociocultural product and therefore each individual should be considered a product of his or her culture and thusly judged accordingly. Therefore, when relating to individuals of a different race, there should be an honest attempt made to understand the social and historical factors that determine that race’s “stressed values which become the conscious symbols and traditions of the culture. Such stressed values are themselves factors in the process of culture making, and account primarily for the persistence and resistance of culture-traits” (Locke 296). Locke’s work illustrates how pan-ethnic terms have been able to persist in the United States, as a result of including cultural identifiers and experiences used to expand the conceptualization of Black American.

In “The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture,” Locke further explains why he favors W.E.B. Du Bois’ position on race as opposed to the views of Booker T. Washington (Mason 1979). Locke (1944) discusses the tension between Washington and Du Bois as one between:
… the necessity for practical compromise and radical assertion of rights and principles. In one phase you have a person like Booker T. Washington attempting a practical program which manifestly is a compromise with an unfavorable situation and in another a person like Dr. Du Bois who, as an intellectual and crusader, comes out four-square for what he knows is right in principle, what everybody admits is right, but what he and everybody also knows is not going to be immediately conceded by a majority that is in power, and that has back of it a tradition of discrimination.

**Booker T. Washington’s Cultivation of Individualism**

The philosophical differences between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois are often understood as oppositional views of Black American solidarity and self-help, but Washington and Du Bois jointly inform our conceptions of the Black race, African American ethnic identity, and ultimately how Blacks negotiate linked racial fate. Although advocating for agricultural and industrial education, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) also emphasized the importance of moral virtue (Shelby 2005), which contributes to one of the social indicators of Black American identity in the 20th century. In *We Who Are Dark* (2005) Tommie Shelby argues that among the virtues to be cultivated by Black Americans were a sense of dignity in labor and an appreciation of hard work (72). Booker T. Washington further believed that many Black Americans “depreciated and avoided manual labor as a result of its association with slavery, but insisted that there was no shame in working with one’s hands” (72). Washington argued that intense manual labor built character and cultivated useful skills, which would prepare the ground for economic independence and the development of Black culture and class. The development of Black American culture and class were based upon the virtues of cleanliness, grooming, and being well dressed; the discipline in one’s appearance was thought to engender and reflect a sense of dignity to further elicit respect from whites (73).
Furthering Washington’s argument, the Black American ethnic identity (or in this milieu, Negro) is one based upon a moral development. To be Black American meant to be cultivated individually based upon the virtues of patience and generosity, and it involved a willingness to “make sacrifices in the short term for greater gains in the future” (73). Being Black American, Washington contended, required individuals to cultivate a sense of personal responsibility, meaning that each person should take primary responsibility for his or her condition rather than blaming others. It is here that we see Washington’s adherence to traditional conservative social values. In essence, Washington perceived Black American (Negro) identity to mean acknowledging the impact of slavery and racial discrimination on one’s life, but individually and collectively working to remove the chains of this degraded condition while not viewing oneself as a victim.

**W.E.B. Du Bois as the Pragmatic Nationalist**

W.E.B. Du Bois’ framing of Black American identity was based upon “two-ness” or dual identity (double consciousness), where the Black American has two identities: the American and the Negro. He maintained that the American and Negro parts could be properly integrated into a “better and truer self” which would not allow for the loss of either identity (Du Bois 1997; Zamir 1995; Early 1993). Du Bois argued that “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line,” meaning that racism and the world’s racial narrative would define an entire century. In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), the “veil” that the color line caused, created other obstacles to Black advancement as a whole. He believed that Blacks needed to embrace and collectively pursue independent collective development, but that “a history of Black subjugation had retarded their best efforts” (Shelby 62). Tommie Shelby writes in *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (2005):
In particular, the efforts of more educationally advantaged blacks to attain their “two warring ideals”--attempting both to be unqualified Americans and to foster independent black development--have had the unintended consequence of slowing the progress of black people toward modernization. It would seem that the pursuit of these seemingly incompatible ideals in a context of severe racial oppression was often self-defeating, producing the misleading appearance that black ability is limited and inferior, perhaps inherently. Many black elites who take up both ideals therefore become discouraged and disillusioned, and some, having lost faith in black ability, fail to have appropriate pride in their people (63).

W.E.B. Du Bois insisted that Blacks pursue both full and equal American citizenship and foster independent development from whites in “the spheres of education, morals, culture, politics, and economics” (Shelby 63). Du Bois believed that Blacks could gain full citizenship and be independent from whites if Blacks had equal educational opportunity according to ability and their individual ambition. He differed from Washington in that he believed that such education must not be limited to industrial and vocational training, but must also include, a liberal arts education at a college or university. Du Bois argued that a quality higher education in the arts and sciences was needed to combat the widespread ignorance of the world and social life that many Blacks held. A quality higher education would arguably result in the production of a qualified assembly of Black teachers for Black youth, and also provide the “Black intelligentsia with the tools necessary for analyzing the condition of their people” (63).

Later in life, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote “The Talented Tenth: Memorial Address” (1948), in which he compared African Americans to the peoples of several countries and invoked a cultural conception of race as he had previously done in “The Conservation of Races” (1897). He argued that African Americans “[were] not simply a physical entity: a Black people, or a people descended from Black folk. It was what all races really are, a cultural group.” Du Bois argued that Black Americans could only advance economically with political rights and equal civic
status, and that both civic status and Black American cultural preservation were needed if Blacks were to progress “while maintaining their self-respect” (Shelby 66).

Cultural preservation was built into the early ideas of Black solidarity and manifestations of linked racial fate, not in opposition to American ideals, but rather as a tool for making it possible for the members of all races, living together in the United States, to complement each other rather than be antagonists. According to Tommie Shelby, Blacks had already made contributions to this end by providing the United States with many of its most distinctive cultural elements such as music, folklore, and spiritual expression (67). Shelby goes on to say that, “Du Bois saw Black political solidarity, then as a temporary though possibly long-term strategy for realizing a multiracial American polity that embodies democratic ideals and cultural pluralism. Thus, I would suggest that we think of Du Bois as a classical nationalist about culture- as an advocate of black cultural integrity as an end in itself- but as a pragmatic nationalist about politics” (67).

**Tracing Classical (Black) Nationalism to Linked Racial Fate**

Classical Black Nationalism informs my understanding of conservatism among Black Americans. I posit that the theory of classical Black Nationalism was created by Martin Robinson Delany, the “father” of Black Nationalist theory, further developed by Alexander Crummell, and reborn through the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois. The Black Nationalism discussed in Delany’s influential work, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852), has been distinguished by intellectuals such as Wilson J. Moses as the beginning of the Classical Nationalism period, existing from 1850-1925. This manifestation of Black Nationalism is an assertion of the equal rights of Black Americans, rather
than simply a reaction to white supremacy. The three core principles, which undergird Delany’s political philosophy of Black Nationalism include: social equality, democratic citizenship, and self-government. Therefore, I contend that conservatism among Blacks is rooted in the goals of social equality, democratic citizenship, and self-government.

These core principles informed Delany’s 1854 essay, “The Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent.” In this essay Delany argued that a common national identity would create a strong bond of affinity and would be the basis upon which Blacks lay claim to the right of self-government. He maintained that without a shared national identity, Blacks would lose their common interest and purpose in remaining together; therefore creating a sort of internal instability that would make them vulnerable to being dominated by a more cohesive national power (Kahn 1984). Arguably, Delany’s promotion of a strong racial bond reflects some aspects of Dawson’s linked racial fate theory.

Ultimately, early Black American identity and the definition of what it meant to be Black American or Black in America was born out of Classical Nationalism as developed by the Delany and Crummell. Delany claimed that Blacks had certain “inherent traits” and “native characteristics” which distinguished them from other people (Delany 1972, 203). Although these traits and characteristics include superficial phenotypic traits such as skin color and hair type, they also include civility, peaceableness, and religiosity, which are not unique to Blacks but claimed to be innately Black by Delany (Delany 1852, 62-66). These traits inform the Black American understanding of Black American identity not only in the sociocultural sense, but the political sense, as well. These shared traits will later help inform Black American racial linkedness in Michael Dawson’s theory.
In the United States, Black American religiosity, and to a certain degree civility and peaceableness, are associated with “Blackness” by Black Americans. According to Delany, the idea of “Blackness” cannot be a matter of Black Americans sharing a distinct culture, because, “Black Americans, for better or worse, have been stripped of their African cultural heritage and consequently have merged with the dominant culture of the United States- in religion, language, values, habit, and customs” (Delany 209-10). As a result “Blackness” must be understood, to a certain extent, by understanding what it means to be American or even white in the United States. For this reason, Black Americans are frequently compared to whites by whites, resulting in a comparison that consequently yields Black Americans as deficient or places them at a lower status as compared to whites (e.g., Black Americans are civil and peaceable, but not as civil or peaceable as whites).

The Framing of the Black American Narrative

In order to understand Black American identity, the ideas of individual self-development and social interaction must be further explored within the context of civil society. Civil society cultivates public discussion through social contestation, where collective identities, ethical values, and alliances are formed (Cohen and Arato 1992). Within the public sphere of civil society, people are able to discuss matters of mutual concern as peers, and learn about facts, experiences, and the opinions, interests, and perspectives of others (Habermas 1989). Through the discussion of mutual concern as peers however, people begin to develop a narrative to reflect their identity and experiences. Jurgen Habermas (1989) also recognizes that some of civil society is institutionalized, meaning public political institutions such as legislatures or constitutional courts determine the narrative of individuals instead, and the individuals accept this narrative as a result of trusting a legitimate government. An example of this is found in the arbitrary ethnic
titles assigned to people of color in the United States, which individuals either accept or challenge by coining their own identifiable terms.

The way in which Black American identity is discussed by both Black Americans and non-Blacks is often influenced by Black news media outlets, which are “owned and managed by African Americans, being intended for Black consumers, and serving as advocates for the Black community” (Wolseley 1990, 4) as well as institutionalized civil and political spheres. An individual’s decision to identify with a particular race or ethnicity and what that identification means to him or her, is often based upon three aspects of racial identity including centrality, regard, and ideology (Sellers et al 1998). To this point W.E.B. Du Bois writes, “… conditioned by the concept which he has of white people and he is treated in accordance with the concept they have of him” (Du Bois 1940). The differences in individual ethnic or racial identification by Black Americans or Blacks are mirrored by the variations in understandings of the qualifications of membership based upon culture or experiential capabilities. Both ethnic and racial identification reflects the philosophical discourse surrounding Black American identity, which plays an important role in understanding what it theoretically and pragmatically means to be Black American in the United States.

A critical element of public discourse is framing, which can “entrench, uproot, or reconceptualize policy preferences and attitudes” (Kirwan Institute, Ohio State University 2010). The concept of framing, or the ways in which ideas are shaped and presented to ethnic groups such as Black Americans in public, is a powerful tool for determining how they will react to the ideas (Kirwan Institute, Ohio State University 2005). The framing of issues and ideas, develop the Black American discourse including the articulation and written words, with overt and hidden meanings that are understood by Black Americans, but not necessarily by whites; this can
also describe language coding or speaking in code. As a result, the way in which Black Americans and whites understand and participate in the development of the discourse on race is different, as a result of framing. These overt or hidden meanings have a particular historical, social, cultural, and ideological facet, which not only allow for a safe place for expression, but also a method for resisting the hegemony of whites (Scott 1990). James Scott illustrates how normal circumstances and conversations contribute to hidden modes of resistance. By showing how Black Americans interact with one another apart from whites, Scott offers a reconceptualization of the behavior of Black Americans and their politics. Scott refers to this as the “hidden transcript,” where subordinate groups such as Black Americans are able to free themselves from the bondage of white supremacy through acts of rebellion, if even only for a brief moment in time. This escape from reality or even expressed humanism is reflected in the ceremonies and activities of enslaved people, celebrated separately from whites (186).

It is within these unique religious and cultural experiences conducted in secret, that Black Americans have developed their own articulation and understanding of their culture and ethnicity. I suggest that the opportunity to create “hidden transcripts” is essential in the development of tools for resistance against white supremacy. These transcripts are ultimately articulated through hidden meanings, but discussed in specific places where these messages could be expressed without judgment. During the antebellum period, Scott’s “hidden transcripts” gave rise to the Black public space, allowing for the Black American framing of issues. It is with these “hidden transcripts” in mind that I developed a methodology that included all Black focus group sessions with visibly Black interviewers and note takers.
According to Melissa Harris-Perry (2004), in Black public spaces, Black organizations, and through Black information networks, Black Americans enter into dialogue with one another. Harris-Perry states:

Much of what they discuss is task-specific, personal, or frivolous... but alongside these kinds of conversations is an everyday talk that helps Black people to develop collective definitions of their political interests. Embedded within conversations that are not always overtly political is language that seeks to understand American inequality, to define the importance of race in creating inequality, to determine the role of Whites in perpetuating inequality, and to devise strategies for advancing interests of self and group (5).

**Racial Solidarity: Mimicry of white Culture or Characteristic of Black Culture**

Scholars have long been interested in determining the ways in which political culture is created and transmitted in communities. According to some scholars (Franklin 1969; Genovese 1974; Phillips 1963), among themselves, enslaved peoples evolved a pattern for living that included racial solidarity. Racial solidarity provided for emotional fulfillment and the formation of close attachments. Thomas Sowell writes, “The norms of the slave community therefore carried weight, even without official sanction or institutions to enforce them. Incest taboos, for example, were more widely observed among slaves than among contemporary whites. Marriages between first cousins were common among white slave owners, but very rare among Black slaves, in keeping with differences in incest taboos between Europe and Africa” (188). In short, the enslaved community developed its own social norms and values, which were not mere copies of the whites’ patterns and culture.

The norms developed during slavery included a set of social graces and manners, a culture with its own mores, a sense of community and racial solidarity, and most importantly the human relationship of family and spiritual relationship with their “Lord and Savior.” Although social graces and manners are not unique to Black Americans, these behaviors reflect the enslaved person and master subservient relationship, as well as customs that are uniquely West
African that were perpetuated in the United States. These racial, communal, and religious identities would ultimately affect the ways in which Black Americans would mobilize to overcome the terror and intimidation of the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, how they saw themselves as political actors with political agency, how they interpreted their role in the larger American political system and further developed their social and political identities and ideologies. Racial solidarity provided Black Americans with an additional source of mobilization, beyond the traditional socioeconomic resources, in order to engage in political activity (Olsen 1970; Shingles 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). Racial solidarity, and what we now know as linked racial fate, provided Black Americans with the tools to mobilize in order to overcome oppression.

**Black Americans Alone are Worthy of Study**

Black political scientists posit that linked fate arises from lived experiences, such as day to day encounters with race oppression and class exploitation (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Feagin and Sikes 1994). A shared experience with racial oppression and class exploitation encourages Black Americans to actively participate in politics. A neglected area of research in the African American political science literature is Black American political assets. The political science literature tends to use sweeping generalizations about ethnic minority political behavior and religiosity and does not address the issues of using white supremacist standards for understanding marginalized groups, which does not account for outliers in the population or subgroups. For example, when discussing Cuban Americans in relation to other Spanish speakers in the U.S. the current literature often speaks to differences in political identity between Cuban-Americans and other non-Cuban Hispanics. This discussion does not acknowledge the implications of pronounced African ancestry and culture in Cuban society, which results in
economic and class specific stratifications in Cuban-American society creating many sub-groups within Cuban-American society.

Likewise, the political science literature tends to group all members of the African Diaspora as African American, not accounting for the cultural differences from region to region or country to country, which may contribute to the need for a different theoretical approach when explaining Black American politics. These individuals, who are viewed as outliers, as well as the Black American community in general, are often compared to their white counterparts. As a result, sub-groups of Black Americans are viewed as having an insufficient or abnormal existence; operating within a deficit. By using the deficit model, the assets or strengths of Black Americans are ignored and their political behavior has negative consequences and connotations for Black Americans (Peters 1981). The deficit model, often used in public education to explain the low expectations, feelings of inferiority, and a sense of defeat for Black American students, can further explain the methods used by other disciplines for studying Black Americans. This project attempts to challenge the deficit model by thoroughly understanding one specific Black American sub-group: the Talented Tenth.

While the deficit model attempts to better understand Black American behavior, sadly, the model only exposes the multiple social ills such as violence and crime, unemployment, drug abuse, poor public health, and teenage childbirth that mar African American communities. The deficit model acknowledges the aforementioned social ills and suggest that they along with an educational system that reproduces intergenerational poverty rather than transforming it, results in a Black American population that is poorer and less educated than the general white

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4 I prefer the term “Black American” for it is racially inclusive of all members of the African Diaspora living in the United States. Therefore, I use Black American as a label for Blacks in America unless otherwise noted.
population (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Jencks et al., 1972). I argue that use of this model has resulted in a perverted view of Black Americans by the rest of society, especially as it relates to how researchers study and further understand Black American behavior. This perverted view of Black Americans can be seen in the public discourse on Black Americans, especially when an African American such as President Obama is referred to as being “articulate” or “not like other Blacks.” H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman (2012) argue that the public discourse surrounding Black Americans is “socially charged, loaded with issues of race, class, citizenship, and other forms of social identification” (41). The white paternalism reflected in assertions related to Black American speech and identity reflects the deficit model that some whites think saturate Black society. My answer to the deficit model is the Talented Tenth: college educated Black Americans.

Arguably, the rationale for the deficit model lies in the low educational attainment of Black Americans. Although Black American students continue to drop out of school at alarming rates, Black American students have made great strides. As a result of this educational success many researchers and policy makers have denounced the use of deficit models to explain the negative experiences of Black Americans and are engaged in research exploring and isolating the multiplicity of factors that contribute to the success of Black students (Cooper and Datnow 2000; Sanders 2000). These researchers choose to shift the framing of their inquiry from a focus on the failure of Black Americans to succeed to an examination of alternative structures, organizations, and practices that lead to greater achievement. This line of inquiry flows from the educational resilience construct that focuses on success rather than failure (Wang and Gordon 1994; Winfield 1991). It views Black American educational resilience not as a discrete personal attribute but
rather as the culmination of processes, mechanisms, and conditions that can be replicated across various school and family contexts (Cooper and Jordan 2003).

This work posits that the deficit model for understanding Black Americans and Black American politics is inappropriate and contributes to the misunderstanding of African American culture and politics. Indeed, Black American racial and cultural identity, and education are different from white racial and cultural identity and educational attainment. While Black Americans and whites are different from each other this does not mean that Black Americans are innately insufficient compared to whites. By using the deficit model, research often uses the same theoretical assumptions for whites and Black Americans. It is important to note that the differences between white and Black American expressed identity and educational attainment results from a history of inequality within the public sector. This includes educational institutions, and the white supremacist structure that has been absorbed into the institutions of the United States. The white supremacist structure operates under the assumption that white culture and standards for achievement are the best and therefore must be the standard for understanding the culture and achievements of other ethnic groups.

According to Tommie Shelby (2005), “What is sometimes regarded as ‘white culture’ is simply that variant of postindustrial, mass culture that prevails in the United States- that familiar set of standardized meanings, assumed common knowledge, and basic competencies that the vast majority of adult citizens must master if they are to live minimally decent lives in liberal capitalist America” (183). This “common culture” that Shelby refers to is transmitted through educational institutions, which allows as he argues, “for citizens from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds to communicate with one another, coordinate their actions, carry out commercial transactions, and conduct their common affairs” (183).
Advocates of asset building and community development often utilize methods that diverge from the deficit model in order to help to identify potential individual, institutional, and community factors that lead to and foster success among Black Americans (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993; Winfield, 1991), instead of comparing Black Americans to whites. This technique helps to illustrate that Black American success is not an anomaly. Using the asset model, the factors that make Black American behavior different from that of white behavior, are resources for Blacks not hindrances to their achievement. These assets include their associations in churches, block clubs, fraternal organizations, and cultural groups, as well as their individual experiences as Black Americans (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993; Winfield, 1991). Community development models are driven by the relationships or networks formed between individuals. The relationships or networks developed between individuals, their associations and institutions aids in their building of assets, which help Black Americans to overcome many social or cultural obstacles that they may face. In that tradition, it is necessary to explore Black Americans who do not fit within the parameters of the deficit model. This allows for the construction of a new model, which understands Black American behavior in terms of assets rather than failures. This new model also recognizes the importance of community as well as race (Winfield, 1991). I argue that one of the African American community’s greatest assets is college educated Black Americans.

The failures associated with Black Americans often results from the substandard public schools and unequal educational opportunities. As a result of this educational deficit, a disproportionate number of Black Americans have “underdeveloped verbal and cognitive skills, have a deficient knowledge of history and world cultures, little familiarity with different political traditions, and low reading levels” (Shelby 2005, 183). Therefore, instead of emphasizing
cultural or racial differences between Blacks and whites, it is arguably imperative that Black intellectuals advocate reforming the failing public school system. This may, in part, be what W.E.B. Du Bois was advocating for with his Talented Tenth doctrine, although the framing through a Nationalist lens may have obscured part of this meaning. Black American solidarity and commitment to other Black Americans could result in a Black “elite” or intelligentsia who were committed to improving the lives of other Black Americans, especially those who faced substandard public schools and unequal educational opportunities. Du Bois recognized very early on that changes in education, income, occupation, and regional opportunities would result in a more advantaged or even elite group of Black Americans whose “material interests might diverge from those of their more disadvantaged racial kin” (Shelby 81). According to Tommie Shelby, Du Bois recognized that these Blacks would be tempted to gain their civil rights and inclusion within America at the cost of their Black identity (81). Arguably, Du Bois himself and the founding members of the NAACP were members of this “elite” group, often criticized by people such as Marcus M. Garvey.

**The Development Du Bois’s Talented Tenth**

In W.E.B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), which provides his introduction to the Talented Tenth, he illustrates that some of the Black American elite (intelligentsia) sought to distinguish themselves from the larger masses of “Black folk” in order to gain acceptance into the mainstream of American society. Du Bois begins by describing how some free Blacks, during the antebellum period, accepted the existence of slavery in the Southern part of the United States. Because they were not enslaved people themselves, they believed that they deserved all of the rights of white citizens (66). In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois argues that these Blacks were prepared to assimilate into the dominant white culture, seeking to see themselves as
“people of color” distinct from “Negroes,” as Black Americans were identified at that time. Whites, however, refused to recognize these individuals as “people of color,” and instead referred to them enslaved or free, as “niggers.” As a result of this precarious status, free people of color were arguably forced to turn to either the emigrationist movement or the abolitionist movement as their only alternatives for survival (Shelby 82).

In his essay entitled “On Black-Brown Relations” (The Cornel West Reader 2000) Cornel West engages in a dialogue about race with Jorge Klor de Alva. In this discussion, Klor de Alva asks about the “Blackness” of recent immigrants to the United States who are members of the African diaspora, essentially inquiring about the method by which they become Black American. West states, “It wasn’t me. It was the first American who called [her] ‘nigger.’ That’s when [she] started the process of Americanization and racialization.” Klor de Alva than asks, ‘What is a nigger?’” To which West responds, “… you’re the one who explained it.” The discussion between West and Klor de Alva illustrates how one must learn to operate within Blackness and learn how to navigate the social implications of such an identity in the United States. This is an especially difficult task for members of the African diaspora, who immigrate to the United States from countries where Blacks are the racial majority such as countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa. As a result of their interaction with African Americans, these immigrants begin to “learn” what it means to be Black in the United States and how to navigate their new social standing in society. This process is the “niggerization” of the Black immigrant. Therefore, despite Black people’s desire to define themselves arguably, they are limited by what their skin color allows.

W.E.B. Du Bois further discussed the issue of self-identification in “On Being Ashamed of Oneself: An Essay on Race Pride” (1933). In this essay Du Bois suggests that there are two
extreme tendencies of Blacks when it comes to racial pride and identification. First, some have opposed the idea that they are Black (Negroes), and therefore worked to assume an “American” identity, disassociating with all modes of Black behavior and expression. Second, others saw their Blackness as a badge of honor, a sign of their racial superiority, and therefore sought to celebrate their Blackness akin to “how white supremacists do whiteness.” In my survey I specifically asked respondents about their racial and national identities (Appendix F) in order to create an index for double consciousness.

The opposition to Blackness and assumed “American” identity shuns racial solidarity or linked racial fate, maintaining that such solidarity would lead to greater racial discrimination. For Du Bois, this assimilationist position was motivated by Blacks who were ashamed of their Blackness or did not want to be associated with other Blacks, possibly believing that the discrimination that they faced was in part brought upon themselves by their actions. The “American” identity was seen as a way to escape Blackness, which arguably lent “support to the racist view that Blacks were not worth associating with” (Shelby 2005, 83). But the New Negro Movement of the Harlem Renaissance was a dramatic shift in the attitudes of the Black elite and intelligentsia, for with the achievements of this period, they found that there were things and people that they could be proud to associate with: people of cultural refinement and intellectual achievement (83). Arguably, this association was class specific. The culturally refined intellectuals of the New Negro Movement became members of the social elite as a result of their education, income, occupational status, cultural capital, and in some cases, their less Negroid phenotypical traits. Of course, not all Blacks were associated with the New Negro Movement, which meant that there was a class of Blacks who were poorly educated, uncultured, and impoverished, not the “kind of people” with which the Black elite would want to associate. This
rift between these Black classes is expressed in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois criticizes the fact that white elites fail to distinguish accomplished, hardworking and morally upright Blacks from Blacks who are incompetent, lazy, or criminal: traits that arguably had nothing to do with class, but rather personal character (146-147; Gooding-Williams 2011).

This discussion illustrates that even when Blacks attempt to disassociate themselves from other Black Americans that linked racial fate is still at play, because whites continue to associate Black Americans with one another, despite differences in class, culture, or achievement. The Black American elite are unable to escape their Blackness and are associated with Black Americans whom they may deem to be inferior. This inferiority is imagined because in the public sphere and in the market place, Blacks continue to be judged as inferior to whites despite their sociocultural achievements. Once the Black elite realized that they too were subject to discrimination and racial insults, they had an interest in combating racism and inequality. They began supporting laws that benefited disadvantaged Blacks as much as laws that would benefit Blacks who for all intents and purposes had “made it.”

Black American oppression resulted in Black American racial solidarity. Since racial oppression had no respect of class or social status, Blacks began to politically mobilize across various socioeconomic backgrounds. Their commitment to their ethnic group and race was arguably greater than any differences in social, economic, employment, or other statuses. This was evident in the establishment of organizations such as the NAACP. The NAACP was created to combat the oppression of all Black people, despite their social standing. When the NAACP was formed to denounce the “ever growing oppression of [our] 10,000,000 colored fellow citizens,” the members invoked a moral passion, which was not based on financial or social
status, to describe what Black people were enduring (Kellogg 1967, 2). The men and women who founded the NAACP, in reference to Black Americans, stated:

Often plundered of their just share of the public funds, robbed of nearly all part in the government, segregated by common carriers, some murdered with impunity, and all treated with open contempt by officials, they are held in some States in practical slavery. The systematic persecution of law-abiding citizens and their disfranchisement on account of their race alone is a crime that will ultimately drag down to an infamous end any nation that allows it to be practiced.

The men and women who founded the NAACP were businessmen, social workers, teachers, writers, and journalists; the whites were affluent and college educated Protestants (rather than Catholics) and Republicans as well as Socialists (rather than Democrats) from big cities, while the Blacks were educated, politically active, and of relatively high economic standing (Fairclough 2001). The NAACP appeared to be top-heavy with whites, which made it an easy target for Black critics. But W.E.B. Du Bois gave the NAACP credibility as an interracial organization. During the NAACP’s first two decades of existence, whites dominated the organization. As a result, the NAACP was not identified as a Black organization by non-members although W.E.B. Du Bois insisted that Black culture and leadership were inseparable. Like Alexander Crummell, Du Bois argued that both “scholars and thinkers” could guide and lead the unlettered masses of Black Americans.

From Alexander Crummell’s conception of leadership came Du Bois’s idea of a “Talented Tenth”; a cultured, broad minded leadership that would fight for equal rights for other Negros (Oldfield 1995). “Progress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push,” Du Bois explained, a “surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of the duller brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage-ground” (195-99). Without access to higher education, leaders of vision and intellect would be lacking, according to Du Bois. Du Bois again echoed
Crummell’s critique of the “shallow materialism that pervaded the age, which Washington’s ‘get rich’ philosophy reflected. No amount of material wealth could compensate for loss of the vote, inferior education, and the ‘emasculating effects of caste distinctions’” (Fairclough 76).

Black American culture and politics become intertwined. As a result, Negro politics in the 20th century was guided by those who had the right “pedigree” to speak with authority on behalf of all Blacks. Du Bois’s conception of Negro leadership arguably entailed contempt for ordinary working Blacks and an “arrogant but unjustified expression of elite superiority, a kind of Black noblesse oblige” (Shelby 88). Was Du Bois wrong to think that Black elites, by virtue of their education, were more “enlightened” about politics and the social issues than their less-educated Black brothers and sisters?

In his “Memorial Address,” Du Bois explicitly denied the claim that the Black intelligentsia was inherently superior to less educated Blacks. He wrote:

They [the Talented Tenth] must first of all recognize the fact that their own place in life is primarily a matter of opportunity, rather than simply desire or ability. That if such opportunity were extended and broadened, a thousand times as many Negroes could join the ranks of the educated and able, instead of sinking into poverty, disease and crime.

Du Bois recognized that he would be criticized for his expressed elitism, which might be seen as exacerbating the impoverished or deficit condition of other Blacks. But Du Bois argued that the educated elite did not create this mass of impoverished Blacks; “instead, they were created by a long history of brutal racial oppression, economic exploitation, political disfranchisement, educational deprivation, and social neglect, all perpetuated by members of the dominant group” (Shelby 89). He further argued that if Blacks of ability were not suitably educated, leaders would nonetheless inevitably emerge within Black communities (90).
Du Bois assumed in *The Souls of Black Folk* that those with formal education would have the knowledge, intelligence, foresight, and ultimately, feel racially linked to other Blacks to be effective leaders. Arguably, given the desire for wise leadership, working class Blacks would choose their political leaders and those to represent them from among the well-educated. As a result of this claim, those Black American leaders that began to arise in the early and mid-20th century were those who were formally college educated such as Black artists and intellectuals including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and Mary McLeod Bethune, predecessors to Bayard Rustin, Ella Baker, and Martin Luther King.

**The Talented Tenth’s Pathway to Leadership**

Du Bois recognized that wise leaders were needed, but where would they come from? Arguably, the best choice was colleges and universities; between 1928 and 1944 the number of Black students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) increased from 12,000 to 27,000 (Fairclough 175). While HBCUs were centers of Black culture and political thought, Du Bois and others complained that as these colleges began to emulate white colleges and universities. Du Bois complained that HBCUs lost the sense of mission that had characterized them in the late nineteenth century. Du Bois believed that the “central goal” of Black education was preparing Black leaders for participation in the political economy of the New South (Freeman and Thomas 2002, 351). Despite calling upon college educated Blacks, Du Bois warned that the rise of an educated elite might ultimately weaken the masses rather than raise the culture of the entire group. Later in life, Du Bois would complain that the Talented Tenth had “surrendered to selfish and even silly ideals” (175). Echoing Du Bois’s sentiments was Horace Mann Bond, who earned a Master’s and Doctoral degree in 1936 from the University of Chicago. Bond complained that Black students were conservative, elitist, and
willing to selfishly profit from the ignorance and superstition of the Black masses (Bond 1934). Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal challenged Bond’s conviction by saying, “The long-range effect of the rising level of education in the Negro people goes in the direction of nourishing and strengthening the Negro protest” (Myrdal 1944, 881).

The colleges and universities that educated and produced the Black American leadership pool were not models of democracy, but rather “oases of freedom” compared to the surrounding society. On the HBCU campuses students were mobilized to form campus chapters of the NAACP and bring in Black American philosophers, leaders, and speakers, which informed their political consciousness and taught students the civic skills necessary to challenge the political system. Now, Black Americans were not only mobilized to politically participate from their religious or church involvement, but also their educational associations. Notwithstanding that Black Americans were still not attending colleges and universities at the same rate as whites, organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) founded in 1960, became ancillary to religious organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) founded in 1957, to promote racial pride and cement the union between the educated Talented Tenth and the institutional Black church.

Booker T. Washington’s desire to showcase Black civility and W.E.B. Du Bois’s efforts to develop educated Black leadership illustrates the link between religion, education, and political action. The aforementioned link further demonstrates that certain forms of religious behavior and educational experiences provide certain resources for Black political activism. Black Americans were mobilized to answer both Washington and Du Bois’s call through their educational, social, and religious networks in the early 20th century and continuing well into the 1950s and 1960s (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Throughout the 20th century there was a positive and
direct link between church attendance and voter turnout for Black Americans (Milbrath and Goel 1997; Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Hougland and Christenson 1983; Martinson and Wilkensing 1987; Strate et al 1989). Just as participation in church activities yielded certain civic skills, I argue that by attending HBCUs Black American students learned skills to become leaders in their various communities. Even if these college-educated Black Americans “surrendered to selfish and even silly ideals” as Du Bois claimed, I argue that by attending a HBCU or other university and being involved in various college activities and organizations, students ultimately graduate with a sense of civic and racial obligation that leads them to participate regularly in political activity and shapes their social ideology (Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Hougland and Christenson 1983).

**Conclusion**

This chapter serves to ground the dissertation discussion in its proper historical context. It suggests that, although this work examines the Black American Talented Tenth in the 21st century, the ideas and principles that inform the formation of the Talented Tenth, linked racial fate and double consciousness, and involvement with Black American politics at the start of the Civil Rights Era have an enduring presence in 2014. This chapter relies heavily on the writings of noted scholars of Black American ethnic identity and Black Nationalism. More importantly, it relies on the original texts in the form of essays and the philosophical debates between the Black American authorities on Black American identity of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This establishes the strength of the intellectual and philosophical debates of Black American identity as a guiding principle for the rationale of the Talented Tenth’s development and commitment to African American society and politics. In the next chapter, these philosophical debates provide a model, by which focus group participants and survey respondents negotiate their philosophical
and ideological acceptance or opposition to the ideas, leaders, and beliefs, that ultimately help form the participants’ racial and ideological views.
Chapter II References


CHAPTER III. BEYOND DU BOIS AND WASHINGTON: THE TALENTED TENTH’S PERCEPTIONS OF CONSERVATISM AND BLACK AMERICAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES

This right of self-determination has always been denied. It is a right which Blacks have always fought for. The first Black newspaper in American [Freedom’s Journal] published its first edition on May 16, 1827. In its lead editorial, it stated, “We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us.”


African American Philosophical Debates

A vast number of political philosophies operate within the African American community. Despite the divergent nature of these philosophies, they almost all have the same goal: to advance Black American empowerment and political as well as social equality. In order for these political philosophies to have an impact on large segments of the African American community, Blacks need to organize themselves. If effectively organized, no matter which political philosophy adopted, African Americans will be able to make progressive changes in the way the U.S. government responds to their interests. Some of these political philosophies have been deemed “radical,” but with the exception of separatism, Black Americans are not asking for the formal governmental systems of the U.S. to be dramatically restructured or dismantled; instead these philosophies advocate for full inclusion, fair treatment, and equality.

These philosophical debates provide a model for better understanding the development and articulation of Black Americans political philosophies of the 21st century. It is the articulation and manifestation of these political philosophies that are uncovered in this study by using focus group participants. By asking respondents a series of questions about the three major political philosophies that pervade Black American culture and the men that championed them,
respondents’ personal political ideologies are revealed. In this work political ideology is understood as “a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved” (Erikson and Tedin 2003) and “the shared framework of mental models that groups of individuals possess that provide both an interpretation of how environment should be structured” (Denzau and North 1994/2000). Some respondents revealed their support or opposition to each political philosophy or ideology explicitly, especially when the philosophy or ideology discussed was one accepted or espoused by other Black Americans. Other respondents were clearly cautious when engaging in conversation about political philosophies and ideologies that either challenged the Black American philosophical status quo, or that others within the focus group did not seem to support, making statements such as, “I think, now this is my personal opinion, I can’t speak for others” (a participant from New Orleans) and “I think I disagree with that…” (a participant from Rochester). The aforementioned statements express the subjective mood illustrating a tone of uncertainty used to conciliate focus group participants’ perceptions of their more radical statements.

**The New Negro and the New Negro Wage Earner**

These philosophical debates not only represent different modes for advancing Black American empowerment and political and social equality, but also illustrate the extent to which these modes are supported or articulated in different regions of the United States. The early 20th century gave rise to two Black American archetypes whose existence in both the North and South was based upon their interpretation of the aforementioned philosophical debates. The “New Negro” (a moniker coined by Alain LeRoy Locke) was born in the North: a self-confident, urban Northerner, who often denied charges of racial inferiority (Painter 2007, 189). The New Negro expressed pride in being Negro (Black). The New Negro “… fought back when attacked
and proclaimed his pride for his race” (189). Many New Negroes migrated from the South to the North and Midwest. Often times, “… these African Americans exchanged the worst of Southern, state-sponsored racial terrorism for relative- strictly relative-freedom” (189). The New Negro experience in the North is often associated with the arts, formal education, employment opportunities, and political involvement and mobilization; their political involvement and mobilization was fueled, in part, by their interaction with foreign-born Blacks in the North, 33,464 Blacks who immigrated from other regions of the Americas (North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean including the lesser and greater Antilles), bringing their experiences as members of the majority racial group in their countries with them to the United States (Painter 2007, 192). The New Negro in the North was more “cosmopolitan” than Blacks in the South. Arguably, Black Americans in the North revolutionized the Democratic Party making Black Americans a political force once again (211). Despite considerable advances for Blacks in the North, the North was not without its social and racial problems.

The New Negro’s Southern counterpart is difficult to characterize, and it is important not to disparage Black Americans who did not migrate to the North or take part of the artistic renaissance associated with the northern United States. Absent of a unique moniker, I have chosen to use Carter G. Woodson and Lorenzo J. Greene’s book title, The Negro Wage Earner (1930), to describe the South’s answer to the North’s New Negro. The South’s “Negro Wage Earner” is associated with Black Americans in the South who transformed themselves from solely being agricultural laborers and domestic servants into members of the modern industrial working class, drawn to jobs within northern and southern urban cities such as being bellboys, longshoremen, and garbage collectors (Painter 2007, 217). Black Americans in the South

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5 Although the New Negro and Negro Wage Earner are associated with specific geographical regions, these archetypes were not entirely exclusive to a specific region.
continued to matriculate at segregated colleges and universities, yet formal education did not always translate into better living or working conditions. Unlike Black Americans in the North, those in the South at this time favored the Republican Party, the favored party of Blacks since Reconstruction.

This dichotomy of the New Negro and the Negro Wage Earner as well as North versus South can also be illustrated in the speeches of Malcolm X. In his September 1963 speech entitled, “The Old Negro and the New Negro,” Malcolm X states:

This is the thing that whites need to be made aware of, that there is an old Negro and a new Negro. The old Negro is the one that the white man is familiar with. The new Negro is the one that has resulted from the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and the whites in this country are not too familiar with this type. Back in slavery they also had two types, and to understand the types today you have to understand the two types that existed during slavery. During slavery, historians agree, there were what were known as the house Negro and the field Negro… Now then, you have the masses of black people in this country who are the offshoot of the field Negro, during slavery. They are the masses. They are the ones who are jobless. They are the last hired and the first fired. They are the ones who are forced to live in the ghetto and the slum. They are the ones who are not allowed to integrate. They are not the handpicked Negroes who benefit from token integration. They are not the bourgeoisie who get the crumbs that fall from the white man’s table. They are not the ones who can slip into the White House or these big hotels when the doors are opened up. These are the ones who still are forced to live in the ghetto or forced to live in the slum or forced to get a third-rate education or forced to work in the worst form of the job.

Malcolm X continued by describing the manifestation of the aforementioned “Negroes” in the twentieth century (1963). Malcolm X emphasized that the integrationist “Negro” was the one who did not want to be Black for he was ashamed to be Black, but knew that he could not be white. As a result of this shame Malcolm X argues that the “Negro” refers to himself as an American Negro meaning he is neither Black nor white. Malcolm X incorporates W.E.B. Du Bois’s double consciousness theory into this description.
Finally, Malcolm X provides an alternative to the “American Negro” towards the end of his speech (1963). He states that this man does not call himself a “Negro,” instead he calls himself a Black man. Malcolm X asserts that this man does not make any apology for his Black skin or for being in America because he knows he was brought here forcibly. Malcolm X explains that the “Black man” perceives that it is the white man’s fault that he is in the United States for it is the white man who created the race problem. As a result, the Black man does not apologize for being in the United States; he doesn’t apologize for the problem that his presence confronts the white man with. Malcolm X then states that the Black man does not walk around bragging that he is an American or that he wants to be a part of the American society for he is cosmopolitan and away of his African Diasporic identity. The “Black man” finds pride in knowing that he is not a racial or ethnic minority and therefore uses his position of “power” to create a world where he is valued.

The New Negro and the Negro Wage Earner as well as Malcolm X’s “American Negro” and “Black man” are important to the discussion of the development and perceived differences of the political ideology of Black Americans based upon geographical regions. These two conceptions, based upon sociocultural and political experiences as a result of geographical region, provide an additional method for understanding the formation of political ideology, as defined earlier in this chapter. The interpretation of political philosophies is based upon individual and group historical experiences. Therefore, the North-South dichotomy offers an additional lens for understanding and further interpretation of the major philosophical debates in the Black community. This also provides justification for hosting focus groups in both the northern and southern regions of the United States: New Orleans, Louisiana and Rochester, New York.
New Orleans (Louisiana)

Politically and socially, New Orleans has undergone a racial transition from majority white during segregation (more specifically the 1960s) to majority Black in the post-Civil Rights Era. Arguably, social integration resulted in an influx of Black Americans from rural areas of southeastern Louisiana to the urban center of the Crescent City (Fussell 2007). The increase of the city’s Black American population further amplified the political power of African Americans in New Orleans. As a result of this increased political power, Black Americans elected their first Black mayor in 1978, Ernest Nathan “Dutch” Morial. Dutch Morial was succeeded by three Black Americans: Sidney Barthelemy in 1986, his son Marc Morial in 1994, and C. Ray Nagin Jr. in 2002. Black Americans have been influential in helping elect the city’s mayors for the last 35 years, illustrating their political power and capital.⁶

The political mobilization of Blacks in New Orleans has arguably influenced the mobilization of Black Americans in other cities across the nation (Vanderleeuw and Liu 2002). Like V.O. Key (1949), scholars have used the city of New Orleans and Black Americans residents of the city to explain Black political mobilization around the country. According to Vanderleeuw and Liu (2002), “its [New Orleans] long history of racial politics [makes] it an appropriate setting for a variety of social and political inquiries centered around race.” Prior to Hurricane Katrina (2005), 67.25% of New Orleans’ population was African American; the 2010 census indicated that the African American population decreased to 60.2% as a result of mass migration following Hurricane Katrina (Krupa 2011). Black Americans in New Orleans have always been politically active, often using organizational bases such as churches and civic

⁶ During the 2002 mayoral election C. Ray Nagin, although Black, was not the Black community’s preferred candidate. Blacks in New Orleans supported Richard Pennington who received endorsements from Black leaders such as former U.S. Congressman William “Bill” Jefferson.
organizations to mobilize participants; Black Americans proved to be politically active even prior to the Voting Rights Act, when only 17% of population was registered to vote.

Using Lawrence Bobo and Franklin Gilliam’s “Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment” (1990) to explain the political experiences of Black Americans in post-Civil Rights Era New Orleans, there seems to be a positive correlation between high levels of empowerment, as measured by the presence of a Black mayor and high levels of political participation. Bobo and Gilliam (1990) write:

Empowerment influences black participation because it is a contextual cue of likely policy responsiveness to black concerns. If so, the empowerment effect on participation should work through those psychological factors that facilitate political involvement; that is, level of empowerment should influence participation because it increase attentiveness to politics among black as well as increasing their levels of political trust and efficacy (382).

Chung-Li Wu (2003) attempts to further explain this Black empowerment by identifying indicators such as race, education, religion, and government responsiveness to explain political participation in New Orleans. The aforementioned indicators are often used to explain Black American politics by using a data set that is inclusive of white Americans. By virtue of the sample used, the sample for this research included more than 75% of respondents who identified as Black or African American. The next chapter outlines the sample.

Three focus group sessions were held at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in the (Faubourg) Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans. Tremé, an over 200 year-old neighborhood in New Orleans, is the oldest Black neighborhood in the United States (Faubourg Tremé 2008), and arguably the birthplace of the Southern Civil Rights Movement and jazz music. St. Luke’s was founded in 1855 as the “Negro Church in New Orleans…for the provision for religious instruction of the colored race” (Swallow 1968). For almost one hundred and sixty years, St. Luke’s has been a bastion of service to the community through education (Francis Gaudet
School) and feeding the homeless and mentally ill (Fishes and Loaves Program). Given the history and location of St. Luke’s, as well as being my local parish, it was chosen as the New Orleans focus group site.

Focus Groups: Sessions I, II, and III (New Orleans)

Focus group participants were recruited using surveys, which were disseminated at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (Esplanade Ridge Neighborhood) and to several NPHC (National Pan Hellenic Council) chapters in New Orleans. Most, if not all, of the participants in all three sessions were local New Orleanians, raised and educated in the city. As a result of recruiting from an aging Episcopal parish in New Orleans and from NPHC organizations, many participants were between the ages of 40-70. Many of their political perceptions resulted from their experiences of growing up in a city like New Orleans, where the Black American experience colors ideology. While the first two focus groups utilized college educated participants, members of the control group consisted of members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and the spouses of NPHC members who were not college educated.

Rochester, New York

Despite the late 18th and early 19th century impact of the milling industry in Rochester (hence the sobriquet of the “Flour City”), the city was home to enslaved African Americans; illustrating that even in the industrial North, slavery thrived. Slavery remained legal in New York state until 1827 and was necessary for the development of the major industrial cities (Moore and Lepore 2005). For this reason, the New York State Legislature dealt with slavery by signing legislation that declared that slaves born prior to July 4, 1799 would be free as of July 4, 1827; however children of slaves born during the interim were not free (Du Bois 1994, 10).
With its close proximity to Canada, Rochester became an important location for the Underground Railroad. Defying the Fugitive Slave Law (1793), both African American and white Rochesterians harbored fugitive slaves as they made their way North to Canada (Du Bois 12). Frederick Douglass, one of Rochester’s most famous residents, escaped slavery himself and gained renown as an antislavery lecturer and writer (13). Later, Douglass also became active in the women’s rights movement, attending the first women’s rights convention held in Seneca Falls, NY in 1848, and later working closely with Susan B. Anthony (Du Bois 13). As a result of this rich history, many Black Americans migrated to the city following World War I, finding jobs as domestics and suppliers of other household help in affluent neighborhoods.

According to Eugene E. Du Bois (1994), the African American experience in Rochester is a story of migration, discrimination, self-help, community support, and “the ability to overcome challenges unimaginable to most Americans (5).” Many African Americans migrated to Rochester during the early 19th century in significant numbers from Culpeper, Virginia following the Civil War. Although many African Americans emigrated from the South to western New York, the rates never mirrored those of African Americans in other industrial cities such as Detroit, Chicago, or Pittsburgh. The aforementioned cities required large numbers of unskilled laborers for industry, whereas Rochester’s African Americans were “relegated to the low paying menial jobs of elevator operators, janitors, porters, chauffeurs and domestics” (6). These jobs, in the service industry, created a class of African Americans who were the working poor.

Between 1950 and 1960 the Black American population swelled by over 300% (Eison 2006) as Black Americans migrated to the city for jobs. Although Kodak and Xerox Corporation had expanded, Black Americans were still typically assigned to low pay and low skill jobs. On
July 24, 1964, violence broke out in Rochester’s Black community, leading the nation into what would become a summer of urban unrest throughout the United States. The protests focused attention on the needs of Black citizens, serious needs that had gone mainly unattended by government, civic leaders, and educators. Rochester would recover, but according to Eugene Du Bois, “it would never be the same.”

According to those interviewed in Carvin Eison’s 2006 film, to many whites it seemed odd that riots started in Rochester, a place they saw as an ideal small city; it had low unemployment and thousands of high paying, skilled manufacturing jobs in ‘clean’ companies like Kodak, Bausch and Lomb and the future Xerox. But this characteristic also led to Rochester being referred to as ‘smugtown.’ Blacks emigrated from the South looking for these jobs only to be bitterly disappointed to find that the only positions open to them were as janitors and service personnel, not as skilled technicians. They were confined to ghettos of rundown, rat-ridden housing; Rochester was the last large city in New York State to build any public housing. Police brutality was a constant aggravation. Rochester’s Black neighborhood was “a keg of dynamite waiting for a match” (Eison 2006).

Accounts of the riots are different. Some say they started with the arrest of a drunken Black man at a block party, while other say that they began after a young Black girl had been bitten by a police dog. Nevertheless, the streets filled with young people throwing bricks, stones and Molotov cocktails at the police and trashing stores along Joseph Avenue, the main artery of the Black neighborhood. The film includes interviews of several riot participants 40 years later and while they express sadness at having hurt store owners with whom they had had friendly relations, none of them felt regret at giving vent to their frustration about the situation in Rochester. These are the real life emotions dramatized in Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing (1989).
I recently attended a screening of *July ’64* with a discussion afterwards (2014). The ultimate causes of the uprising, according to former Rochester mayor, William A. Johnson Jr., were health, education and jobs. Johnson was elected as Rochester’s first Black mayor in 1993, as the city’s 64th mayor, and then reelected in 1997 and 2001. Since 2005, all subsequent mayors of the city of Rochester have been white\(^7\).

The problems that sparked unrest in the 1960s continue to persist in Rochester today. In many cases, the problems have even intensified rather than abated in the 49 intervening years (Eison 2006). During the 2010-2011 school year, 63% of the students in the Rochester City School identified as African American or Black. New York State declared that for a school district to meet state standards, 80% of African American students must graduate. Sadly, only 50% of African American seniors graduated from high school (New York State District Report Card 2012).

In Eison’s film, James Turner, Professor at Cornell University, refers to cities like Rochester as the ‘crisis of the Black politician.’ Turner explains that once Blacks win political power, whites move out of a city to the suburbs or the Sunbelt, and industry runs away or overseas, taking the tax base with it. Today, as a result of white flight, the advancement of digital imaging technology, and poverty Rochester is just a shadow of the prosperous industrial city that it once was in 1964. Despite the relative economic demise of the city, African Americans make up 41.74% of the city’s population (Census Bureau).

Three focus group sessions were held in the Corn Hill neighborhood (Clarissa Street) of Rochester at Mount Olivet Baptist Church. The Corn Hill neighborhood is the oldest residential neighborhood in Rochester. In 1830, Reverend Thomas James, who escaped slavery, founded

\(^7\) As I was writing, Lovely Ann Warren, an African American woman was elected mayor.
the Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, then located on Favor Street (Corn Hill Neighborhood Association 2013). This church became a center for the Underground Railroad, and for Frederick Douglass’s abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*. It also became the center for the women’s suffrage movement, with Susan B. Anthony’s home located within the same neighborhood.

Mount Olivet Baptist Church has had a long association with higher education, training and employing many students from the Colgate Divinity School, including renowned scholar and prolific writer Dr. Howard Thurman (Mt. Olivet Baptist Church website 2013). Mount Olivet has a history of providing a space for political candidates to speak to the Rochester metro area. In 2000, when former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton ran for United States Senator for New York, she campaigned at Mount Olivet Baptist church. Mount Olivet is located in a traditionally Republican region of New York State (Upstate New York). However, the Congressional district is overwhelmingly Democratic and a majority-minority district (Census Viewer 2013). Mount Olivet Baptist Church served as my adolescent church home.

A recent study produced by The Rochester Area Community Foundation, entitled “Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine County Rochester Area,” identified the city of Rochester has the fifth poorest city in the entire nation amongst the 75 largest metro areas (December 2013). One of the report’s principal goals was to, “[foster] racial and ethnic understanding and equality.” According to federal poverty guidelines African Americans account for 43% of the impoverished areas (U.S. Census Bureau- American Community Survey 2007-11). Interestingly, the report states that, “Despite its heritage as the home of Frederick Douglass, African Americans found access to [tight-knit blue collar and immigrant] communities to be difficult. Housing and employment choices for Blacks were very limited, even for professionals”
(23). As a result of the disparities facing Blacks in my home town, it was important to host focus groups in Rochester.

**Focus Groups: Sessions IV, V, and VI (Rochester, NY)**

Participants were recruited from Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Corn Hill neighborhood), several NPHC chapters, the Boulé, and the Links Inc in Rochester. Unlike the New Orleans participants, many of the participants in Rochester were not Rochesterians by birth. Many relocated to the city for jobs at the large corporations such as Xerox, Kodak, and the University of Rochester. As a result of recruiting from one of the largest Black churches in Rochester and from NPHC chapters and other civic organizations, participants were between the ages of 30-90. Many of their political perceptions resulted from their dual experiences of being raised in the South, but raising their families or attending college in the North. Members of the control group consisted of members recruited from Mount Olivet Baptist Church.

**Everyday Discussions about Du Bois, Washington, Garvey and Others**

The following discussions offer a picture of the composition of the expressed political ideologies derived from intimate conversations via focus groups and interviews with college educated Black Americans.⁸ The discussions highlight both the conflict and consensus found in Black American political thought. I observed unity, elitism, egalitarianism, activism, hope, and some pessimism about the racial and political futures of Black Americans and their place within the broader context of American political culture and society. The focus group discussions in New Orleans, Louisiana and Rochester, New York, provided evidence of diversity in the people and positions that informed this project, but most importantly, they have allowed me to illustrate...

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⁸ All names have been changed and pseudonyms are used.
the “dialogically complex and sometimes circuitous route” (Price 2009, 4) used by African American members of the Talented Tenth to make sense of their political and social world as well as their conservatism.

When first presenting participants with photographs of W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey, many participants were able to identify the men. When I asked them about their personal adherence to these individuals’ political philosophies though, most participants didn’t use the same descriptive language as me. Their explanations did, however, echo some of the arguments made by Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey. In all focus group sessions, there were certain participants that were much more vocal than the other attendees; this is reflected in some of the recurring focus group participant responses, which appear in this and subsequent chapters.

Participants did not seem to worry about sounding “radical” or exhibiting language consistent with Black pride. In fact, they often explicitly used the term “Black pride.” Any hesitancy to express radicalism was often overcome when participants were asked whether or not they agreed with the political philosophies espoused by each man. The participants’ comfort level, which was reflected in their ease of discussing such philosophies, may have resulted from an all Black research team; the research assistants and I (the primary investigator/researcher) were all phenotypically Black.

The manifestation of Black pride in the participants’ responses was unremarkable; the goal was to move the conversations toward the way in which race, their educational achievements, their social status, and linked racial fate shaped their perception of various Black American political philosophies and conservatism. Initially, asking specific individuals about
their political ideologies placed many participants in unfamiliar territory, but by beginning by allowing participants to define these political ideologies for themselves, I allowed them to shape the discussion while maintain my role in facilitating the conversation. In several focus groups, I spent the majority of the time on Black philosophical thought relating to Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey, which was then related by participants to Black American religion. I did not purposely include any questions about religion, but the amount of time participants spent discussing religion illustrates the saliency of religion on their political philosophical development. Much of their discussion about religion was rooted in the Black American religious experience. A great deal of the discussion surrounding religion was illustrative of a conservative moral philosophy that would influence empowerment in the Black community. This will be explored and explained more in Chapter V.

When discussing the political philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey focus group participants also engaged in conversations about Reverend Martin Luther King and Malcolm X Shabazz. These discussions were allowed, as the conversations about African American politics and culture is often oversaturated with narratives about the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X (Shabazz). I expected participants to discuss these two men as it relates to Black American political philosophy and leadership. Due to the age of many participants, I expected them to be familiar with the philosophies of King and Shabazz; many participants in both New Orleans and Rochester shared their experiences of meeting or attending forums held by both leaders in the early 1960s. Brenda, a PhD and septuagenarian in New Orleans stated:
I was a Catholic girl at New York University when I learned about Malcolm X. I never so badly wanted to be Muslim. I went to every activity, as a matter of fact, I was at the mosque the day that he was assassinated. I just think that was it, so when you speak of Garvey, I think that was the position that we as Black Americans should have taken.

King and Shabazz have enjoyed the greatest recognizability and popularity in this post-Civil Rights era due in part to the recordings of their prolific speeches. The advancement in technology and recording devices during the late 1950s and early 1960s ensured the perpetuity of King and Shabazz’s political and religious philosophies for generations to come. King and Shabazz are often studied in schools and portrayed in films. Their images grace T-shirts and their names line the streets of many Black American urban neighborhoods.

Unlike King and Shabazz, W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey have not enjoyed the same name recognition and popularity outside of the Black community. King and Shabazz’s political philosophies were shaped by their religious experiences; King being a “Prophetic Christian” (West 1999) and Shabazz as a visionary Muslim (Shabazz 1997). In contrast to King and Shabazz, in many Black American history books Du Bois is often reduced to being a “man of letters” while Washington and Garvey seem to be portrayed as the voices of working class Blacks. As a result of the limited knowledge of Du Bois, Washington, and Garvey, I decided to begin all focus groups by providing participants with images of the men and asking them to identify them before discussing these leaders’ political beliefs. These focus group discussions, outlined in the methodology section, provided participants an opportunity to express their own personal political views as a reflection of the beliefs of the men in the photographs. It also allowed participants to describe the political beliefs of the leaders using their own words. Although the leaders in the photographs were not familiar to all participants in the two control groups, by showing the photographs, I attempted to demystify and make the entire
research process seem more accessible, especially to those who may not have engaged in conversation as a result of thinking that they had nothing of value to add to the conversation.

After the discussion about W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey was under way, I guided the conversation toward other political questions based upon participant responses to the aforementioned men’s more conservative political beliefs. I assumed that college educated Black Americans, especially those educated at HBCUs, would have some knowledge about Du Bois, Washington, and Garvey’s political views and their political activities. Therefore I expected that, when probed, focus group participants would automatically offer political comments or at least a historical narrative about the men. I further expected that the political comments would be a reflection of participants’ own political philosophies. My expectations were met.

One control group participant stated:

You know, I look at those three men and the only one in my mind that has the track record of success is Marcus Garvey. I don’t like to think of him so much as the separatist, as I would like to think of him as a person who’s trying to tell people “you’ve got to get yourselves, put yourselves in a position, where you’re working with each other and your money circulates through your community before it goes out.” Du Bois, when you talk about integrating, Black people like to acculturate. They take this out of white culture and this out of this culture, and before you know it they don’t pull people up by their bootstraps, they don’t pull their people out. You get a nice job and all of a sudden you’re not good enough. That neighborhood? It’s not good enough for you to stay there. So you move out to the suburbs with white colleagues. Booker T, he’s basically talking about surviving. You look at Marcus Garvey, you’re looking at Black Wall Street [referring to Tulsa, Oklahoma]. You say separatist, you know what? Black people got together to make sure that their money went through their community selling ten times before it got out and you had white people coming to them to make garments. Well see, that couldn’t survive. You had millionaires. That’s the only method for success. You’ve got to stay within your community. Your money stays in your community more than once. What do our kids do now? They get a paycheck and go out there and buy something, their money is gone. You know, even our social habits, Black people usually get together even the ones that gamble, they’ll gamble amongst themselves. If they need something they’ll come borrow from a friend or loved
one. But now they get out here, they gamble at Harrah’s (casino in New Orleans)... that’s where all their money goes. You don’t have money circulating in our community. When you don’t have money circulating in your community, you’re not going to survive. And he’s [Garvey] is the only one with a track record of success.

Control group members were able to describe the political thought of Du Bois, Washington and Garvey, albeit without some of the sophisticated language used in other focus group sessions.

W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Marcus Garvey are often portrayed as oppositional figures as they relate to Black American political progress- Du Bois a supporter of more confrontationist methods; Washington an advocate of accommodation and gradualist strategy; and Garvey an adherent to militant yet nonviolent action. Overall, participants were vocal about the impact of these leaders on Black American culture and politics as well as how their personal views aligned with these men. Participants disagreed with the language describing Du Bois as a confrontationist, even after I explained that the political science and historical literature describes him as such. One participant stated that, “White people would call him a confrontationist. Any time we have an idea that seems rather radical for the times, we’re considered confrontational. If we don’t go along with that which is considered the status quo for our people, then we’re considered confrontational... he was a visionary.” Participants offered generalizations about Du Bois, Washington, and Garvey, often reflecting how popular fables of Black American history and figures become inextricably linked to personal, public, and collective Black American memory. In much of the same way that participants offered somewhat muddled generalizations about these men’s political philosophies, participants also expressed personal ideological and philosophical preferences which were an amalgam of each leader, even when expressing a disdain for their political style or approach. It is important to note that participants were grappling with their perceptions of the leaders and how those perceptions fit
within their own political preferences, philosophies, and ideologies. As a result of this, I asked the following question:

If you were to take these ideas or political philosophies represented by Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey and place them into the 21st century, how do you see them manifesting today? How do you see these ideas articulated in our present political arena? It may not be in the traditional sense that you often think of politics such as voter mobilization.

Laura, a professor at a college located outside of Rochester replied to this question by saying:

I think about two things about the African continent, one it has been so unduly influenced in many regions by western philosophy, western dress; no matter what part of the continent I’m in it’s cheaper to buy African attire or to find nobody wears African attire. They only want jeans and sneakers and baseball hats and that’s what they want from the tourists. That’s what they want to buy and we’re [going there] trying to find our authentic selves. So I think, if we were to go back to East or West Africa… and you were talking about the language, Africa the continent is not a monolithic language. When I’m in Angola, the language is Portuguese. When you are in Senegal, I spent three summers in Senegal, it’s French. I don’t speak any French. That’s in addition to the native dialect. When you’re in South Africa its Afrikaan. So I don’t know if Garveyism as such would work in the 21st century because of the changes in the continent like the rest of the world. It’s not the Africa I dreamed about as a child.

Amber, a late twenty something working in the non-for-profit sector, continued with:

I think for me, when in school and learning about the Talented Tenth and the thought that it provokes in a group was these were the Talented Tenth. They were the smart folk, but they were also the bourgie folks. So when you talk about how it manifests itself in present day, I think of the Links Inc. I think of fraternities and sororities, Eastern Stars…

In a focus group hosted in New Orleans, Robert responded to the question by saying:

I’ll tell you, for me politically, what I end up doing is kind of using a combination [of their philosophies]. Some things I do better by getting out there pounding the pavement, knocking on doors, putting out knockers and putting things on doors; I did that in Pensacola. And other things I think that finesse is the order of the day. Sometimes with some issues, not persisting, not enduring things, but if you figure out the approach that is going to be most effective, you know where your end is where you want to be. You got to figure out how you’re going to get to that end and sometimes being really aggressive, it can cloud where I’m trying to get first. I want to
get “there.” Do I use this tool or do I use this accommodation? Sometimes I accommodate, sometimes just to get to that answer I needed to get to.

Participants were able to quickly identify the political leaders by using the photographs, but had much more difficulty relating the leaders to contemporary Black American political thought or politics. Participants often described Washington and Du Bois strategies for Black American political advancement, instead of their goals. The exception here was Garvey. Participants were quick to identify Garvey’s goal of returning to the continent of Africa. This may result from the imagery of the Black Star Line, a tangible tool that was created to take members of the African Diaspora, back to Africa. Ultimately, this illustrates that participants understood that each of the leaders were advocates for African American advancement and ultimately worked toward that goal, albeit using different methods.

Interestingly, initial comments about the leaders referred to their association with specific institutions; this occurred in every focus group. In the second focus group, hosted in New Orleans, participants identified Washington as the founder of “the Tuskegee Institute,” Du Bois as the “first African American PhD from Harvard” and a “Fiskite,” and Garvey as the founder of the “UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association).” However in the New Orleans control group (non-college educated Black Americans), participants did not associate specific institutions or organizations with Washington and Du Bois. Instead participants cited “dignity” and “Up From Slavery” with Washington and “writer” and “The Talented Tenth” with Du Bois. Like the other focus groups, control group participants associated the UNIA with Garvey, as well as referring to him as a “businessman” and “determined.”
Discussions about Accommodation- *Up From Slavery: Booker T. Washington*

Next, I flush out the three major conservative philosophies that pervade Black American politics, providing a framework for understanding how Talented Tenth members develop their own conservative political ideologies and identities. While this chapter deals with the reoccurring political philosophies and debates that permeate Black American culture, these philosophies also influence the political thought of members of the Talented Tenth. Therefore, Black American ideology- the shared framework of mental models that provide Black Americans with an interpretation of how the environment should be structured- is rooted in the unique Black American experience as well as the conservative philosophies of accommodation, confrontation, and separatism. To better understand how the early conservative philosophical debates of accommodation, confrontation, and separatism inform the political perspectives of Black Americans in the 21st century, it is necessary to briefly trace their formations.

Booker T. Washington’s political philosophy can be best understood upon review of his autobiography, *Up From Slavery* (1901). The autobiography and political philosophy are often viewed as one-dimensional: accommodationist. According to Earl Ofari Hutchinson, a political analyst, people are often overly critical of Washington and his philosophies, which are a result of thinking about him in an ahistorical way (2006). The context and time in which Washington lived is important to understanding his philosophies. As the focus group narrative will illustrate, many respondents were critical of Washington’s support for accommodating whites. But what were the prevailing ideas at the turn of the 20th century when Washington was writing? By identifying these ideas I can make better sense of Washington’s philosophies and writings.

Washington began writing in the 1880s, not in the urban industrial North, but in the rural South; specifically, Alabama. Amidst the backdrop of Reconstruction, Washington saw the rural
agrarian economy as a tool for inclusion and equality in the dominant White society. According to Huntchinson, “[Washington] understood that for starters, civil rights meant nothing if you couldn’t feed yourself or learn some kind of industrial skill… That was Washington’s basic mission: to prepare African Americans to be productive citizens, to survive, and to integrate into the changing legal milieu of that time” (110). Earl Huntchinson further explains that Washington understood all of the forces that were driving against him and Black Americans, and used that understanding to develop his philosophy.

When respondents first identified Washington, many identified him using terms such as “educator” and “academic,” which were surprising. I expected that respondents would describe him as an “Uncle Tom” or a “sell out,” but those terms were reserved for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (see Chapter V). Focus group participants did identify Washington, the man, in comparison to the philosophy championed by Du Bois. Often, this resulted in disparaging remarks about Washington. I recognized that respondents were not referring to Washington’s philosophy as a whole, but an isolated incident that has remained in the Black American cultural subconscious for over a century. Without knowing the specific context, many Black Americans associate Washington’s desire for Blacks to pursue agricultural “careers” as accommodating Whites. However, the incident which formulates their understanding of Washington as an accommodationist is his famous Atlanta Exposition speech, in which he discussed Blacks and whites remaining separate in their social interactions. Washington’s statements in the aforementioned speech were interpreted as meaning “Don’t challenge or agitate the political order” and ultimately condoning segregation and the reinforcement of a mind-set among African Americans that they were servile (Huntchinson 110). Considering that Washington, a former slave who was socialized in the segregated South, was able to establish an industrial institution
of higher education, his model essentially reflected his experiences. According to Hutchinson, Washington was embraced by northern philanthropists (111), who gave him the monetary capital to build his institute; therefore he was not in a position to publically oppose whites. Earl Hutchinson goes as far as to say that if Washington supported any philosophy other than accommodation during his era, future generations would never have heard about him, for he would have been killed and Tuskegee never established (111).

Participants commented not only on Booker T. Washington’s political conservatism, but also on how his career trajectory influenced some of his writings and speeches. Booker T. Washington’s accommodation was perceived as socially acceptable for his time across all six focus groups (inclusive of control groups). Overall, there was no focus group in which Washington or his philosophies were disparaged. For instance, among some of the respondents in New Orleans who discussed whether Washington’s assertions were correct, the most common answer proffered was best expressed by Terri, a historian and professor, who stated:

For his time, yes. But, I don’t like the question because he’s right about some things and not about others and he’s been so caricatured and sort of repackaged, over the years it’s kind of hard. I think like most political leaders as I say he is right about some things and not about others. Is it 60/40, 50/50? God only knows. I think the other thing that’s hard for us to wrap our minds around and to remember with him, is what he was up against because all of us know something about racism. But again, his political career came to fruition before the scale of violence got to its peak, which was really not until the sort of 1890s. But you know, white people do plenty of messed up things to Black people now without impunity, but they could do some truly crazy things to Black people in his day. And so, how would our decisions be different if that’s what we saw looking out the window?

Terri and others agreed that Washington’s political philosophies were appropriate for his time period. Amir, a young entrepreneur who participated in a different focus group (Rochester, NY), expressed that Washington’s political philosophy was valid:
I don’t know if they [his philosophies] were right in a sense, but I think they were valid. I think going back to his idea of self-sufficiency; I mean he believed that as Black people, you know, we should have our own financials. We shouldn’t necessarily depend on others to… He believed if you had money or you have resources and finances then you had a voice as far as what happens to them in politics.

In the final focus group (Rochester, NY), respondents identified Booker T. Washington using the following words: “academic,” “educator,” and “self sufficient.” Brian, a late 20 something psychiatrist, began the discussion by stating:

He took a pro-Black stance from what I remember. He was most well noted for his somewhat opposing stance to W.E.B. Du Bois. His motto was more acquiring education for African Americans for the sake of self-sufficient means of increasing one’s status within society Status isn’t exactly the word I’m looking for, but to ultimately be able to provide for themselves and no longer be dependent upon white counter culture.

Despite participants lack of use of disparaging language in describing Booker T. Washington, which was surprising, participants did discuss Washington in comparison to Du Bois almost immediately. Participants demonstrated that much of their knowledge about Washington and his philosophies were in contrast to their knowledge about Du Bois. This was demonstrated in the same focus group when Wilson, a professional in his mid sixties stated:

It’s interesting though the debate between he and Du Bois. Du Bois eventually, over time, he did admit that Booker T was correct. Washington referred to the tradesmen. One thing that slavery gave Blacks was skills; skills and the trades. What Booker T was saying was that knowledge you’re going to pass on, but you’re still going to have those skills. Take those skills and become entrepreneurs. By becoming entrepreneurs you begin to build a middle class. See one of the challenges for Blacks is that we don’t have a middle class of trades people. He actually said, “Well, why is it that all these countries, other nationalities come here and all of a sudden they’ve got large homes, they’ve got a little of this and a little of that? Because they come here with trades, they’re already all merchants.”

The participants’ discussions about Washington, which did not describe him or his philosophy in a negative or disparaging way, challenges much of the narrative on Washington and accommodationism. Although not revealed to focus group participants, upon further review
of Booker T. Washington’s life, I discovered that he did secretly fund some of the civil rights
groups and donate to several Black newspapers (Mackintosh 1972). Washington’s private
support for Black organizations supports the claim that he wanted to avoid scrutiny and maintain
the support of wealthy white donors. In one of the final focus group sessions (Rochester, NY),
Janet, a PhD and former university provost, echoed this sentiment when participants were asked
about the rationality of an accommodationist philosophy. Janet stated:

It’s about playing the game. It’s about who’s got the money; the money and the power to build
that school. Because without those funders we wouldn’t be talking about him right now because
there wouldn’t have been an institute. So you know, the quiet is as kept (not that quiet). Anybody
who’s in the system working is an accommodationist to some degree. Hello!

Other participants argued in favor of accommodation as a tool for Black American
sociopolitical success. Monica, dean emeritus at a local community college, who spent much of
her time serving on various community organization boards both in Rochester and Syracuse New
York. Monica asserted:

Or you might say cross-cultural. If you want to change it from being so accommodating to a
person in terms of the power structure. Your ability to be cross-cultural and not threatening or
understand the game so that you can play it and get something from it as well.

In a New Orleans focus group, Robert suggested that the virtues of Washington’s
accommodationist approach are found in his deliberate and contrived interaction with whites.
Robert stated:

I would have to say that I think for those times, the political climate and social unrest that might
have been going on in those times, I think like Simeon was saying that it probably could have
been the right prescription for that time because that way it doesn’t put out these alarms and
make a deliberate affront to someone you could actually see the work and get some rights that
aren’t as offensive as if you let someone sort of talk to you as if they’re above you then they’re
so concerned about being above you that you’re actually persisting and probably going home to
enclave, or you have a lot of Black businesses going on that was thriving off of our patronage. I
don’t know if that will work today, but it looks like it worked then.
Focus group participants articulated an understanding for the conservative techniques employed by Booker T. Washington. Clearly, participants saw accommodation as a means to an end. This understanding does not necessarily express agreement with Washington’s philosophy; participants were asked separate questions about whether or not their own political philosophies aligned with Washington’s. As a result of the “merits” of accommodation, participants expressed that they did not see Washington’s actions or philosophy as accommodationist, but rather as the necessary method, for his era, to help ensure that African Americans could gain political power, even if this type of power limited African Americans to a segregated existence.

Surprisingly, a respondent during the final focus group in Rochester bridged the philosophies of Washington and Du Bois by reciting a poem with great accuracy. Upon further research, I found that the poem was written by Dudley Randall (1969) and entitled “Booker T and W.E.B.” Nina, an educator, recited the poem verbatim saying:

There’s a poem and I can’t remember who it was written by and it’s called, “Booker T and W.E.B.” [Participant begins to recite poem]

"It seems to me," said Booker T./"It shows a mighty lot of cheek/To study chemistry and Greek/When Mister Charlie needs a hand/To hoe the cotton on his land/And when Miss Ann looks for a cook/Why stick your nose inside a book?"

"I don't agree," said W.E.B./"If I should have the drive to seek/Knowledge of chemistry or Greek/I'll do it. Charles and Miss can look/Another place for hand or cook/Some men rejoice in skill of hand/And some in cultivating land/But there are others who maintain/The right to cultivate the brain."

"It seems to me," said Booker T./"That all you folks have missed the boat/Who shout about the right to vote/And spend vain days and sleepless nights/In uproar over civil rights/Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse/But work, and save, and buy a house."

"I don't agree," said W.E.B./"For what can property avail/If dignity and justice fail?/Unless you help to make the laws/They'll steal your house with trumped-up clause/A rope's as tight, a fire as hot/No matter how much cash you've got/Speak soft, and try your little plan/But as for me, I'll be a man."
"It seems to me," said Booker T.\"I don't agree.\"/Said, W.E.B."

Nina continued by saying:

So, as I looked at Booker T as I got older I realized that he was quite true. Now he really was, because first of all when we’re thinking in terms of things that we had or that which we did not have, or that which we still have not had, if we don’t we can always use our hands. They say when you’re thinking in terms of whatever else, if there’s nothing else we can always use our hands. With us, with our families, I think what has happened is that we have not given our children options. We no longer give them the option. I know when I grew up and when most of you probably grew up, it was “you’re going to college.” I was born knowing that I was going to college. Times are different now. When I even look at the cost of college… so what’s happening is that people are saying well, you know, if you can’t finance it… you’ve got to figure out a way to finance it first of all. If you can’t afford it, and this is where it comes in because other things will come. I think we do our kids a great disservice. We have tried so hard to… we have let the social service system rule us. I think if we are going to ever advance we have to take back our lives. Take back our kids’ lives. We let someone tell us that, “Oh, if you spank your kids, then you’re doing the wrong thing.” If my child is robbing a bank and I go there, because you know I’m going in with a belt, they’ll arrest me. But if a police officer shoots my child and he kills him? He’s alright. He’s getting off because he’s doing his job. So before we can go any place, the first things we need to figure out is, what is our job. Let’s do our job.

It seems as if Nina was advocating self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency was a reoccurring theme in participant responses when describing Washingtonian philosophy, an idea that is conservative in theory. Washington did indeed advocate for self-sufficiency, viewing income garnered through hard work as a means to gaining power and material prosperity. Although Washington placed great emphasis on economic prosperity, he believed that political rights were important. In order to ensure self-sufficiency, Washington urged Black Americans to remain in the South, while many were migrating to the North during the Great Migration. “Washington astutely realized that much of the opportunity ostensibly awaiting Blacks in the North was a mirage…stating that ‘Negroes are better able… to buy and own their own homes, to build their own communities, where they can have their own churches, schools, banks, and other places of business’ (Jones 2013, 89).”
The self-sufficiency advocated by Washington was also rooted in desegregation, allowing for a space where Blacks could operate autonomously from whites. This helps to illustrate how desegregation and self-sufficiency are theoretically and practically linked in Washingtonian political philosophy; Washington’s support of desegregation was not synonymous with integration. Black American self-sufficiency did not require that Blacks integrate into white society; however, Washington did not oppose integration. Instead, Washington was concerned with the timing of integration; he advocated gradualism unlike the likes of Du Bois who thought that Blacks could “jump from slavery to complete equality; he saw this process as coming over time and that strategically it would be best to achieve one realistic goal at a time” (Jones 2013, 89).

**Discussions about Confrontation- The Souls of Black Folks: W.E.B. Du Bois**

W.E.B. Du Bois was one of the most recognizable figures during the focus group sessions. Upon asking participants to identify Du Bois using an unlabeled photograph, almost all participants recognized him immediately. Participants’ familiarity with Du Bois, at least visually, illustrates his prominence in Black American culture. College educated African Americans’ familiarity with Du Bois may be attributed to many of his works being assigned in undergraduate classes at HBCUs and his prevalence in the early 20th century as one of the founding members of the NAACP; an organization that continuous to mobilize Black Americans in the 21st century, especially on the campuses of HBCUs. The NAACP circulated *The Crisis* magazine (Painter 2006, 202), which reached over 100,000 members, as a media tool to organize ideas and people around civil rights issues.

Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) blamed Booker T. Washington for Black Americans’ lack of civil rights, and pledged to recover these rights. Du Bois and his colleagues,
who were socialized in the North, formed the Niagara Movement and later the NAACP. Their membership was comprised of Blacks, whites, men, and women. Across all focus groups, participants articulated that Du Bois and his political philosophy was seemingly more progressive than Washington’s, although participants never made a clear distinction between the two eras in which the men operated (with Washington dying in 1915). Washington’s private support for Black organizations was not a part of Black American collective history, nor was Du Bois’s “damnation of women” as intellectuals (Griffin 2000); this illustrates that the public’s knowledge on both Washington and Du Bois was limited in nature. Furthermore, history and collective memory perpetuate the manifestation and understanding of certain political philosophies, which may result in misconceptions about their original intent.

The development of Du Bois’s political philosophy was inspired by his scholarship and cosmopolitan perspective. Focus group participants quickly identified Du Bois as the author of The Souls of Black Folk, and more specifically with the concept of the Talented Tenth. Although this study defines Du Bois as a confrontationist, respondents never explicitly described Du Bois using such language. Rather, respondents continuously returned to the concepts of the Talented Tenth, elitism, and intellectualism. Since their frame of reference for Du Bois was defined based upon his “confrontation” with Booker T. Washington and The Souls of Black Folk, in which Du Bois explicitly discusses the Talented Tenth, I expected participants to describe Du Bois using terms synonymous with confrontation. Instead, participants referred to Du Bois as a “visionary,” an “intellectual,” and “everything opposite of Booker T.” One focus group member did explicitly identify Du Bois as a confrontationist in a later part of the discussion. Arguably, this label was used in explaining Du Bois’s role in instigating student confrontation and protests at various HBCUS during the 1920s in response to white philanthropists forcing Black institutions of
higher learning to compromise their missions and principles in return for money (Finkelman and Wintz 2004, 561).

Naomi, a septuagenarian in New Orleans stated:

See, that makes a difference [referring to Du Bois’s matriculation at Fisk and Harvard universities], in my siding with Booker T. Washington. By having risen to the Harvard level, he had a different foresight, insight on living and doing. Whereas Booker T probably, as you said, we want to keep what we do or own, we’ve lost a lot of stuff sometimes with the big ideas. We go too far too quick, some whites do the same thing, but nevertheless Blacks are who were concerned about. That was where I would see the two of them and the reason why there was such a division between them and the things that they thought and did opposite to one another.

Within this same session, Jean a human resources director stated:

Well, having gone to Fisk and then being more educated than Washington, if you read some of those debates, he was vicious [referring to Du Bois]. He was vicious in his attacks on Washington, you know, belittling him, all sorts of things. That I don’t agree with. You know, I thought he was just too kind of high and mighty. I just think that in terms of where we should have been going and how we should have been doing it, I think that Washington could have moved up his schedule a bit more and let more voices in, because he had to be the sole voice. Have you read any of his biographies? They say one thing… his way, or no way. He would have no other voice; you had to do it on his schedule and I think if he had been more accommodating with other Blacks, saying “okay, let’s work out a plan and let’s do this together” I think history would have or at least he would have been looked on more favorably, if he’d just been willing to compromise.

When asked to identify Du Bois, respondents continuously compared and contrasted Washington and Du Bois. It was not until I specifically asked participants to think of Du Bois separately from his interaction with Washington that I was able to obtain responses that specifically spoke to Du Bois, although these responses began rather vaguely with respondents only associating the Talented Tenth with Du Bois.

In the second New Orleans focus group, Kelly, a pharmacist and graduate of Fisk University stated:
The Talented Tenth. I think he was the first to coin the term in his book called *The Souls of Black Folk*. In that book, I think it’s comprised of ten chapters, but in that book there are two chapters that stick out. One is the Talented Tenth, where he speaks to the educated Black folks and says “Listen, it is up to us to lead the way and we have a duty and responsibility to bring other people up behind us. That was the first part. The second chapter that comes to mind is the two masks, where he talks about how we as African American have to be able to communicate amongst ourselves. So, I have to be able to talk the language of my community and communicate with Black folk and be recognized as a Black person, but at the same time be able to integrate into white society and be recognized, respected, and received by them as well.

Historian Terri interjected:

I think the coolest thing about Du Bois was how long he lived. I mean, there are great biographies on Du Bois that are like 1,000 pages long, but I think it’s real important [to discuss] that for a long time he was a Communist and why he got pissed off at the communist party. I think that matters, in terms of how we think about Black thought. He gives us a bigger way to think about Black politics because he lived so darn long and I mean, he was chased out of his own country and you have to respect a man for that. But he was a Pan Africanist, and I don’t think he regretted dying in Ghana at all when he was run out. It’s worth remembering that, and it gets back to what you were saying about it being hard to say whether Washington was right or wrong. I think we tend to put our politics in little teeny tiny boxes and I think both of them for different reasons, and Du Bois especially because he lived to be 90 something, I think it says something about how small we make our politics, you know, and his politics were really big.

She continued:

At the front end of his career, he was seen as elitist, in a sort of disgusting way, but in many ways I think that’s in part because he wanted to put some burdens on the very, very small numbers of people that got a little bit. But when you think about particularly the role of communism or pan Africanism in his thinking, you’re like “wow.” We’re not asking nearly enough of anybody who is a political leader.

Kelly then added:

Well, to add to what you said, yes he died in Ghana, but he was under self-exile. He chose to leave and he exiled himself after he spent time at Harvard and talked about the first time he experienced racism and that’s what really turned his approach to addressing racism and his political stance on things. So it was during that time, this whole self evaluation, that’s when you begin to see these essays where he and Booker T go back and forth, and they did have some rather vicious exchanges that were very intellectually written but they were really barbs at one another in their approach to how Black people should elevate themselves in this country. Because they had such opposing views, rather than the two of them joining and saying, “How can we enhance and undergird one another.” I never read anything to suggest that.
The exchange ends when Terri says:

It was Du Bois that said, when our Negroes gather, we too must gather arms about the need to shoot back. That was one of his responses to the South. He saw a guy’s knees, I think it was displayed in a shop window in Nashville, when he was teaching at Fisk. And he was basically like (pardon my French), “F this.” If that’s how they’re coming, you know we’ve got to be prepared to shoot back. That’s just like the complexity of both of their thinking. It was way more interesting than we make it. I think we’ve used them [Washington and Du Bois] to let our own political leaders off of the hook.

The exchange between Kelly and Terri was unique to the second focus group session in New Orleans. Those who accepted the invitation to attend this session included many who worked or previously worked in higher education and had a familiarity with Du Bois that extended far beyond the most elementary understandings or readings of Du Bois. The accuracy in which Kerry and Terri described Du Bois’s life and philosophical development was not echoed in any other focus group sessions. In the Rochester control group session, one member was able to describe the writings and basic development of Washington and Du Bois’s philosophies, but still not with the accuracy of Kerry and Terri. Surprisingly, most members of the focus group in which Kerry and Terri attended were able to articulate biographical information that was not shared by participants in other sessions. Later on in this chapter I explain some of the unique qualities and experiences of respondents in New Orleans.

Du Bois’s political philosophy has endured for many generations. After all, Du Bois lived to be 95 years old, influencing political leaders and political thought in both the 20th and 21st century. In the post-Civil Rights Era, however, many Black “leaders” and elected officials who recognize the merits of Du Bois’s philosophy have abandoned some of his later philosophical tenets by articulating a color-blind approach to Black politics. Du Bois’s political philosophy must be understood in terms of the entire trajectory (his career spanning more than 70 years), accounting for his own transformation. When attempting to better understand this trajectory Du
Bois’s impact on 20th and 21st century Black American political thought and influence on leadership is useful. Du Bois influenced the political thought of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. in the 20th century and President Barack Obama in the 21st century. Therefore, it is useful to follow King and Obama’s own transformations and language (often coded) used to advance Black politics while using language that incorporated whites. According to Alexis Rogers (2012):

However, by acknowledging and using the power of rhetoric, Du Bois was able to deter initial opposition. In the perspective of a white southerner, the ideology of a class system was well rooted in the plantation economy of the white community. Consequently, the word “class” seemed far less imposing than that of “race,” something deemed inferior and threatening to the white former planter class. The same was true in terms of politics. Bourbon Democrats controlled Southern politics on the basis of white supremacy; any mention of political involvement among the African American community would immediately raise fear and resistance among whites. Education, however, a seemingly futile trait among a society as of 1890, was the key to political involvement and influence yet did not seem to pose as serious a threat among a majority of white Southerners. By simply replacing the word “race” with “class,” and the word “politics” with “education,” Du Bois was able to lessen the fury of his claims without weakening the fervor. As a result, at least for public appearances’ sake, he has a seemingly less radical approach to the early Civil Rights Movement, gaining both Black and white followers previously weary of the radical social changes of Reconstruction. With his audience now established, Du Bois was ready to put his methods into action.

W.E.B. Du Bois’s philosophical “transformation” reflected his lengthy career as well as his interaction with Blacks of the African diaspora. The spirit of Du Bois’s political philosophy is actually found in the shifting of his positions over time. Despite this shift, Du Bois always remained committed to Black American political and economic strength, racial pride, and pride in African heritage. These are all arguably, manifestations of conservatism among Blacks.

According to Du Bois, cultural transformation was an important strategy for social change (Jones 124). According to Jones (2013), it is here that Du Bois adhered to conservative logic, with this logic being one constant among his shifting positions, ultimately suggesting that Black
Americans needed to adopt bourgeois cultural values in order to be accepted and change themselves for the better (124). Du Bois’s support for pride in African heritage was rather shallow; Marcus Garvey would take this philosophy a step further.

**Discussions about Separatism-The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey: Marcus M. Garvey**

Marcus Garvey was not included in the original methodology for this project, however upon hosting several mock focus group sessions, I realized that many participants were expressing support for political philosophies that were neither strictly accommodationist nor confrontationist; instead, they expressed support for separatism, albeit timidly at first. Once I began the actual focus groups, I included a photograph and series of questions about Marcus M. Garvey, whose political philosophy fills the philosophical and ideological gap left by both Washington and Du Bois.

Unlike Washington and Du Bois, who were born in the United States and desired political rights and political inclusion for Black Americans in the United States, Jamaican-born Garvey desired for Blacks- all of the African Diaspora- to return to their ancestral land, Africa. Garvey was not the first to advocate a pan-African identity and a return to Africa. Martin Delany was arguably the first American proponent of Black Nationalism. Delany was a strong proponent of self-sufficiency, which is a guiding principle of Black Nationalism (Jones 208) and ultimately, conservatism among Blacks. Arguably, Delany inspired Booker T. Washington, who directly inspired Marcus Garvey; Garvey originally traveled to the U.S. to meet his philosophical “mentor” Washington, who had died before his arrival. In his book *Dusk of Dawn*, W.E.B. Du Bois states, “… the Negro Union of Newport, Rhode Island, in 1788, proposed to the Free African Society of Philadelphia a general exodus to Africa on the part of at least free Negroes.”
Du Bois recognized the importance of Black Nationalism and pride in African heritage; at the time *Dusk of Dawn* was written (1940), Du Bois’s philosophy had begun shifting towards a “new radical philosophy” (e.g. Du Bois’s essay, ‘Pan-Africa and New Radical Philosophy, 1933), but Du Bois still advocated for higher education. Although, Marcus Garvey was not the first Black to advocate separatism, journalist Roi Ottley wrote in *New World A-coming* (1943):

Garvey leaped into the ocean of Black unhappiness at a most timely moment for a savior. He had witnessed the Negro’s disillusionment mount with the progress of the war. Negro soldiers had suffered all forms of Jim Crow, humiliation, discrimination, slander, and even violence at the hands of a white civilian population. After the war there was a resurgence of Ku Klux Klan influence; another decade of racial hatred and open lawlessness had set in, and Negroes again were prominent among the victims. Meantime, administration leaders were quite pointed in trying to persuade Negroes that in spite of their full participation in the war effort they could expect no changes in their traditional status in America.

Through his establishment of the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association) Garvey, who first came to the United States with the intentions of visiting Booker T. Washington, worked towards transforming racial segregation in order to benefit Black people (Painter 2006, 203). One of the research participants, a native New Yorker and a nonagenarian, recalled her West Indian born parents taking her to the harbor to see Marcus Garvey as a very young child and the excitement that this involved. Garvey’s UNIA represented Black self-sufficiency, empowerment, and in some ways social equality, establishing its own press (*Negro World*), its own autonomous church (African Orthodox Church), its own women’s group (Black Cross Nurses), its own businesses (Black Swan Phonograph Company), its own industries (Negro Factories Corporation, Berry and Ross Company, which manufactured Black dolls), and its own police force, bands, marching society, cooperatives, and labor unions (204). In 1920, the UNIA boasted a membership of over one million, becoming the largest Black organization in the
world; a distinction that lasted well into the 1930s (204). The UNIA’s mission statement (1924) read:

The Universal Negro Improvement Association advocates the uniting and blending of all Negroes into one strong healthy race. It is against miscegenation and race suicide.

It believes that the Negro race is as good as any other, and therefore should be proud of itself as others are.

It believes in the purity of the Negro race and the purity of the white race.

It is against rich Blacks marrying poor whites.

It is against rich or poor whites taking advantage of Negro women.

It believes in the spiritual Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

It believes in the social and political physical separation of all people to the extent that they promote their own ideals and civilization, with the privilege of trading and doing business with each other. It believes in the promotion of a strong and powerful Negro nation.

It believes in the rights of all men.

Marcus Garvey’s UNIA seemed to speak primarily to working class Black Americans and the organization’s members often held contempt for Black Americans who appeased whites (Jones 2013, 232). As a result, Garvey held contempt for W.E.B. Du Bois and the NAACP. Garvey called the NAACP “a scheme to destroy the Negro race” (233). Despite Garvey’s opposition to working with whites and his Black separatist sentiments, Garvey mirrored the approach of his mentor, Washington, in meeting with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in 1922 to advance both the UNIA and the KKK’s separatist messages and prevent miscegenation. As a result, many of the African American elite decided that “Garvey Must Go.” Their campaign was to eliminate Garvey from public life (205). W.E.B. Du Bois said: “Marcus Garvey is, without a doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and the world… He is either a lunatic or a traitor” (Lewis 1997, 43-44).
Surprisingly, Garvey and his political philosophy (referred to as Garveyism) have endured as a popular ideal of Black unity. As discovered in the focus groups and a thorough reading of the literature, people are more familiar with Garvey’s political philosophy than those of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois (based upon their ability to clearly articulate his political philosophy). This may be attributed to Garvey’s famous orations and rhetorical skills captured using new technologies such as the audio recording device, allowing its perpetuity. Also, many organizations in the later part of the 20th century, such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party, used Garvey’s philosophies in their development although the former is considered both a religious and racial separatist organization, rather than a purely political one. C. Eric Lincoln, Black American scholar and founder of the Black Academy of Arts and Letters writes:

The Black Muslims learned much from Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali. Like those earlier prophets of Black Nationalism, they capitalize on the lower-class Black Man's despair and reservations about the white man, and they have developed Black consciousness into a confession of faith. The Black Man, they teach, has a manifest destiny, and the white man is the personification of the evil that separates the Black Man from his freedom, his moral development, and his God. . . For the Black Nationalist, the Black Man's Zion is where the white man is not (69).

When participants were shown the photograph of Marcus Garvey, he was identified immediately without prodding as was his basic political philosophy of separatism. Warren, professor emeritus from the University of Rochester, identified Marcus Garvey as believing in “the kinship of African people.” Warren then continued:

I was in Liberia last year and I was with the Alphas [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc], we got invited to the inauguration of the president. It was the second inauguration of the president and she’s an AKA [Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc] so of course the Alphas had to be invited. When you are in the midst of your people, and they are the presidents and the foreign ministers, and the governors and the soldiers, and all the dignitaries and you’re just one of the folks among
them... I mean they run the colleges, they run the banks, they run whatever, and there you are in the midst of this. I can see why Marcus Garvey thought, “Yeah, let’s take our country and let’s go back and set ourselves up with what we ought to be having.” That’s how I look at Marcus Garvey.

When asked whether Marcus Garvey was “right” Warren maintained that:

Yeah, for himself absolutely and for that time, yes. The nice thing about when you ask whether he was right is that there were so many people with different ideas. He was right with this and he was right with that, because that’s what establishes the whole groundwork; all of these different ideas and abilities and places that helped develop our people.

Terri, a native of the Caribbean from New Orleans responded to Marcus Garvey differently than many other respondents in any of the six focus group sessions. She stated:

I tell people that some days that I am a neo socialist and I think that Garvey believed we should go back to Africa the same way that I’m a neo socialist; I’m not giving you my house today. I might practically be able to give it to you in 100 years and I think that was the going back to Africa. For him it was a distant goal, and I think probably the most powerful thing about him [I think the reason he got so many followers] is that he wasn’t really talking about Black politics per se, he was talking of Black pride; that it’s okay and a good and wonderful thing to be Black people. Now he was not thinking in the (same) way a lot of us would think about being Black people, trying to think about what’s unique about being Black people. But, we could be just as good as anyone else and while we take a certain amount of race pride for granted, (for him) to be rolling that out in the 1920’s...? We can’t go back and ask them, but I think the reason he got so many followers was exactly that and he was much less engaged. He got a lot of fame every time he said anything political, like with the Klan, but again we take Black pride for granted. All of us in this room have lived through the Black power movement and all kinds of nice and nasty, and stupid and not stupid versus Black people, so we kind of take it for granted that Black people are proud to be Black people and we think that we can be accomplished as Black people. I think that’s the reason he [Garvey] gets underestimated for maybe not so much giving us that but I think that’s the reason if you put all three of those guys together [Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey] in terms of who got actual followers, granted he was in the business of recruiting followers, which the other two really weren’t, he’d win.

Respondents in four of the six focus groups also identified Marcus Garvey as believing in self-sufficiency, echoing earlier discussions about Booker T. Washington. Garvey shared many of Washington’s ideas on Black American economic philosophy, but he also argued that
Washington had become an “aristocrat” (Jones 2013, 233). When identifying Garvey with self-sufficiency, one respondent in Rochester, William stated:

I think he believed in self-sufficiency, respect and dignity. He felt very strongly, (and I tend to agree with him) that when you’re 12% of the population, you don’t control anything. Therefore, you end up being assimilated. In fact, the social sciences talk about assimilation, accommodation, assimilation as accommodation, you lose your whole identity. You become blended. At 12%, in the end you’re going to end up blended and losing your entire African identity.

**Discussions on Malcolm X Shabazz**

Many of the characteristics and identifying traits associated with Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey are also seen in the political philosophy and speeches of Malcolm X, although the rhetoric of the three aforementioned leaders was somewhat restrained compared to that used by Malcolm X. In several focus groups, respondents presented Malcolm X as an alternative to what they viewed as the pacifism presented by Washington and Du Bois as well as the unintended consequences of racial and social integration of Blacks into white society. One respondent stated, “I think that part of it [integration] hurt us in a sense, as well as our businesses. We don’t seem to support ourselves, our Black businesses. We’d rather go to another ethnic group and feel I guess like Malcolm X would say, ‘Their ice is colder than ours.'”

This research neither focuses on the Nation of Islam (NOI) or the Black Panther Party, nor did any focus group participants identify as members of either organization. However, both organizations were established, in part, using the political philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey. Respondents expressed support for Garvey and Malcolm X’s ideals using 21st century language that is further discussed in the next chapter. Although the implications of these political philosophies are discussed further in the next chapter, it is important to note here that these political philosophies often inform the Black
American ideological spectrum and inform the development of the measure of conservatism among Blacks.

In the 21st century the Black Panther Party and the NOI do not have the same prominence that they previously had; however, both organizations are still active in Black communities across the country. Despite a decline in prominence, as my survey responses show and these focus group participants articulate, Black Americans continue to support many Black Nationalist ideals. For example, the Black Panther’s Ten Point Program, originally drafted by Huey P. Newton, resonates with many Black Americans today. The Ten Point Program included demands such as: full employment, decent housing fit for the shelter of human beings, free healthcare for all Black and oppressed people, and an end to police brutality. In 2013, many if not all, of the ten points are still supported and advocated for by many Black Americans. Focus group members expressed support for many of these ideas in their responses.

Although this study was limited to the political philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey, researchers of Black American politics would benefit from inclusion of the political philosophy and impact of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, founder of the NOI; Muhammad influenced Malcolm X who was also influential in modern Black American political thought and philosophical formation. The Pan Africanism advocated for by Garvey, X (Shabazz), and Du Bois (albeit later in life), also speaks to better understanding and developing Black coalition politics in the United States. Developing political coalitions based upon race allows for Black people of various ethnicities and nationalities to work in concert with one another. This includes African American and Latino coalition politics. To this end, this study includes many who racially identify as Black but ethnically identify as Latino.
Conclusion

Blacks are familiar with Black American political philosophy and articulate support for conservatism, even when they are not explicitly using such language. It is also true that, when expressing their adherence or support of various philosophies and ideologies, Black participants were able to relate the development of these philosophies to historical events. This is significant for any discussion on Black American political philosophy or philosophical development because it illustrates that Black Americans recognize the heuristic used to develop political ideas. It also tells interested scholars that Black Americans support Black American conservative thought as a result of a racialized experience in the United States. This racialized experience influences how Blacks interpret ideological conservatism among Black Americans, Black leadership, and the decisions made by leaders. Although they may not always agree with the methods used by Black leadership, Black Americans recognize that many of their leaders ultimately intended to uplift Black Americans.

The primary goal of this chapter has been to provide a general sense of how the focus groups were developed and conducted and to provide a sample of the discursive structure of the group discussions, which often lead to other topics relating to the Black American political and cultural experience. The next chapter will elaborate on the demographics and educational as well as social experiences of members of the Talented Tenth. It begins by tracing the development of the Talented Tenth from 19th century Black American political thought to the corridors of the nation’s PWIs and HBCUs, where Black Americans officially become members of the Talented Tenth.
Chapter III References


Mount Olivet Baptist Church. 2013.”Join Us.”

http://mt-olivetbaptistchurch.org/Church_History.html (September 2, 2013).


The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional [men]. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races. – W.E.B. Du Bois (1903, p 33)

Background

When W.E.B. Du Bois used the moniker of “The Talented Tenth” in The Souls of Black Folk (1903) to describe the cadre of college educated Black Americans whom he charged with guiding other Black Americans during the post-Reconstruction years (Battle and Wright 2002), Black Americans had already begun establishing their own colleges and universities for some 66 years⁹. These colleges and universities exhibited a “remarkable capacity for survival, serving as a cultural and intellectual enclave for America’s Black populace” (Freeman and Thomas 2002). Following the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), it became evident that a system of formal education must be established to meet the relevant needs and conditions of newly freed Blacks (Bullock 1967) and to continue to educate the Black elite, their children and the children of former slave owners. James Anderson (1988) writes, “Education, then, according to the more liberal and dominant segments of missionary philanthropists, was intended to prepare a college-bred Black leadership to uplift the Black masses from the legacy of slavery and the restraints of the postbellum caste system.” It is from this liberal and missionary trajectory that Du Bois’s moniker was created.

According to W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), from the very first it has been the best educated and most intelligent of the Negro people, the Talented Tenth that have led and elevated the

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⁹ Cheyney University of Pennsylvania was founded in 1837
masses. The very first Black Americans to be educated and form the Black elite or intelligentsia were the ordained and formally trained ministers, ministerial staff, and reverends. There is a long-standing connection between education and religion in the African American community. During the antebellum period many Black American men were formally educated for ministerial service within traditional Protestant and Black American Protestant denominations. For example, Alexander Crummell became an ordained Episcopalian priest in 1844. However, he was originally ostracized by the white Episcopalian diocese and he left for England where he graduated from Queens College in Cambridge (Jones 2013). Alexander Crummell, who preceded Du Bois, founded the American Negro Academy (ANA) in 1897, which was comprised entirely of highly educated males from around the world for the purposes of promoting higher education amongst African Americans and defending the rights of Blacks in America (ibid). Crummell was devoted to the proliferation of education amongst African Americans and advocated a self-help ideology that was rooted in racial solidarity. Crummell argued that often times Blacks were urged to assimilate and reject their race and African heritage (74). He argued:

The only place I know of in this land where you can “forget you are colored” is in the grave… if I forget that I am a Black man, if you ignore the fact of race, and we both ostrich-like, stick our heads in the sand, or stalk along, high-headed, oblivious of the actual distinctions which do exist in American society, what are you or I to do for our social nature? (ibid)

Crummell argued that social progress was dependent on racial unity and that Black people should utilize schools, churches, social and political organizations to foster social networks. By creating meaningful Black-only social, economic, and political ties, Black Americans would have power (ibid). Many of these Black-only networks began within Black churches and religious communities, where Black men served as clergy and hence became leaders in their social communities. Many of the Black American religious denominations, which broke away from traditional white Protestant denominations, allowed for Black men who were
disenfranchised and facing racial oppression to become leaders in their churches through titles such as “bishop,” “father,” “deacon,” and “elder,” or by appointing them to national religious offices. The autonomy allowed within many denominations allowed Black men the opportunity to become members of the elite (intelligentsia) within their communities, especially if the denomination had a seminary that clergy were required to attend (Morris and Lee 2005). Within many Black churches the power flows from the bottom rather than from the top, and therefore a large elite class of Black men was created in the form of clergy members.

**Discussions on HBCUs, PWIs, and Education**

Black social networks expanded to include those who were educated at institutions that despite “different educational ideologies and reform movements” had the central goal of preparing Black leaders for participation in the political economy of the New South (Freeman and Thomas 2002, 351). As recently as the 1990s, the majority of Blacks who were enrolled in college attended Historically Black Colleges or Universities (Freeman and Thomas 2002). Historically, Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have provided Black American students with a formal education and produced Black American leaders “in the face of considerable obstacles, such as discriminatory public funding, hostility of the white power structure, low church support, and minimal response from the white philanthropic community and foundations” (Wilson 1994, 198).

Brenda, a focus group participant in New Orleans stated:

I did attend Tuskegee. I think of all the universities I’ve attended, I’ve been to four, of all the universities it is one of the finest educations I’ve had. The professors and doctors there were some of the finest and most brilliant minds. I can write and can remember almost everything that
I’ve learned when I was there. I remember little from Xavier\textsuperscript{10} or New York University. But again, one of the finest group of professors [at Tuskegee].

Although HBCUs and PWIs (Predominately White Institutions) often produced Black American “leaders,” key to the Du Boisian conception of the Talented Tenth was the willingness of these leaders “to work and make personal sacrifices for solving the problems [of the race]” (1903).

Sandra, an educator and graduate of Bethune-Cookman University in Florida stated:

One of the reasons that our children don’t know [about Black leaders and Black pride] is because they aren’t being taught. I went to an HBCU that’s where I learned it. I didn’t learn it in my white schools. I was in high school, well all through school: elementary, middle, high school; it was 70% white and 30% minority. So my parents made me go to an HBCU. There was no question. I had to go to an HBCU. When I went to graduate school I went to a white school, but when I went there I went there under the auspices of if I go to another Black school I may not be thought of or taken seriously. That’s a sad thing to think that if I put two HBCUs on my resume, what are people going to think?

Sandra’s desire to attend a HBCU, but then attend a PWI illustrates a personal sacrifice that many Black Americans make in order to appease potential white employers. Despite her parents’ insistence that she attend a HBCU, her thought process for choosing a PWI for graduate school illustrates her making a personal sacrifice in order to solve the problem of race as it related to her interaction with whites. The problem of race did not exist intrinsically for Sandra, but in order to be taken seriously by whites she made the choice to attend a PWI, essentially, to solve her race problem; a problem caused not only by her Blackness, but her decision to attend, at least once in her academic career, a HBCU.

Kelly, a Xavier University (of Louisiana) graduate and pharmacist followed Sandra’s statements by saying:

\textsuperscript{10}Xavier University (of Louisiana) is the only Roman Catholic HBCU in the United States
My parents were HBCU graduates, both of them. Even though they were HBCU graduates and they taught us Black history at home… they bought us a Black history set of encyclopedias, we had all of that stuff, there was nothing that could exchange having the HBCU experience, nothing. Because we were in a majority system that did not support us we couldn’t see nor ever experienced being a majority ourselves. We were always the minority and for once, the thing I believe, the most value I got is not having to be the minority all of the time [at a HBCU]. It took you out of that sector what you experienced, and for the first time in my life being the majority, I didn’t know what that was like, I really didn’t. I had such an appreciation for it.

Kelly continued:

We were the majority; that changed my world! I felt validated. I felt validated! When you don’t get a scholarship application because the guidance counselor, the white guidance counselor won’t even give you an application to an HBCU, the only thing she’s willing, she won’t even get you one even though you’re the top ten [in the class] and you’ve done all these things, they won’t even get you an academic scholarship. They only want to get you a minority scholarship, and they will save all of the academic scholarships for the white students. There’s a different type of experience and my parents would participate in the sit-ins, they did all that stuff. So I grew up with Black history all around me so that was not a novelty to me, but the experience for myself is what was missing.

Sandra and Kelly both illustrate how Black Americans must solve the race problem, despite not being the ones who created it. Both women, by virtue of their matriculation and graduation from four year institutions of higher learning, became members of the Talented Tenth. Their individual decisions to attend HBCUs required each of them to make a sacrifice that seemingly attending a PWI may not have required. Focus group participant Terri, a graduate of Yale, made an interesting observation about HBCUs when she said “There’s a lot more that HBCUs have given [compared to PWIs]… it is understanding the long tradition of frankly the ordinariness of Black people being in college and succeeding there… There’s so much more that HBCUs give our young people in terms of the ordinariness of their academic excellence.” Terri’s comment illustrates the normalness of Black academic achievement and university attendance. Arguably, both students who choose to attend HBCUs and those who attend PWIs are making “sacrifices” to exhibit this “ordinariness”. The major sacrifice for Black students at PWIs may be
their being numerically underrepresented on campus leading to feelings of racial, social, or cultural isolation. The major sacrifice for Black students who have matriculated at HBCUs is found in their convincing others of the validity of their “Black education”. At both institutions Black students are illustrating that they have the intellectual capability to succeed in the college and can contribute to solving the race problem created by white supremacy through their collegiate experiences.

A major underpinning of Du Bois’s argument was that the majority of Black Americans would be unwilling to make personal sacrifices (i.e., loss of financial stability and fear for personal or family safety), and this underscored the courage of members of the Talented Tenth who understood the immediate need of intellectual leadership and who willingly defied American injustice (Battle and Wright 2002, 656). Therefore, the Talented Tenth was not an “elite group of individuals” in the traditional sense, but rather a group designed to promote self-sacrifice. As a result, according to Juan Battle and Earl Wright (ibid) the Talented Tenth is not synonymous with the Black elite. Years after first using the moniker “Du Bois would readily acknowledge that he did not fully articulate the obligations of the Talented Tenth in such a manner that could curtail and prevent possible misperceptions of his concept.”

When addressing his critiques of “The Talented Tenth” (1903) almost 50 years after its publication, Du Bois said:

[My critics suggest] that I conceived that those Negroes who were advantaged in gift and property, should be educated and should become the group which spoke for the Negro and assumed that they represented the Negro… [Also], my idea of the Talented Tenth was criticized because as a man said I was thinking of the exceptional persons and the persons who had and could get advantages and losing sight entirely of the great mass of people in the race, and that my program therefore contemplated the uplift of the few, rather than the development of the many (Du Bois 1965, 1).
Du Bois further asserted:

We, [the Talented Tenth], did not regard ourselves as separate and superior to the masses, but rather as a part of the mass which was being equipped and armed for leadership and that leadership was of course for the benefit of the masses (2-3).

**Education and Becoming Members of the Talented Tenth**

Whether choosing to attend a HBCU or PWI, Black American college choice (both the decision to attend and where to attend) illustrates one of the first steps toward becoming a member of the Talented Tenth. Of the 234 individuals surveyed for this project, 76 attended HBCUs and 138 attended PWIs. A number of the 192 participants who obtained at least a Bachelor’s degree matriculated at both a HBCU and a PWI; the latter was often the case for those who pursued undergraduate degrees at HBCUs and graduate degrees at PWIs. Twenty-one respondents did not have college degrees, but did graduate from high school or obtained a GED. Many of these individuals, although not members of the Talented Tenth, were members of the Black middle and upper middle class, as were many members of the college educated Talented Tenth.

Despite suggestions to the contrary made by those not familiar with Du Bois’s complete philosophical development, the Talented Tenth and the Black middle class are not synonymous terms. Du Bois’s conception of the Talented Tenth was rooted in two things: college education and commitment or leadership to Black society. Members of the Black middle class neither have to have a college education nor articulate commitment to the Black community to be middle class; Black middle class status is solely based upon income. As I will discuss further in chapter V, income and education are not necessarily correlated for Blacks therefore Blacks may be members of the Talented Tenth and not members of the Black middle class.
One way in which members of the Talented Tenth exhibit their commitment to the Black community is their economic investment in and patronization of Black businesses. During several of the focus group conversations participants discussed patronizing and investing in small Black businesses and institutions, in order to ensure that “money circulates within and supports our community because that ensures our financial success.” Investment in Black businesses was advocated by both Talented Tenth members and control group members who were also members of the Black middle class per their own admission. While the idea of investing in and supporting Black businesses is later used in the chapter to create a new index for measurement of double consciousness participants did not explicitly speak to their own financial or class status; instead participants continuously framed their financial status in contrast to white Americans, alluding to the financial disparities keeping Blacks from climbing the income class ladder.

Focus group respondents did articulate their commitment to the Black community illustrating their alignment with Du Bois’s original conception of the Talented Tenth. Although focus group members did not explicitly acknowledge their middle class status, per their associations with NPHC organizations and affluent churches as well as the demographic information on their surveys, I can deduce that most respondents were members of the middle, upper middle, and in some cases upper class. These focus group respondents were not the portion of the Talented Tenth that Du Bois suggested would at some point “[many of whom were firmly entrenched in the middle class,] forsook their responsibility to their communities in favor of personal gratification and accomplishments” (Battle and Wright 661). Du Bois wrote (1968), Negroes of intelligence and prosperity had become American in their acceptance of exploitation as defensible, and in their imitation of American “conspicuous expenditure.” They proposed to make money and spend it as pleased them. They had beautiful homes, large and expensive cars and fur coats. They hated “communism” and “socialism” as much as any white American. Their
reaction toward Paul Robeson was typical; they simply could not understand his surrendering a thousand dollars a night for a moral conviction (370-371).

Undoubtedly Du Bois’s criticism of the Talented Tenth and the Black middle class resulted from their denigration of him for supporting and later joining the Communist Party. Du Bois left the NAACP in 1948, an organization which he had helped found, after the organization advocated complete desegregation while he urged voluntary Black segregation in certain fields as a means of self-dependence in order to counter white discrimination (Kihss 1961). This further illustrates how often the public’s imprecise interpretation or misunderstanding of Du Bois’s definition of the Talented Tenth results in a much broader sub-group of Black Americans being included than Du Bois imagined. All college educated Black Americans have not had the same experiences and therefore do not have the same commitment to leading and uplifting their race. According to Du Bois (1903), “the Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it” (75). Whether HBCUs, or PWIs for that matter, are training Black American students to be leaders within their communities is up for debate; one’s commitment to leadership and community is arguably linked to their feelings of linked racial fate to other Black Americans rather than only to their level of education.

The juxtaposition of race and education is a major theoretical underpinning of the early Black philosophical debates which inform this project. Arguably, the most influential Black American educator during the early twentieth century was Booker T. Washington (Alridge 1999, 362), who also became one of the primary 20th century developers of Black philosophical and political thought. Derrick Alridge states, “The resiliency of [Washington’s] educational thought has been so powerful that it has virtually frozen Du Bois in time and permanently connected him to Washington in American history” (362). By juxtaposing race and education, both Washington
and Du Bois shared a goal of racial uplift through economic means and hard work (formal education or vocational work), and both were ultimately concerned with Blacks gaining economic stability and becoming self-sufficient.

One focus group participant said:

The hand skills that Washington advocated for were also writing skills because the power of the pen was also important to him back in that time period because we’re not looking at the social media that we have today. Just reflecting back on him, I think the power of his pen and being able to speak his voice clearly to be heard by other African Americans because we were looking at a different time period.

Although other focus group participants spoke to Washington’s role as an educator, focus group discussions were absent of specific discussion about Washington’s writings. Alternatively, focus group participants discussed Washington’s theories in general without explicit mention of the titles of his works. The aforementioned participant statement about the power of Washington’s writing introduces another way of not only understanding Washington and his political philosophy but also political tools that Black Americans can use for political empowerment. Essentially, Washington argued that money was needed to support the campaign towards gaining Black American rights. Through his speeches and writings he was able to solicit funds from many wealthy white donors in order to fund many of his political projects, including the establishment of the Tuskegee Institute. Using a language that placed the onus on Black Americans to uplift their communities, while appeasing the whites’ Christian nature, Washington was able to acquire funding for his projects. In the 21st century, many Black academics refer to actions such as Washington’s as respectability politics, a reminder to Black Americans to appear “cultured” in front of whites in order to gain their approval. Often, Black Americans use respectability politics in order to gain access into certain political arenas or political capital. However, W.E.B. Du Bois challenged Black American respectability politics, maintaining that
Black Americans could gain entry into American politics whilst challenging the political status quo.

**Racialized Education and Double Consciousness**

Du Bois challenged the United States to live up to its claims of democracy and to use education as a model for and a means to a more democratic society. Philosopher and educator John Dewey also believed that education should improve the conditions of individuals by giving them an opportunity to “experience” ideals (Alridge 367). Dewey argued that by experiencing new ideas and challenging the status quo, the United States could become a more democratic society. As a prolific scholar and intellectual, Dewey argued that racial antagonism and racial prejudice might be effectively challenged not so much through legislation, but through the operations of voluntary associations (Stack 2009, 19). These voluntary associations, developed based upon common interests, can be seen at the collegiate level within Greek letter organizations (such as NPHC organizations) and other sociopolitical clubs (such as The Links Inc).

While Dewey’s work did not deal with issues of racism and power associated with institutionalized structures, Du Bois placed racism at the center of American life and educational philosophy and included race as an integral component of his emancipatory educational strategy (Alridge 369; Shelby 2005). An emancipatory tool refers to a methodology that Black Americans use to disentangle themselves from American institutions and western cultural values, which may be influenced by white supremacy. The common interests for Black Americans, especially those using education as an emancipatory tool, is their race and racialized experience.
The salience of race often informs the ways in which Black Americans approach their colligate education and the organizations that they join in and outside of the university or college setting; membership in these organizations is a manifestation of Black consciousness. The Du Bosian model for understanding education is based on six principles (Alridge 1999; Shelby 2005): (1) African American-centered education, (2) communal education, (3) broad-based education, (4) group leadership education, (5) Pan-Africanist education, and (6) global education. According to Derrick Alridge (1999), these principles provide the formative stages of a Du Boisian model and show how Du Bois was thinking about the role of education in improving the conditions of Black Americans and other oppressed people. He further argues that the model also demonstrates the “comprehensiveness of Du Bois’s thinking and his significance to American educational philosophy, while simultaneously illuminating the co-agency of his ideas for contemporary African American education” (370).

The educational principles outlined above are used to explain the responses of members of the Talented Tenth to focus group questions. The conversation begins with African American-centered education. When Du Bois discusses the “two-ness,” or double consciousness, of being Black and American, he argues that the best way to adequately negotiate this dual identity is to provide Blacks with the cultural and historical knowledge to address the notions of Black inferiority, white superiority, Black hopelessness, and Black ignorance that were “emblematic of American society and its institutions” (Alridge 370). About double consciousness, Du Bois wrote (1903):

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of
always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

This double consciousness helps anchor African Americans in their Blackness, helping them to navigate their educational and political experiences in the United States. Not all educational environments, formal or informal, were created with the mission of grounding students in their African and Black American heritage, while protecting them from “self-hatred,” “self-doubt,” and “self-degradation” (Alridge 371). However, Black American and African heritage and values can be taught in various settings such as homes, primary schools, and universities. Despite many respondents operating within this dichotomy of being a part of the African Diaspora and being an American, I found that many focus group participants were unable to express this explicitly until attending college. Respondents stated that the college experience, whether at an HBCU or PWI, resulted in an Black American centered education through the student body, student organizations, and in some cases the college curriculum. In the case of Black American centered college curriculum respondents referred to specific seminars devoted to the Black experience in the United States and abroad. It is with these Black American centered educational and social experiences in mind that I developed focus group survey questions, focus group questions, and chose NAES and NBES variables.

**Empirical Explanations of Linked Racial Fate and the Talented Tenth**

This research project was designed, in part, as an exploratory analysis to better understand the manifestations of linked racial fate and the articulation of Black philosophical thought in Talented Tenth members. As an exploratory analysis my goal was to summarize the main characteristics of a multivariate data set and inform the theoretical expectations used in
examining the survey responses of members of a non-random sample of Blacks to survey questions. As part of the exploratory analysis, I administered a survey to more than 400 members of National Pan Hellenic Council Organizations, civic organizations, and affluent churches in three different U.S. cities. In order to increase the number of survey respondents it was necessary to use a non-random sample. A non-random sample was the best option for this political research for several reasons, but due to the small sample size I utilized the National Annenberg Election Study (2008) and National Black Election Study (1996) to ensure more robust and generalizable results. The survey questions were used to develop focus group questions, which are germane to the study. Hypothesis testing, utilizing contingency tables and linear regression analysis, was used to analyze all survey results.

The sample of Blacks in my survey data was small as is generally the case in datasets that exclusively use Black respondents for it is particularly challenging to convince Blacks to complete (political) surveys as a result of their mistrust for government (UyBico et al 2007). Therefore, I used my personal and familial membership in and affiliation with NPHC organizations, the Links Incorporated, The Boulé, and several affluent Black churches in order to encourage survey participation and completion. In my interaction with members of the aforementioned organizations and churches I made my personal connection to the organizations and churches explicitly clear. Also, as a phenotypically Black woman, I suspect that respondents were more willing to participate and did not feel the need to “wear the [Black] mask,” instead speaking truthfully and frankly in my presence (Davis and Silver 2003, 34). Stereotype threat, defined as the risk of confirming stereotypes about one’s group, may have applied to non-Talented Tenth members who completed the survey, but did not indicate willingness to participate in focus group sessions (Steele and Aronson 1995). I suspect this to be the case,
because out of the 30 survey respondents who indicated that they had obtained less than a bachelor’s degree, only 10 were willing to attend a focus group session. I even had several non-Talented Tenth members explicitly devalue their contribution to this study as a result of not having a college degree.

Although I was able to employ sophisticated models utilizing responses to the survey described above alone, use of the National Black Election Studies Series from 1996 (Tate 1997) and the National Annenberg Election Study Data from 2008 further expand my study. Ultimately, this dissertation is a modification of part of Michael Dawson’s 1994 study, which used the 1988 National Black Election Study (NBES). Incorporating the NBES into this research allows for a more contemporary reading of a study that is 17 years old. Moreover, this dissertation also employs the 2008 National Annenberg Election Study because of the large sample and the wide range of questions asked about political attitudes.

The NBES (1996) was used to create some of the focus group questions and therefore, these questions were used to model variables that are specific to the African American community and have been found to have a significant impact on Black American political behavior. I ultimately developed four (4) hypotheses based upon the survey variables that were a reflection of focus group questions (see Appendix G). While the criterion for inclusion in focus group sessions (exclusive of control group sessions) included Talented Tenth membership (an earned bachelor’s degree or higher) much of the focus group narrative and discussion juxtaposed Black American political philosophy and racially linked fate. Therefore, I first hypothesize (hypothesis 1) that membership in the Talented Tenth results in an explicit articulation of linked racial fate for Black Americans. More formally:
H₁: Members of the Talented Tenth will express higher levels of linked racial fate than Black Americans who are not members of the Talented Tenth.

Theoretically, earning a college education or degree not only results in a Black American becoming a member of the Talented Tenth, but also indicates that graduates also have a certain skill set that socialization in the college setting provides. Socialization in higher educational environments arguably results in a greater ability to comprehend and articulate theories and ideas. In the case of attending either a PWI or HBCU the socializing environment results in a greater understanding of the Black American experience and Black diasporic communities, resulting in linked racial fate. Arguably, the social environment at a PWI results in Black American students’ increased sense of agency to express their Blackness out of the fear that they’ll lose their Black cultural identity in a setting where they are the out-group or minority (Simmons et al 2013). Simmons et al write, “As a group, African American students wanted to assimilate into their respective universities, but at the same time they expressed a need to maintain cultural independence by segregating from them. The need to segregate was born out of a fear that [their] African American culture would become less independent and more similar to the dominant culture.”

Conversely, both the social and academic environment at HBCUs often emphasizes the Black American experience in a way that allows (Black American and non-Black American) students from all backgrounds to have a strong sense of understanding the complexities of the Black experience. One of the ironies about many HBCUs is that they do not offer Black American specific academic programs. According to Delores Aldridge and Carlene Young in Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies (2000), to date, no HBCU has “required institution-wide a course with the Black experience as its exclusive or primary focus” (299). Therefore, members of the Talented Tenth who are educated at HBCUs “learn” and
become linked to Blackness through the cultural and social environment rather than specifically through their course work.\textsuperscript{11} Both PWI and HBCU environments advance the discourse on the global Black race, which arguably results in making students feel a greater linkedness to other Blacks.

Using cross-tabulation, I illustrate the observed percentage of participants who gave a specific response to the various survey questions and in parentheses presented this percentage in whole numbers. The joint frequency distribution is analyzed using the chi-square statistic ($X^2$) to determine if the two variables are statistically independent or if they are associated. The cross-tabulation of the variables Talented Tenth and linked racial fate is shown in Table 4.1. In Table 4.1 the independent variable is education or membership in the Talented Tenth, while the dependent variable is linked racial fate. The independent variable groups survey respondents into two groups: those with less than a college degree (non-Talented Tenth members) and those who have earned a college degree or higher (Talented Tenth members). The dependent variable corresponds to the survey question that asks, “To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement, ‘I feel strongly connected to other African Americans or Blacks.’” When calculated for Table 1 the chi-square value is 3.905. The $p$ value of 0.272 indicates that the relationship between Talented Tenth membership and linked racial fate is not statistically significant at commonly used levels of significance. However, as expected, the percentage of Talented Tenth members answering “Strongly Agree” is greater than the percentage of non-Talented Tenth members giving this same response; it may be the case that the relatively small

\textsuperscript{11} Many supporters of HBCUs argue that all of the classes at an HBCU are taught with an Afrocentric perspective given that the focus of the institution overall is dedicated to the racial uplift of African Americans. Some critics of HBCUs often argue that the curricula are not Afrocentric and relies too heavily on Western perspectives. Still other critics argue that many HBCUs are often too conservative and unwilling to take risks with their curricula.
survey sample size of 231 (n) may result in the inability to conclude that there is relationship between level of education and feelings of connectedness or linked racial fate. Therefore, I ran the same model in Table 4.2 using a much larger dataset (NAES 2008), which produced statistically significant results at the \( p < .001 \) level. As illustrated in Table 4.2, Talented Tenth members are more likely by 15 percentage points to indicate feelings of linked racial fate than respondents who are not members of the Talented Tenth. Although this data may be illustrative of the linked racial fate of some members of the Talented Tenth, I cannot unequivocally say that it is illustrative of the entire Talented Tenth population in the United States.

### TABLE 4.1

*Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Linked Racial Fate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 37)</td>
<td>57% (21)</td>
<td>41% (15)</td>
<td>2% (1)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (194)</td>
<td>69% (134)</td>
<td>25% (49)</td>
<td>5% (10)</td>
<td>1% (1)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (231)</td>
<td>67% (155)</td>
<td>28% (64)</td>
<td>4.5% (11)</td>
<td>0.5% (1)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 3.905  
\( p \) value: 0.272  
Kendall’s tau \( b \): 0.081  
\( p \) value: .222

### TABLE 4.2

*Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Linked Racial Fate (NAES 2008)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 1736)</td>
<td>69% (1190)</td>
<td>31% (546)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (n= 577)</td>
<td>84% (482)</td>
<td>16% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n= 2313)</td>
<td>72% (1672)</td>
<td>28% (641)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 48.56  
\( p \) value: .000  
Kendall’s tau \( b \): .145  
\( p \) value: .000
Since one of the major goals of this work was to challenge the deficit model typically used in social science research, with the exception of affluent churches, all survey respondents were recruited from organizations that require members to have at least a bachelor’s degree. My recruitment methods resulted in a biased sample by excluding many community members who did not have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Despite the unrepresentative nature of the sample, I suspect that by utilizing these methods I was able to recruit more participants than I would have by sending the survey electronically or in the mail without addressing the organizations and churches in person. Table 4.3 illustrates the composition of the entire survey sample as well as the focus group sample (Talented Tenth members).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.3</th>
<th>Comparison of Survey Sample and Talented Tenth/Focus Group Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entire Survey Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal Degree</td>
<td>13 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>18 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree or &gt;</td>
<td>92 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree or &gt;</td>
<td>71 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American or Latino (ethnicity)</td>
<td>202* (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (race)</td>
<td>216* (92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The discrepancy in values represents non-responses/missing responses

Using the NAES (2008), Table 4.2 illustrates that there is a relationship between membership in the Talented Tenth and linked racial fate. I used the linked racial fate question that asks, “How much does what happens to other Blacks affect your own life?” These findings are expected, since education is crucial to the development of linked racial fate in that these individuals are more likely to be able to articulate their racial/ethnic identity and experiences.
Notably, although their actual numbers are similar, both non-Talented Tenth and Talented Tenth members express feeling racially linked with other Blacks in large numbers. In order to further understand linked racial fate and membership in the Talented Tenth, I ran an additional cross tabulation of the variables education and linked racial fate using the 1996 National Black Election Study. The results of this cross tabulation are shown below in Table 4.4. The linked racial fate variable (qv1a) was used in Tate’s survey to ask respondents, “To what extent does what happens to Blacks affect you?” I suspect that Tables 4.2 and 4.5 illustrate statistical significance, while Tables 4.1 and 4.4 do not because the sample size used in Tables 4.2 and 4.5 is considerably larger than those available using the NBES and my survey sample. Comparing Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4 illustrates that respondent responses are similarly dispersed across all three datasets. These tables also illustrate that there is little difference in racially linked attitudes between Talented Tenth and non-Talented Tenth members.

### TABLE 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not Very Much</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 720)</td>
<td>42.5% (306)</td>
<td>42.4% (305)</td>
<td>12.5% (87)</td>
<td>2.6% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (n= 220)</td>
<td>42% (93)</td>
<td>46% (101)</td>
<td>10% (22)</td>
<td>2% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n= 940)</td>
<td>42% (399)</td>
<td>43% (406)</td>
<td>12% (109)</td>
<td>3% (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 2.06  
*p value: 0.617*  
Kendall’s tau *b: .014*  
*p value: .651*

---

12 All “Don’t Know” responses are counted as missing data in calculating the Kendall’s tau *b*.  

162
TABLE 4.5
Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Combined Linked Racial Fate Variable
(NAES 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not Very Much</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n=1694)</td>
<td>27% (466)</td>
<td>38% (636)</td>
<td>4% (65)</td>
<td>31% (527)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (n=613)</td>
<td>40% (247)</td>
<td>35% (217)</td>
<td>6% (35)</td>
<td>18% (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=2307)</td>
<td>31% (713)</td>
<td>37% (853)</td>
<td>4% (100)</td>
<td>28% (641)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 16.97   \( p \) value: .000   Kendall’s tau \( b \): -.071   \( p \) value: .004

Respondents who disagree with the statement “What happens to Blacks has a lot to do with me” by responding “not very much” are few, but they are also less likely, as I will illustrate later, to score highly on the conservatism among Blacks dimension. Displaying high levels of conservatism among Blacks requires an increased emphasis on race over other salient characteristics. As Table 4.5 illustrates, both Talented Tenth members and non-members overwhelmingly express possessing linked racial fate. Even Blacks who responded that they possessed “some” linked racial fate are emphasizing the saliency of race in their lives.

The Various Manifestations of Double Consciousness

There is no preexisting direct measure of ethnic or racial consciousness in surveys used to better understand Black American identity. Mikhail Lyubansky and Roy Eidelson (2004) use Du Bois’s double consciousness theory to explain African Americans acculturation and compare Black American beliefs about their racial group to their beliefs about their national group. Although Lyubansky and Eidelson provide a method for understanding the manifestation of certain aspects of double consciousness they do not provide insight as to why expressing their racial, ethnic, and national identities is important for Black Americans. A measure for adherence to explicitly expressing racial, ethnic, and national identity is important to this study for
respondents in national surveys are not given the opportunity to self-identify as a member of a specific racial and ethnic group, while also expressing their national identity. Instead hyphenated ethnic identities are used, and these are often ambiguous.

The racial and ethnic identity consciousness survey question (question 9), like many of the survey questions, does not speak directly to the specific experiences of the Talented Tenth. Instead, this question offers a snapshot of Black Americans in general. Arguably, college education may strengthen one’s ability to better understand their racial, ethnic, and national identities and articulate how these identities manifest in their life. Racial, ethnic, and national identity can manifest in many ways other than an African American self-identifying as both African American and American. I chose three items from the NBES (1996) that I believe capture respondents’ attachments to their racial, ethnic, or national identities and how they negotiate these identities. Those three items asked respondents whether they (1) thought Blacks should attend Afrocentric schools (e2a), (2) thought Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores whenever possible (e2c), and (qv2) (3) think that being Black determines how they are treated (qw2). The first two questions address respondents’ support for Afrocentrism and Black businesses ideas often associated with racial and national identity double consciousness for both ideas juxtapose race and American institutions: race centered education in the American public school system and patronizing Black owned businesses in the American capitalist system. The final question addresses Black American racial consciousness in these public spaces or institutions. I also utilize a variable illustrating support or opposition to Black owned stores (SD06_4) from the NAES (2008) in later tables for comparison purposes. The correlations between these survey items are illustrated in Table 4.6. First, I find that the items are both significantly and positively correlated with one another. As the propensity to either participate in
one of these activities or possess these feelings increases, so does the propensity to engage in
other activities or think about being Black in America (i.e., express double consciousness).

### TABLE 4.6

*Correlation Matrix: Three Items Used in Double Consciousness Measure (NBES 1996)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shop Black Stores</th>
<th>Afrocentric Schools</th>
<th>Being Black Determines Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shop Black Stores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.309**</td>
<td>.123**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrocentric Schools</td>
<td>.309**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Black Determines Treatment</td>
<td>.123**</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at p < .01 level

Although it may not be obvious, Black Americans’ adherence to double consciousness can be seen in their explicit articulation of their ethnic and national identity as well as their support for systems or institutions operated by and for Black Americans. Support for Afrocentric schooling and shopping in Black owned stores are used to measure double consciousness because these items arguably illustrate Black American connectedness to the Black community or Black culture. Double consciousness can be measured in circumstances when Black Americans think about the implications of their Blackness on their social experiences in the United States. The former and latter were explicitly asked of respondents on the surveys and in focus group sessions.

In addition to determining that support for Afrocentric schooling, support for shopping in Black owned stores, thinking about being Black, and thinking that being Black determines treatment were correlated with each other, a second measure of double consciousness was created using responses to survey question 9 that asks, “With which characteristics, as listed
below, do you most identify?” Survey respondents could choose between a combined measure of racial/ethnic identity and national identity, solely a national identity, or a racial/ethnic identity. These identities were converted into a four-point scale, which included the option of don’t know. A score of 1 was assigned to respondents who identified with both racial/ethnic identity and national identity. This dual identity was defined as double consciousness. Alternately, a score of 5 represents complete rejection of double consciousness principles or respondents who most identified by their national identity. The distribution of respondents along this scale is reported in Figure 4.1. About 19% of survey respondents fall within either the American or Neutral (includes those who offered “Don’t Know” as a response); conversely, the majority of respondents (81%) endorsed categories that measure either Racial/Ethnic and American Consciousness or Racial/Ethnic Consciousness, which constitutes the largest cluster of respondents.

**FIGURE 4.1**

*Frequency Distribution: Double Consciousness (Measures are Percentages)*

“With which characteristics, as listed below, do you most identify?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic AND American</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Only</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Only</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/Don’t Know</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An important feature of this sample is the relatively low percentage of respondents who identified solely with their racial/ethnic identity. There are several explanations for the small number of respondents who solely identify with their racial/ethnic identity and not national identity as well. First, as Michael Dawson (2001) finds, very few Black Americans actually endorse separatist identities; however, support of moderate identifications is more common. Support for an identity that rejects their American experience is difficult, and may be viewed as an unrealistic goal while residing in the United States. Support for Afrocentric schools and shopping solely at Black owned stores could also be an unrealistic goal. According to the NBES (1996), respondents were only slightly more likely to agree (28.2%) with the shopping at Black owned store question as to strongly disagree (16.7%), as illustrated in figure 4.2. Also, respondents may desire to send their children to Afrocentric schools and patronize Black businesses, but they realize the difficulty in finding Afrocentric schools in their community or may have to travel out of their way to patronize a Black owned business. Table 4.7 illustrates that both Talented Tenth members and non-members tend not to support Afrocentric schools. Their opposition to these schools may result from educational costs or the perception that these schools are inferior to white academic institutions. Utilizing the NBES (1996) questions “Afrocentric schools” (e2a), “shopping at Black stores” (e2c), and “being Black determines treatment” (qw2) as the best proxy for adherence to the survey question about racial, ethnic, and national identity when operating within certain U.S. institutions it is not without its problems.
FIGURE 4.2
Frequency Distribution: Support for Afrocentric Schools
"Blacks should Attend Afrocentric Schools" (NBES 1996)

FIGURE 4.3
Frequency Distribution: Support for Shopping in Black-Owned Stores
“Blacks Should Always Shop in Black-owned Stores Whenever Possible” (NBES 1996)
By combining three of the survey items described above, I was able to create an index that allows me to better understand a broader range of expressed double consciousness beyond simple pan-ethnic identities or support for Black owned institutions (results are shown in Table 4.8). The index was created using factor analysis. The value of Chronbach’s alpha was .372 in the double consciousness index, which is a fairly low value of alpha. This low value may result from using only three questions/items or the internal heterogeneity of the items. The factor analysis further illustrates that shopping in Black owned stores and children attending Afrocentric schools are significant indicators on the double consciousness index.
TABLE 4.8  
*Factor Analysis: Double Consciousness Index Items (Extraction Method: Principle Component Analysis)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Items</th>
<th>Principal Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Black Determines Treatment</td>
<td>.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrocentric Schools</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Black Owned Stores</td>
<td>.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance Explained</td>
<td>46.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant factor variables are in **bold type**

The factor analysis method resulted in the creation of one dimension or component. Only shopping in Black-owned stores and support for Blacks attending Afrocentric schools were significant. Next I wanted to descriptively show whether or not respondents agreed with the individual statements that serve as components of the double consciousness factor. I assigned a score of 0 to NBES (1996) respondents who disagreed with a given component statement; alternatively, a score of 1 indicated that the respondents agreed with that statement. Most respondents agreed with many of the statements presented in the index, but as I review the significance of the individual variables used I find that being Black determines how Blacks is treated (qw2) are not significant. Approximately 50% of respondents agree that Blacks should shop in Black owned stores (e2c) and that being Black determined how Blacks are treated (qw2). Respondent support of Black businesses and their assessment of treatment based upon race may be attributed to respondent acknowledgement of the adverse effects of unilateral integration of the 1960s and continued inequality expressed in the market place. All of these variables challenge the “American narrative” providing Black Americans with tool for expressing their
Black identity in various social, educational, and economic settings within American institutional settings.

Participants in the NBES (1996) also illustrated support for Blacks patronizing Black owned stores, a support that is even stronger among members of the Talented Tenth. Table 4.9 illustrates the relationship between Talented Tenth membership and support for shopping in Black owned stores is statistically significant; Table 4.10 utilized the NAES (2008) dataset and here the relationship is statistically significant as well. In Table 4.11 I illustrate a cross tabulation of support for Black owned stores and linked racial fate, instead of education. Here I used linked racial fate because unlike education linked racial fate creates a sense of individual accountability. As a result of linked racial fate Black Americans may see their individual economic condition as being linked to that of the community, traced in part, to the decline of the Black economy after desegregation.

**TABLE 4.9**
*Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Shopping at Black Owned Stores (NBES 1996)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 607)</td>
<td>26% (158)</td>
<td>30% (179)</td>
<td>24% (147)</td>
<td>20% (123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (n= 202)</td>
<td>33% (66)</td>
<td>47% (95)</td>
<td>13% (26)</td>
<td>7% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n= 809)</td>
<td>28% (224)</td>
<td>34% (274)</td>
<td>21% (173)</td>
<td>17% (138)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 39.95  \( p \) value: 0.00  Kendall’s tau \( b \): 0.160  \( p \) value: .000
TABLE 4.10
Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Shopping at Black Owned Stores (NAES 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth</td>
<td>22% (365)</td>
<td>38% (645)</td>
<td>23% (393)</td>
<td>17% (281)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 1684)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth</td>
<td>29% (165)</td>
<td>44% (253)</td>
<td>21% (118)</td>
<td>6% (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 574)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>23% (530)</td>
<td>40% (898)</td>
<td>23% (511)</td>
<td>14% (319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 2258)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square: 44.88</td>
<td>p value: .000</td>
<td>Kendall’s tau b: .118</td>
<td>p value: .000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.11
Cross Tabulation: Linked Racial Fate and Shopping at Black Owned Stores (NAES 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linked Racial Fate</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27% (439)</td>
<td>43% (695)</td>
<td>20% (332)</td>
<td>10% (165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 1631)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No =0</td>
<td>14% (90)</td>
<td>32% (200)</td>
<td>29% (179)</td>
<td>25% (155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 624)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>23% (529)</td>
<td>40% (895)</td>
<td>23% (511)</td>
<td>14% (320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 2255)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square: 125.47</td>
<td>p value: .000</td>
<td>Kendall’s tau b: .207</td>
<td>p value: .000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operating within Double Consciousness

Explaining double consciousness helps clarify how Black Americans understand their precarious role as people of the African Diaspora and their American national identity as members of one of the nation’s oldest groups of residents within the institutional framework of the United States. Despite having separate identities, many Black Americans experience their “Americanness” as Blackness in America, not solely as Americans. I ran a cross-tabulation (Table 4.12) of double consciousness and education where three categories were used to express double consciousness: African American and American, African American, and American (those who responded “don’t know” were coded as missing). African American and American could possibly be combined with African American because for many Blacks in America, perceptions
of “Americanness” are defined by the multigenerational experiences of Blacks in the United States. Table 4.12 illustrates that respondents who are members of the Talented Tenth are only slightly more inclined to see themselves as both African American and American. Arguably, this dual identification proclaims more of a Black Nationalist identity than African American or Black alone, for it illustrates the agency and influence that African Americans have as citizens and major players in the development of this nation. This dual identity asserts their sense of belonging, which is often lost or vaguely expressed with the use of hyphenated identities. Those with higher levels of education may be inclined to use language asserting their right to be American, while simultaneously proclaiming their Black pride. Seemingly, non-Talented Tenth survey respondents are more inclined to identify as African American rather than African American and American. This monistic identity may result from feelings of exclusion from white American society as a result of not having a formal education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African American and American</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>African American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 36)</td>
<td>61% (22)</td>
<td>11% (4)</td>
<td>28% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (186)</td>
<td>72% (133)</td>
<td>13% (24)</td>
<td>15% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (222)</td>
<td>70% (155)</td>
<td>12% (28)</td>
<td>18% (39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 3.09    \( p \text{ value: } 0.213 \)

When specifically looking at the surveys completed only by focus group members (rather than all of the respondents to the survey), I find that all focus group participants selected responses that indicate some degree of double consciousness; specifically the option of “African
American and American.” Upon reviewing all focus group attendees’ surveys, no attendees responded with “American” as their identity. Therefore, all focus group members identified as either only Black/African American or Black and American. This illustrates that their racial or ethnic identity is at least as salient as their national identity. I asked one group of focus group members to explain why they don’t typically identify solely with their national identity, but rather categorize themselves based upon their ethnic/racial identity alone or paired with their national identity (Table 4.12). Focus group participants responded to this question by making statements such as, “My country reminds me that I am Black” and “I’m proud to be Black and American. Being Black and American connects me to my ancestors who built this country.”

When asked in focus group sessions under what circumstances respondents learned about the implications of their Blackness, Black politics, political leaders, and political philosophies, the answers varied. For instance, Nina, a retiree in her early sixties reared in Port Huron, Michigan, moved with her family to Rochester, New York when she was in the sixth grade. She described her early experiences of understanding her role as a Black American in the United States. Nina stated:

When we went to Marshall [Middle School], we [the Black students] got called niggers. Now mind you, I was only in the 7th grade. I was still 11, I hadn’t had my 12th birthday yet. The parents [of the white children] threw things at us, they hit us. I’ve never forgotten this. I went home and I was crying. I just kept saying that I wanted to go back to Michigan because I thought white people weren’t prejudiced in Michigan. That’s when my parents sat me down for “the talk” and explained to me that yes, white people were prejudiced in Michigan too. The Fight Organization had to march us [the students] into the school building, from off of the bus; they had to protect us. I remember the first riot inside of the school, it was awful. People right here in “Smug Town” [Rochester]. That first riot? We [the Black students] came out of class and the [white] parents had gotten into the school and they attacked us. This was 1966… Thank the Lord for Grambling [University]! I went to Grambling (a HBCU in Louisiana) for college. The events in Rochester were traumatic. I even recall a teacher, Mr. Paddy, saying “you people don’t belong here.” This is how I learned about being Black in this country.
Janet, a woman also in her early sixties and reared in Rochester presented another perspective about “learning” Blackness. In response to another participant discussing the unintended consequences of racial integration in public schools Janet stated:

There was a time when your teacher lived in your neighborhood, went to your church, went to your mother’s hairdresser… that’s what I saw as a child. Dr. Young [a Black educator in Rochester and one of the founders of Monroe Community College], she was my vice principal when I was a kid. We’d go to the hairdresser and Dr. Young was sitting there under the dryer, I was like ‘Oh my God, that’s Dr. Young!’ I was just in awe of her. We’ve lost so much and what we’ve really lost is the ability to tell our kids the truth. When we were segregated they would tell the children ‘you know better’ or ‘you better be able to do it ten times better than those whites’ or ‘you need to act like this or that.’ We would tell them what being Black meant. What they needed to do in order to get along in this world. This world was not built for you. We would tell them that ‘you’ve got to be better than, you’ve got to be smarter than.’ But now they’re just, they’re just thrown in there and they know that they’re not being told the truth and they resist this misinformation that they’re getting. They resist the low standards of the classroom. They know that they’re not being taught to compete and so they don’t know what to do with that resistance. They end up dropping out of school.

Both of these respondents are members of the Talented Tenth, the first respondent attended an HBCU in Louisiana for her undergraduate studies, while the second attended a PWI in upstate New York. Both women illustrate two different perspectives for experiencing and understanding their Blackness. For Janet, the experience of interacting with professional Black people in her community and the lessons they imparted on youth in order to teach them about navigating society as Black Americans was how she learned about Blackness. In a future discussion Janet would share that she did not learn to be Black at home stating, “We were Black. That’s not something we had to learn explicitly.” On the other hand, Nina’s early experiences with Blackness resulted from her negative interactions with whites. As a result, she engaged in activities and has worked in environments that were heavily populated with other Blacks or committed to serving the Black American community.
Learning Linkedness, Blackness, and Conservatism

Respondents Nina and Janet help illustrate that becoming informed about Black politics, political leaders, and political philosophies is an educational exercise in Black pride. While students are socialized to be American through the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance during much of their primary education matriculation, racial pride is all but absent from this experience. In *We Who Are Dark* (2005, 97), Tommie Shelby argues that the meaning of Black pride has relevance for the discussion on the problem of class and social divisions among Blacks. Du Bois argued that many elite Blacks and members of the intelligentsia are ashamed of their Blackness because it is associated with the condition and behavior of the Black poor (97). In some circumstances, this may help explain why some respondents were not explicitly taught about Black culture, politics, and leaders in their homes, but this was only limitedly discussed in this project.

Clifton, a former IT manager at Xerox in Rochester stated:

From our own generation we felt like Blacks need to hear about “Blackness.” Those who were successful had a responsibility to prove themselves and to represent their race, which is quite different from the younger generation today. We felt like when we went to work for various corporations that we not only represented ourselves, our families, but we represented our race. Whoever amongst us is successful and has an opportunity to demonstrate or bridge some of the racial stereotypes we do it. We share our culture and share who we are as Black people with others. Sadly, I find it sorely missing in the youth of today. Even my son, I don’t think he feels that responsibility toward Black people, his race or to represent not only himself or his family, but his people as well.

When I asked Clifton about his Black American socialization he said:

I formally learned about being Black by attending Black history classes, which were held every Saturday at the white Jewish high school in Dayton [Ohio]. Informally, I recall first learning about my Blackness when my family and I would travel to Alabama to visit my grandparents. We always had to eat on the highway. It didn’t bother me because I was happy eating on the road, but my parents explained to me the real reasons… we also got Jet and Ebony magazines.
Surprisingly, they were great educational tools for Black children; the photographs and the articles.

Narratives such as the one expressed by Clifton have been relayed in Feagin and Sikes’s (1994) *Living with Racism* and Cherise A. Harris’s *The Cosby Cohort: Blessings and Burdens of Growing Up Black Middle Class* (2013) further discusses these topics. The childhood socializations and parental narratives explaining Blackness often result in Black American children realizing early on in life that being Black is a liability. According to Cherise Harris (2013, 81), if the negative aspects of being Black are emphasized to the exclusion of more positive messages, then it becomes more difficult for the child to develop a strong racial identity that isn’t entirely predicated on victimization. Likewise, failure to discuss race may leave Black children ill prepared to deal with racial prejudice and discrimination.

Heather from Rochester echoed these sentiments when she said:

Although we as parents are responsible, part of the issue is also what our children are being taught in our communities, in our schools. If we are left out of the history books and we’re only showing information that does not really depict who we are, because we can pick out some information and move forward. The reason I’m saying this is because our children do not know their history and the other piece is that they are angry about their history. When we bring it up… The other day I had one of my students look up Emmett Till and she came back with this wonderfully written essay. Now, all of the students sitting around were close to Emmett Till’s age, 12-13. They didn’t even know who he was, they had no idea and we we’re not just talking about African American children we’re talking about Hispanics too. They were clueless about Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and all of those who were someone who propelled us to where we are today… for you to be able to sit in your chair. You have no idea what those people meant back in their era and you may not even want to because when you get the information then you’re angry. I’ve heard students express that they’re angry because they ask, ‘How can it be that I’m sitting here next to my classmates and he’s white and I’m looking back at his people and they had us in slavery.’ So all of these people who were frontrunners, who were helping us, we still need to look at today.

On the NAES (2008) Black respondents were asked whether it is, “More important to build relationships with whites or build own pride” (SD04_4). The results are shown in Table
4.13. The relationship between Talented Tenth membership and support for building relationships with Blacks versus whites is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. One explanation for the relationship between the desire to build intra-racial or trans-racial relationships and Talented Tenth membership is that the desire to build intra-racial relationships gathers all intersections of Black life rather than only education: identity, class, culture, gender, ideology, sexual orientation, region, religion, age, etc. Instead of level of education or Talented Tenth membership, a variable such as class, gender, or sexual orientation may result in a greater statistically significant relationship with the desire to build intra-racial relationships. This is illustrated in Table 4.14 using the “most important issues” variable (CA02_4), in which a greater level of statistical significance is found. By finding which issue is most important to Black respondents I can predict which identities are most salient to Black respondents as well. For example, if a respondent states that “moral issues” are most important I expect that their religious identity as a Christian or Muslim might be most salient. I found that the “economy and jobs” were most important to Black respondents. Arguably, this variable represents an intersection of race, class, income, educational, and cultural identities; it is not defined by ideology, religion, or sexual orientation illustrating the link between Black pride/respect and the ability to provide for oneself or family. Black pride and respect as well as aspects of the Black experience are arguably inextricably linked to economic stability and mobility.
### TABLE 4.13

**Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Building Relationships vs. Build Own Pride (NAES 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More Important for Blacks to Build Relationships with whites</th>
<th>More Important for Blacks to Build Pride and Respect for Themselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Talented Tenth Member</strong> (n=1648)</td>
<td>20% (332)</td>
<td>80% (1316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talented Tenth Member</strong> (n=611)</td>
<td>17% (101)</td>
<td>83% (510)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong> (n=2259)</td>
<td>19% (433)</td>
<td>81% (1826)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 3.76  \( p \) value: .052  Kendall’s tau \( b \): .041  \( p \) value: .045

### TABLE 4.14

**Cross Tabulation: Most Important Issues and Building Relationships vs. Build Own Pride (NAES 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More Important for Blacks to Build Relationships with whites</th>
<th>More Important for Blacks to Build Pride and Respect for Themselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taxes</strong> (n=60)</td>
<td>42% (25)</td>
<td>58% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong> (n=71)</td>
<td>11% (8)</td>
<td>89% (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War on Terrorism</strong> (n=117)</td>
<td>19% (22)</td>
<td>81% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation in Iraq</strong> (n=121)</td>
<td>12% (14)</td>
<td>88% (107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy/Jobs</strong> (n=1554)</td>
<td>18% (275)</td>
<td>82% (1279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral Issues</strong> (n=72)</td>
<td>27% (12)</td>
<td>83% (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Care</strong> (n=193)</td>
<td>25% (49)</td>
<td>75% (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong> (n=67)</td>
<td>40% (27)</td>
<td>60% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong> (n=2255)</td>
<td>19% (432)</td>
<td>81% (1823)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 53.59  \( p \) value: .000

179
In *Is Bill Cosby Right?* (2005) Michael Eric Dyson writes, “Some Blacks think that ‘real’ Blacks don’t vote Republican, marry outside the race, adopt gay lifestyles, support abortion, bungee jump, climb mountains, attend the opera, or love country music. These views reveal the tribalism that can trump complex views of Black life. Proud of their roots, some Blacks worship them. But roots should nourish, not strangle, Black identity” (40). As a result of the intersectional nature of Black identity (Crenshaw 1989), it is difficult to determine how respondents interpreted the idea of connectedness to other Blacks. Excluding the control group participants, out of all focus group participants (n=31), 75% indicated that they “strongly agreed” with the feelings of connectedness with other Blacks, while 64% of the 234 survey participants indicated the same feeling. Interestingly, none of the focus group participants indicated that they “strongly disagreed” with the connectedness statement of “did not know,” while one person indicated that they “disagreed” with the statement from the entire surveyed group. Question 5, which addressed the extent of connectedness, are related more closely to cultural and social connectedness than racial linkedness i.e. “what happens to African Americans in this country affects what happens in my life.” Table 4.15 illustrates that the extent of influence of Blacks over the lives of other Blacks is almost equally distributed around “a lot of influence” and “some influence.” This illustrates, at least descriptively, that Talented Tenth members and non-members both see the actions of other Blacks as having influence on their lives. This is important because racial influence may affect socioeconomic decision making including how Blacks vote or which other groups they feel closest to. I use Figure 4.4 to illustrate the groups to which survey respondents felt closest to. Descriptively, I find that respondents feel closest to Democrats, African Americans, and women.
Arguably, it is not surprising that survey respondents and focus group members expressed a connectedness to other African Americans or Blacks because race is extremely salient. Despite the cultural indicators, Blackness is often a physical “marker” defined by phenotypical characteristics. Therefore, despite some African Americans’ protestations to connectedness to other Blacks, these Blacks are not seriously entertained because they are still members of the group (Shelby 98). Tommie Shelby writes (98):
Extrapolating a bit, an analogous point could be made about the tendency of some whites to regard Black progressives as unreasonably defiant or arrogant. Black militancy necessarily involves, almost by definition, being willing to use political methods that whites might find unacceptable or even offensive if Black liberation requires as much. When members of the Black elite exhibit these traits of militancy, this need not therefore be understood as some form of irrational racial chauvinism. It could be more charitably interpreted as an attempt on their part to demonstrate publically that they are not servile and obsequious. This militant attitude is a public signal that they can be trusted in the collective Black struggle that they will not compromise the principles of the Black movement for freedom and equality in order either to avoid white disapproval or to advance their individual positions within the white world.

Tommie Shelby illustrates and echoes what respondents said about expressing their pride in being Black, and in some instances, their militant commitment to Black progress. At the time that the first focus group was hosted in New Orleans, Christopher Dorner the LAPD officer who wrote a manifesto and attacked several police officers, had recently been killed in the mountains of San Bernardino, California. Focus group participants wanted to discuss the events leading up to Dorner’s death and how he was portrayed in the media. In part of his manifesto Dorner wrote, “Unfortunately, this is a necessary evil that I do not enjoy but must partake and complete for substantial change to occur within the LAPD and reclaim my name. The department has not changed since the Rampart and Rodney King days. It has gotten worse…” (LA Times). Several focus group members discussed the ways in which Dorner’s narrative had been altered in the media from a man challenging the racial injustices of the LAPD in its treatment of officers and citizens to a crazed gunman upset about his firing. Simeon, a native of Miami responded to this conversation by saying:

If you’re silent, you’re not going to get what you want in this society here, especially in America. I actually think we need to insight fear inside of people, but that’s that other side of me that would say that [chuckles]. I believe that during the 60’s you had the Stokley Carmichaels and H. Rap Brown and those guys. During that time they struck fear, they got attention. And Malcolm X. They got attention! With their education they were able to express themselves in such a way that people believe, ‘Yeah, we need to stand up for our rights’. And then those who are oppressing us will respond with, ‘Oh, okay. They’re serious about moving forward.’ There’s
good and there’s bad. I’m from Miami, Florida and I remember we had several riots down there and they were doing protests at first. All of the silent and non-violent protests did not work. But when they had the riot, although they were rioting in their own neighborhoods they got more done. I saw the city move forward. Blacks were given more opportunities politically, socially, economically, and so I’ve seen something different and so I believe that confrontation is the only way that we can move forward.

While the aforementioned statement reflects double consciousness, specifically national and racial identity negotiation, it also illustrates the manifestations of conservatism among Blacks. Double consciousness often causes the Black racial identity and conservatism to collide, which in some cases results in support for separatism and Black militarism. According to Michael Dawson (2001), however, the majority of Black Americans do not favor forming a separate Black nation state. Despite their justifiable grievances with the United States and her political systems, the United States is home; the home that many of their ancestors built through forced labor. Some Black Americans have become disillusioned with some of their nation’s more lofty ideals or, rather, by the failure of their government and compatriots to live up to them (Hochschild 1995). However, an identity that is rooted in an African American perspective is not pessimistic, but rather focuses on a realistic educational strategy that “adapts African Americans to the reality of being of African descent in America” (Alridge 371). This educational strategy implores Black Americans to experience a dual socialization process in order to prepare them for life in the United States, a life to include discrimination and oppression. This dual socialization and educational process is arguably rooted in Black empowerment and easily transpires in informal educational environments where Black Americans are the majority, such as certain neighborhoods, municipalities, and even individual states within the United States (Shelby 102).

Tommie Shelby writes (2005, 102):
If effectively organized, such concentrations of Blacks could enable them to make progressive changes in the way their government responds to Black interests, but without having to dramatically transform the formal structure of U.S. governmental institutions or appropriating a portion of its territory to create a separate Black state.

One survey respondent, from Michigan, explicitly identified as a “separatist” and “radical” when asked about his political party identification on the survey. Interestingly, although this respondent identified as a “separatist” he also identified as a Moor. Many Moors in America advocate for a separate nation within the physical boundaries of the United States of America. This illustrates, in part, cultural connectedness to the United States that even separatism may not diminish. Arguably, Black Americans, in many ways, have a deeper connection to the operation of their Blackness in America than to their Blackness in any other country. Therefore, Black American identity is rooted in the American experience.

**Making a Case for African (American) Centered Socialization in a Desegregated Society**

Separatism is deeply rooted in the education of African American students in the United States and was championed by W.E.B. Du Bois. It can also be argued that the development of the Talented Tenth is also rooted in Black American culture. Separatism and DuBois’s Black American centered educational perspectives can be seen in more contemporary manifestations of Afrocentricity such as Molefi Asante’s work (1987), which defines Afrocentricity and Afrocentric education as the idea of placing Africa and African people at the center of one’s worldview. Du Bois’s perspective on separatism and Afrocentricity included the “history, culture, and experiences of African peoples along with a focus on the societies and cultures in which people of African descent live” (Alridge 1999, 372). Du Bois defended a version of this view during the Depression era (Shelby 2005, 102) that was even championed by Marcus M. Garvey. Du Bois’s defense of this perspective was rooted in forced racial segregation, which ensured that a high concentration of Blacks of diverse socioeconomic standing lived in the same
communities. This high concentration of Black Americans of diverse socioeconomic standing living in African American communities or neighborhoods has dramatically decreased as a result of residential integration patterns in the post-Civil Rights Era. The high concentration of Black Americans of diverse socioeconomic standing living in African American communities or neighborhoods often results in communal education.

The idea of communal education, often associated with Afrocentricity, is based on Du Bois’s advocacy of social and economic cooperation. Social and economic cooperation are ideas that have been championed by the African American community and are explicitly articulated during the Black American (and West African) holiday, Kwanzaa, created by acclaimed professor Maulana Karenga (Mayes 2009). Two of the holiday’s tenets or themes include, in Swahili, Ujma and Ujamma. Ujma, represents the collective work and responsibility of Black Americans toward their community, and Ujamma, cooperative economics. Both of these concepts were championed by Du Bois, who throughout his life argued that Black Americans must become the masters of their own economic destiny, and thusly advocated using “intelligent consumer economic cooperation” as an important approach (Nembhard 2004). According to Jessica Gordon Nembhard (2004), Du Bois advanced the concept and strategy of “racial economic cooperation” combining cooperative industries and services in a “group economy,” through which Black Americans could then gain control over their economic lives, and assert themselves as equals or even serve as leaders in the mainstream economy (Nembhard 2004; Du Bois 1975). Interestingly, respondents are asked their opinions about these ideas in various questions on the NBES (1996) and NAES (2008) surveys.

The discussion about racial economic cooperation was tackled in the focus groups by asking participants, “How important do you think it is for Blacks to interact with whites?” The
question was phrased in this manner because, arguably, in order for racial or cooperative economics to truly be successful, Blacks must believe that there is little need to interact with white businesses, and that Black communities can be self-sufficient with limited support from whites. This would be akin to life in many Black communities prior to desegregation. Historian Terri said:

If you want to live an interesting life, interacting with white people it has its advantages, and living around white people is interacting with them. Alright, from a comfortable standpoint if you live in the United States to say that you’re not going to interact with white people, even in a very Black place, that’s pretty hard to do. I mean to decide that you’re not going to interact with them, even if you decide that ‘I would rather spend my money at Black businesses because African Americans have been so disadvantaged and that I’m going to bank at Liberty Bank [Black owned bank in New Orleans], go to Black doctors, shop at small Black pet stores in Gentilly and not go to PetCo,’ even if you make it, it’s almost impossible from a practical standpoint to say that you’re not going to interact with whites. If you want to find out, you know, do something at City Hall and you will end up with a white council person. If you’re trying to figure out that 99 page booklet of New Orleans’ public school, they’ll present you with a white person to help you understand that booklet. So I view it as a pragmatic thing.

Michael, another focus group participant in New Orleans stated:

As long as they hold the gold you have to interact with them. You have to go to white people because number one they’re the money in the United States. If you want the money, that’s how you play the game.

Chloe, a middle school teacher and graduate student originally from Kentucky, added a different perspective to this discussion about interacting with whites and cooperative economics.

Chloe stated:

I’m from Kentucky and went to school in Kentucky, and actually being in New Orleans, this is my first time ever in my life living around Black people, working at a place where there’s a majority of Black people, so this is a very unique experience for me. I can say from those experiences, I went to the University of Kentucky which is a PWI; I think it’s like less than 6 percent African American and the city of Lexington… Actually, Lexington is one of the only places that did not really have any documented evidence of the Civil Rights Movement, none at
all. So from being in a place like that, being from Kentucky and now being here I think it’s very much an advantage to be around so many Black people.

I’m a teacher now and I actually work in a school where most of my students are African American. I didn’t think anything like this would be mine. My school growing up was nothing like that, but I feel like sometimes it’s kind of hard for the people that I work with. To code switch I think it could be rather difficult for some of them to go to another environment where it wasn’t majority African American and actually work because that’s how the culture is here. So I guess for me I think that it’s an advantage to interact with whites or being able to deal with whites. I mean at the end of the day I am a Black woman so I can obviously deal with Black people, but having the experience of school, corporate America and undergrad dealing with white people I’m really thankful for that experience. But one thing that always bothered me was, you know, it was always kind of like or they would say, ‘Yeah you’re Black, but you’re not one of them.’

After reviewing the transcripts from the six focus group sessions, it was clear that no participants articulated complete economic separatism from whites. Participants recognized the virtues of interacting with whites in economic arenas. Almost two decades ago, when the 1996 NBES was conducted, interviewees were asked “On the whole, would you say that the economic position of Blacks is better, about the same, or worse than that of whites?” According to the NBES (1996) results 57.3% of interviewees responded “worse,” while 33% responded with “about the same.” Arguably, the economic position of Blacks could be improved through their social and economic cooperation initiatives, but according to this study’s respondents, whites would have to be involved and would therefore control Black economic success to some degree. One participant stated, “Whites don’t want Blacks better off than themselves so sure they’ll help us, help us while keeping us beneath them.” Interestingly, social and economic cooperation motivated militant Black organizations such as the Black Panthers. The Black Panthers created communal education programs in the 1960s which were arguably used to further develop Black American empowerment. The National Black Panther Party did not desire to separate from the United States. Instead, they depended on “white” or governmental money in order to see their
social and economic programs benefit Black American children and young adults. Using the NBES (1996) I find that there is a statistically significant correlation between support for Afrocentric schools and the belief that the economic position of Blacks is worse off than whites, which supports the Black Panther Party’s desire to develop programs to benefit Black American children. The variables are significantly related at the $p < .05$ level (.047). Table 4.16 is consistent with the claim that Blacks believe that their economic condition is worse than whites. Table 4.16 illustrates that 62% state that their economic position is worse than whites. As a result, Blacks may advocate for institutions such as Afrocentric schools, which they perceive as benefiting the Black community economically.

**TABLE 4.16**

*Cross Tabulation: Economic Position of Blacks and Support for Afrocentric Schools (NBES 1996)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Position of Blacks vs. whites</th>
<th>Blacks should attend Afrocentric Schools</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>About the Same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree (n= 56)</td>
<td>10% (7)</td>
<td>8% (19)</td>
<td>7% (30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree (n= 118)</td>
<td>6% (4)</td>
<td>15% (33)</td>
<td>17% (81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree (n= 333)</td>
<td>50% (33)</td>
<td>39% (85)</td>
<td>47% (215)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree (n= 241)</td>
<td>34% (23)</td>
<td>38% (83)</td>
<td>29% (135)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n= 748)</td>
<td>100% (67)</td>
<td>100% (220)</td>
<td>100% (461)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 12.78  $p$ value: .047  Kendall’s tau $b$: .053  $p$ value: .108

Black American support for Black controlled institutions such as schools and banks shows support for Black belief in Black solidarity and, arguably, Black Nationalism. In order to better understand how Black solidarity and Black Nationalism manifest in political ideology, I
examined responses to a question that gauged whether respondents believed that Blacks should control Black economies. In Table 4.17, I suggest that support or opposition to Blacks controlling their own economies would predict Black political ideology using the traditional or standard measure. Table 4.17 indicates that as respondents become more moderate, they also become significantly more likely to believe that Blacks should control Black economies. Again, here respondent ideology is measured on a traditional ideological scale. Though this is not surprising, the direction of causality needs to be flushed out. Do Blacks, Talented Tenth members and non-members, specifically think about controlling their own economies and they then become more moderate? Or do Blacks become moderate and as a result begin to focus on more race-centered issues? The answer to this is difficult to flush out through statistical analysis. Surely, Black solidarity and in this case Black ideology is a combination of ideology, linked racial fate, and racialized experiences. For example, Table 4.17 clearly indicates that a significant percentage of respondents who agree with Black control of Black economies identify to some degree as liberal. Arguably, when discussing Black control of Black economies, Blacks see this as taking a liberal or progressive stance; definitely not conservative or associated with conservative policies or the Republican Party. Although this is discussed more in Chapter V, with the usage of the conservatism among Blacks dimension, it is clear that even in the absence of expressed ideology that Blacks desire to control some aspects of their communities. The extent to which Blacks desire community and institutional control is difficult to deduce through the NAES (2008) and NBES (1996) data; given the evidence found in focus groups, Blacks themselves realize that although they desire control, they must still interact with whites. Even W.E.B. Du Bois had difficulty with the extent to which Blacks should socially and economically segregate themselves from whites.
TABLE 4.17
Cross Tabulation: Ideology and Blacks Should Control Black Economies (NAES 2008)

Blacks Should Control Black Economies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Liberal (n= 156)</td>
<td>34% (53)</td>
<td>40% (63)</td>
<td>20% (31)</td>
<td>6% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal (n= 489)</td>
<td>33% (159)</td>
<td>37% (182)</td>
<td>20% (98)</td>
<td>10% (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Liberal (n= 307)</td>
<td>25% (76)</td>
<td>45% (139)</td>
<td>19% (57)</td>
<td>11% (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate, Middle of Road (n= 883)</td>
<td>22% (195)</td>
<td>45% (399)</td>
<td>25% (219)</td>
<td>8% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Conservative (n= 197)</td>
<td>22% (44)</td>
<td>52% (102)</td>
<td>20% (40)</td>
<td>6% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative (n= 191)</td>
<td>26% (49)</td>
<td>54% (104)</td>
<td>14% (27)</td>
<td>6% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Conservative (n= 21)</td>
<td>38% (8)</td>
<td>28.5% (6)</td>
<td>10% (2)</td>
<td>23.5% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n= 2244)</td>
<td>26% (584)</td>
<td>44% (995)</td>
<td>21% (474)</td>
<td>9% (191)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 62.46  p value: .000  Kendall’s tau b: .023  p value: .197

By the 1930s, Du Bois realized that democracy and equality would come from obtaining social, economic, and political strength (Alridge 1999, 372). Du Bois then began to advocate that the Talented Tenth take advantage of the “Jim Crow system already set up in the South and use segregated communities to mainstream and further develop control over their social, economic, and political situation” (372). Interestingly, Du Bois began to advocate for methods and tactics previously employed by Booker T. Washington. Du Bois illustrated support for continued segregation of Blacks, but on their own terms because he believed that Black American communities created an environment in which Blacks could concentrate on and address their
political condition in the United States without interference (Provenzo 2002). Du Bois further argued that without outside interference or having to integrate into white society Blacks would build a strong economic infrastructure. Du Bois wrote, “The community must be able to take hold of its individuals and give them such a social heritage, such present social teachings and such compelling social customs as will force them along the lines of progress, and not into the great forests of death” (Aptheker 1973, 38).

Du Bois’s statements were echoed when Rochester focus group participant Janet stated:

W.E.B. Du Bois said that the problem of the 20th century would be the problem of the color line. He was absolutely right. Did that make him a confrontationist? Confronting that time’s ideologies? Yes. If we had continued to do that we would probably be further along today, but we believed during the Civil Rights Movement, when they said schools would be better with integration. And it’s just the opposite.

The development of Black social and cultural heritage that Du Bois advocated was retarded by integration. Monica, another focus group member from Rochester stated:

Integration really hurt us. I mean the research says that achievement is associated for children who are in integrated schools because the schools are doing better than when they were concentrated and not performing. But in terms of integration I think what it has really done it has taken away our ability to work together and be self-sufficient. It has separated us and moved us and separated us and our communities.

Echoing the sentiments of Janet and Monica in Rochester, Terri said:

I am not so much interested in social equality as I am in equality which I think is different. One of the beautiful things that Diane Nash said when she was here, she said that integration was not the goal, equality was the goal. If you’re getting along with white people and being in integrated spaces, that’s a by-product. I think for me, in terms of looking at what has happened in our post Civil Rights politics, I would say that frankly we’ve had a lot of Washington and not enough Du Bois because in terms of speaking truth to power, naming the thing, we have now gone through two maybe three generations of politicians that have not essentially said anything as we looked in horror as they defunded and dismantled a civic commitment to public education. Now no one, Black or white, is able to say out of their mouths that this is racism, pure and simple. We’ve gone through a lot of people, but we haven’t had enough people willing to speak out. I was just
speaking to some young people last night about probably the most brilliant thing Du Bois ever said, which was when he said that he wishes that white people would walk up to Black people at the start of the 20th century and say, ‘So, how does it feel to be a problem?’ He says that they would say something else when in fact you know what they’re thinking and that kind of frankness in his writing was really trying to name the thing and be like this IS the problem. I want some more of that from our political leaders.

According to Derrick Alridge (1999), W.E.B. Du Bois’s advocacy of voluntary segregation was based primarily on an African perspective of communalism and socialist economic cooperation (372). On the surface, communalism simply refers to Black owned churches, banks, social societies, and other business and organizations that seemingly thrived during racial segregation, but schools, specifically HBCUs, also thrived under segregation. These schools were responsible for developing the Talented Tenth. One of the unintended consequences of integration has been the decline of HBCUs and the loss of the sense of community as a result. Black American students are earning college degrees at higher rates than 50 years ago and there has been extraordinary growth in the education achievements of Black American women (National Urban League [NUL] “State of Black America Report”). However, according to the NUL, the surge in Black student enrollment in degree programs is “separate and unequal,” as community colleges and for-profit colleges account for 70% of Black college enrollment. Arguably, community colleges and for-profit colleges are not bastions of Black culture, nor is their mission to “produce graduates from diverse backgrounds with the integrity and intellect required for substantive contributions to society” (Fisk University). One of the unintended consequences of desegregation was the dismantling of the Black education system, which moved many Black grammar schools and schools of higher education outside of Black communities and separated education from contact with the community. This had an adverse effect on the development of the Talented Tenth.
The effects of desegregation inform the Talented Tenth’s knowledge of Black political philosophy, culture, and the way in which members negotiate their individual and community politics. With segregation, the communal educational perspective allowed for a strategy for Black Americans to engage in community based efforts of liberation and self-help, echoing the trajectory of other ethnic groups in the United States. I argue that these community based efforts of liberation and self-help are illustrative of why the Black American economic condition continues to lag behind the white American population, despite an increase in Black American degree earners; the community lost its sense of purpose with integration. In addition to the well-known income gap, an even larger wealth gap persists between Black Americans and white Americans, even at the same educational, income, and or occupational levels (Kunjafu 2002; Oliver and Shapiro 1997).

For members of the Talented Tenth, this wealth gap is understood in terms of historical inequality both in and outside of the marketplace. The limitations of equality within the marketplace illustrate the “failures of traditional economic strategies” (Nembhard 2004, 3). Traditional economic strategies that address the needs of the elite, do not work for members of the Talented Tenth because their social status does not always yield high economic status as a result of their race. In 1994, the United Nations Development Program summarized the need for a new economic development paradigm. Interestingly, this paradigm could be used to decrease the wealth gap that persists in the United States by focusing on increasing opportunities and access to institutions, rather than just the acquisition of wealth. The United Nations Development Program wrote (Nembhard 5):

To address the growing challenge of human security, a new development paradigm is needed that puts people at the center of development, regards economic growth as a means and not an end, protects the life opportunities of future generations as well as the present generations and
respects the natural systems on which all life depends…. A major restructuring of the world’s income distribution, production and consumption patterns may therefore be a necessary precondition for any viable strategy for sustainable human development.

Often members of the Talented Tenth feel compelled to reach out to other Black Americans when they feel socially or racially linked to them. I argue that this racial linked fate (Dawson 2001) is rooted in Black solidarity and Black consciousness, which inspires conservatism among Blacks. The father of Black consciousness, Steve Biko, defined Black consciousness as (Biko 1978):

The realization by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression- the blackness of their skin and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the normal which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realization that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black consciousness therefore takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God’s plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life.

William Hoston (2009) argues that, “because current and historical social experiences are largely responsible for the formation of Black consciousness, the belief that Blacks should be able to build economic, social, and political institutions to develop a sense of group solidarity should be accepted as a cultural norm” (720). If members of the Talented Tenth possess high levels of Black consciousness or linkedness to other Black Americans, it is necessary to explain its development and various manifestations such as conservatism.

The methodology used to explain linked racial fate in this project mirrors previous work conducted by Pat Gurin and other scholars at the University of Michigan (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989). Pat Gurin’s research analyzes the relationship between Black American political
preferences and behavior. I expected to find that the results of a linked racial fate measure would emphasize the saliency of race.

Since linked racial fate and Black consciousness seem to be explicitly expressed by both Talented Tenth members and non-members, the hypothesis (1) that Talented Tenth membership results in an explicit articulation of linked racial fate needs to be fleshed out more. Therefore, I test the factors that influence the linked racial fate expressed by Talented Tenth members by regressing double consciousness, as measured by the double consciousness index on membership in the Talented Tenth and other variables (Table 4.18). Again, the double consciousness index included the variables support for Afrocentric schools, shopping at Black-owned stores, and race determines how Blacks are treated. All of these variables relate to Black Americans’ experiences in American institutions or public spaces and as a result of these experiences their motivation for developing or supporting their own institutions.

First, the variable that I am most interested in - Importance of the Million Man March - is statistically significant. This variable expresses a sense of double consciousness for the Million Man March called upon Black American men to meet on the Washington Mall. The significance of this event and respondents’ support of the event is a manifestation of male and female racial linkedness to other Blacks as well as the manifestation of double consciousness in the act of proclaiming their Blackness at the physical location of one of the United States’ most well known monuments. This reinforces the validity of the double consciousness measure. The coefficient’s negative sign indicates that respondents may only see the Million Man March as symbolic, not truly challenging U.S. institutions, which would support double consciousness. For this reason, Talented Tenth members who express double consciousness are less likely to see the
Million Man March as important. Arguably, the Million Man March was not progressive or revolutionary enough of an act for those who possess double consciousness.

Second, Blacks who are members of the Talented Tenth are less likely to possess a sense of double consciousness. This may suggest that education causes members of the Talented Tenth to see themselves as even closer to other Black Americans as a result of continued isolation from white institutions despite education. There are also several variables that significantly impact individual adherence to double consciousness. The first significant finding is those who support campaigning for Black candidates posses feelings of double consciousness. Here race is salient and manifests in support for Blacks in elected office. This finding arguably illustrates double consciousness because respondents may realize that Black candidates not only represent Blacks symbolically, but must also substantively represent their American interests. I also find that feeling as though one is judged on their character more than race reduced the sense of double consciousness. Again, this illustrates that race is key to feeling a sense of double consciousness. Arguably, the belief in eventual equality as a result of education and higher income requires a certain sense of optimism that Blacks who may operate within double consciousness, may not have as a result of viewing the world through a racialized lens.
TABLE 4.18  
Regression Model: Factors Influencing Double Consciousness (NBES 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education (Dummy-Talented Tenth =1)</td>
<td>-0.308***</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance Million Man March</td>
<td>-0.001**</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judged on Character More than Race</td>
<td>-0.072**</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign for Black Candidate</td>
<td>0.085**</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Significant at p < .005 level    ** Significant at p < .05 level    * Significant at p < .1

The fact that the double consciousness index is not significantly and positively related to education is contrary to the theory posited in this chapter. Although education may help members of the Talented Tenth better explain or articulate their feelings of double consciousness and linkedness, Talented Tenth members are not more likely to express such feelings, at least as measured here. Therefore, the null hypothesis that membership in the Talented Tenth has no effect on linked racial fate for Black Americans cannot be rejected (hypothesis 1). However, as expressed in focus group discussions, membership in the Talented Tenth, whether attained at an HBCU or PWI, results in a racial linkedness based upon the interaction with other Black peers or in social threat/racial out-group situations. While membership in the Talented Tenth has an effect on racial linked fate for Black Americans, non-Talented Tenth members also possess linked racial fate although their feelings of linkedness and Black solidarity are born out of non-academic experiences. Actually, control group members used language that was much more explicit in expressing linkedness to other Blacks. Seemingly, Black Americans develop linked racial fate based upon racialized education, which may occur in formal or informal arenas. The
concept of linked racial fate is common among most Black Americans for whom race is salient, especially those who came of age during times of racial unrest. As the focus group narrative inquiry illustrates all participants expressed feelings of linkedness to other Black Americans.

**Conclusion**

Previous analysis has explored the impact of socioeconomic status indicators, such as education, income, gender, and age on feelings of racially linked fate. In this analysis I also consider education, ethnicity, double consciousness, and, in chapter V political ideology and religion to offer another perspective for understanding the ideological foundations of racialized conservatism. I found that those who identify as Black and or African American/Black American are more likely to subscribe to racially linked fate regardless of level of education. Although scholars have shown that educational attainment makes individuals more politically informed and engaged (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), education is not a statistically significant determinant of linked racial fate when other factors related to linked racial fate are controlled for. Education may make respondents more aware of their duty to other Black Americans, but increased education does not result in increased linked racial fate. A subscription to racially linked fate only requires Black Americans not to reject the prevailing narratives of “authentic” or typical Black political behaviors. Therefore, Blacks who have less education may be just as likely to embrace racially linked fate as members of the Talented Tenth as indicated in Tables 4.4 and 4.9.

Linked racial fate manifests in the dimension of conservatism among Blacks, which includes several characteristics such as: Black solidarity, Black autonomy, Black identity, Black Nationalism, Black consciousness, and Black separation (Hoston 2009, 721). All of these
concepts are learned and “address the belief that individual Blacks share a common fate with a larger black group and that the welfare of the larger group coincides with the welfare of the individual” (Dawson et al 1990). Both non-Talented Tenth members and members of the Talented Tenth develop this unique dimension of conservatism in similar fashions, but the way in which they articulate it is different. This was observed when comparing responses from the four Talented Tenth focus groups to the two control groups, which included those who were not college educated.

When asked about conservatism among Blacks phrased using Black consciousness language, Randy, a factory worker and high school graduate stated:

When I think about [Black consciousness] I think about Malcolm X, Minister Farrakhan, early Al Sharpton, and to some degree Martin Luther King.

Another control group member, Patricia, responded to the same question about the meaning of conservatism among Blacks, again using Black consciousness language saying:

I think it means that we should be working together to uplift and move forward. We need to live in communities together and be able to help and work and live amongst each other.

Although many of the responses in the control group were often less detailed and expressive when compared to the four focus groups, respondents in the control groups were able to articulate what conservatism among Blacks meant to them. Many times, their expression of this ideological dimension entailed their identification of Black political leaders and what those leaders represented as well as the basic ideas of Black American solidarity.

Linked racial fate is only one way to measure Black American sociopolitical attitudes, yet it is important in shaping the attitudes of Blacks and influencing their behavior (Bledsoe et al 1995). I use the concepts of linked racial fate and Black solidarity to better understand how
Black Americans develop both conservatism among Blacks and double consciousness, because they are arguably the simplest expressions of a racial feeling (Bracey et al 1970). Double consciousness, in general, does not necessarily have ideological implications beyond the desire to have members of the race organize themselves on the basis of their common racialized experience and ultimately overcome oppression and white supremacy by creating and supporting their own institutions. Through focus group discussions, I found that double consciousness, Black solidarity, and conservatism among Blacks are experienced in a unique way. Often, double consciousness, Black solidarity, and conservatism are not explicitly taught, but are learned through interacting with and discussing political issues with other Blacks. Double consciousness and conservatism among Blacks are arguably conceptualized through messages and conversations about racialized experiences. By participating in these types of conversations many Black Americans begin to develop a positive racial identity and solidarity with other Blacks, particularly in the face of racial bias and adversity (Demo and Hughes 1990; Sanders Thompson 1994).

Members of the Talented Tenth do not have a greater sense of double consciousness, Black solidarity or conservatism than other Black Americans. However, as a result of college education, they arguably have greater opportunities to develop Black solidarity and conservatism through in-group and out-group experiences. Although empirical literature on determinants of linked racial fate and double consciousness among Black American adults is limited, this chapter illustrates that the interpersonal relationships between family and friends, education, and linked racial fate are important for understanding the Talented Tenth and later their unique brand of conservatism.
This chapter helped illustrate that the Talented Tenth are not much different from other Black Americans in their feelings of connectedness or expression of double consciousness or linked racial fate. This chapter reflects W.E.B. Du Bois’s assumption that with knowledge, “sacrifice would automatically follow” (Lewis 1995). By the 1930s, Du Bois realized that the idea of the Talented Tenth would not manifest in the way he anticipated. Du Bois did not anticipate that “selfishness [was] even more natural than sacrifice” (Lewis 1995). Arguably, members of the Talented Tenth are selfish, but in order to successfully pursue higher education, one must be selfish, at least in their use of time and resources. What sets the Talented Tenth apart from other Black Americans is their expansive social networks and experiences with non-Blacks, which have the potential to decrease their feelings of racially linked fate and Black solidarity. The “selfishness” that Du Bois discussed in the 1930s increased exponentially with social integration and greater alternatives for Black Americans (Shelby 2005, 130). Interestingly, no matter how well members of the Talented Tenth become integrated into white or mainstream society, it would be “irrational for Blacks to unilaterally abandon group solidarity” (133).

As echoed in the focus groups, members of the Talented Tenth do not accept “color blindness” theory. Instead they try to ensure that the interests of other Blacks are met, even if other Blacks don’t agree with their methods. W.E.B. Du Bois’s original assertions about the Talented Tenth were correct; he failed, however, to differentiate between their obligation to help other Black Americans and their altruistic choice to help them. Discussions with members of the Talented Tenth illustrate that they are committed to serving the Black American community and even support traditional Black American political philosophies and ideologies such as conservatism among Blacks. Members of the Talented Tenth have been able to renegotiate these philosophies and ideologies as a result of their educational and social experiences, which
influence the way in which they interpret traditional Black American philosophies and ideologies specifically conservatism. In the next chapter, I will explore the impact of religious theology, income, and racialized experiences on conservatism among Black Americans. I make clear distinctions between Black conservatives and conservatism among African Americans utilizing focus group conversations about Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and Justice Clarence Thomas.
Chapter IV References


CHAPTER V. THE QUEST OF THE SILVER FLEECE: CONSERVATISM AMONG TALENTED TENTH MEMBERS

The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery.
- W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America

Background

In 1911, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote his first fictional romance novel, The Quest of the Silver Fleece. Du Bois introduces readers to Zora Cresswell, a unique character that is able to transcend many of the impermeable barriers of the white, patriarchal oppression of the cotton industry that economically raped and separated the families of the fictional community of Tooms County, Alabama. Zora criticizes the racist paternalism of society, in both demonstrative and subtle ways. This novel has feminist underpinnings, which are not unique to Du Bois’s works or political philosophy, yet his explicit feminism is often oversimplified by Du Boisian feminists. The feminism which is promoted and portrayed in Du Bois’s work focuses on community empowerment through the restoration and preservation of the feminine agents who challenge patriarchal societies. Du Bois writes, “Out of protection of womanhood as a central thought, she must build ramparts against cruelty, poverty and crime” (359). This protection was seen to come through the “subsistent” community, within the Swamp of Tooms County, which was equipped with a farm, church, school, and housing.

It is the protection provided by these community “institutions” that amend “the quest of the silver fleece” from solely the monetary advantage provided by cotton to also include a proverbial “baptizing” through education. Du Bois presents a transition in the characters’ development, that is similar to the development of Black American political philosophy from Washingtonian to Du Bosian.
*The Quest of the Silver Fleece* draws its title from the Greek mythological story of Jason and the Argonauts’ quest for the Golden Fleece. In the mythological story, the fleece is a symbol of authority and kingship (Smith 2013). In the tale of Jason and the Argonauts, the witch, Medea, was the one who possessed the Fleece, while in Du Bois’s novel, whites controlled resources, power, and cotton. *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* allowed Du Bois to use themes of community, race, education, religion, and political philosophy within the context of literary prose: a juxtaposition of literature and social activism. Using the character of Zora as an archetype for Blacks who attain education, Du Bois illustrates that upon her return to Alabama from New York, Zora began to “establish an economic community oriented to cotton production and designed to challenge the white power structure of the area” (DuBoisopedia). Du Bois essentially stresses three things in *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*: 1) the importance of women in the struggle for Black rights, 2) how the Black American sense of personal integrity shouldn’t be at all affected by the often mercenary partisan politics of the country and 3) how education could be used to actualize social progress for Blacks. Despite being written in the early part of the 20th century, the themes represented in Du Bois’s first literary work are relevant in the 21st century: a time in which even with the election of an African American president, the social and economic benefits from obtaining the “silver fleece” seems elusive.

**The Talented Tenth in the Civil Rights Era and Beyond**

The historical significance of the election of Barack Obama, the “African American senator from Illinois” as the President of the United States, was felt internationally. Despite the significance of his election, Barack Obama did not usher in a new wave of Black politics, for members of the Talented Tenth had already begun to challenge the Black American political system in the 20th century. Arguably, the latest articulation of Black political thought and the
“Black political agenda” began to shift in the early years following the Civil Rights Era. It was at this time that recent Black college graduates began to enter into politics in large numbers. The post-Civil Rights Era gave rise to a Black political agenda and a manifestation of conservatism among Blacks that was less about protest and Black power, and more about supporting a diverse pool of moderate Black American candidates with Ivy League educations and with a less racialized political style who were becoming representatives of Black American politics. This new cohort of Black elected officials was extremely diverse, both stylistically and politically (Gillespie 2010), and different from their Civil Rights Era brothers and sisters, which raises new questions about the study of Black politics and African American political philosophy in the 21st century.

The post-Civil Rights Era’s Black elected officials fit into two major categories: modern moderate Blacks and what Andrea Gillespie refers to as “Ivy League Upstarts.” Of course, Black American political candidates and leaders fit into a myriad of other categories or typologies, as a result of their ages, regions, religions, et cetera but for the purposes of this discussion modern moderate Blacks and “Ivy League Upstarts” are most important. Demographic information on modern moderate Blacks and “Ivy League Upstarts” indicates that members of both groups tend to be highly educated, graduating with advanced degrees from prestigious PWIs (Gillespie 2010, 24). Therefore, modern moderate Blacks and “Ivy League Upstarts” as well as the “Old Guard” Black politicians are all members of the Talented Tenth. As candidates these Talented Tenth members “often run on good government platforms, in response to what they perceive to be failures of previous administrations to deliver goods and services effectively to their communities. When they get elected to office, they are expected to produce results immediately” (Gillespie 25). By examining these groups, I am able to better understand the Talented Tenth as
elected officials, as voters, and, arguably, as the standard bearers of Washington’s conservative accommodation as discussed in Chapter III.

When W.E.B. Du Bois criticized the Talented Tenth’s level of commitment to Black American causes, he was expressing his disapproval of acceptance of Washingtonian tactics. However, before his death, Du Bois began to see members of the Talented Tenth accept a more confrontational style, which they used during the Civil Rights Movement. Although Du Bois was not involved in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, as he had become increasingly involved in more international African Diasporic affairs, early Civil Rights leaders such as Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph were inspired by Du Bois’s earlier philosophy. The Civil Rights Movement provided a great opportunity for members of the Talented Tenth to be involved in helping Black Americans gain access to the electoral and, later, legislative arenas. Despite its adult leadership, the Civil Rights Movement was “won” by Black college students: future Talented Tenth members who were confrontational, when the adult leadership was not. Organizations such as the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) organized freedom rides, marches, sit-ins and other activities to agitate and confront institutional racism early on during the movement, and then, under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael, moved more towards Black power and pan-Africanism, reflecting the conservatism of Marcus Garvey.

The Talented Tenth as Elected Officials in a Desegregated Society

Many focus group participants and survey respondents came of age during or just before the aforementioned Black power era. As a result, many of the identified members of the Talented Tenth have either participated in or experienced politics in a deracialized manner. This

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13 Du Bois’s career extended more than 75 years; While Randolph was inspired by Du Bois’s later socialist philosophies, Rustin was inspired by Du Bois’s early NAACP affiliation.
deracialization of politics does not mean that these Black Americans have accepted a “post-racial” political philosophy or that their racial linkedness to other Blacks has diminished. Instead, the once polarizing effects of race-specific issues have been replaced with a more “mainstream” message absent of a pro-Black rhetoric and often accused by some Black as too “accommodating.” This “mainstream” message is often criticized as being too moderate by Black Americans who are more Du Boisan or Garveyist in their conservatism. Despite articulating or supporting a more “mainstream” political message, many salient political issues have racial implications that members of the Talented Tenth cannot deny. This holds true for even elected officials who are also members of the Talented Tenth.

As elected officials and members of various political constituencies, members of the Talented Tenth represent various demographics and subgroups within the African American community. Despite their connection to other sociocultural and political groups that may not fit the “conventional” Black sociocultural or political model, members of the Talented Tenth remain linked to the African American community. Even Black Americans who have high levels of income, reside in white neighborhoods, and attend majority white churches, for example, are still linked to the Black community in some way. One way to explain this racial linkedness despite social advancements is income inequality. Despite having high levels of education, members of the Talented Tenth do not always receive as much compensation as similarly educated whites, arguably as a result of their race. In a 1964 study, Paul Siegel found that when a Black American man and a white man have the same job title and qualifications that the Black American man is paid approximately $7,542 less ($1,000 adjusted for annual inflation) annually, than the white man. Although Siegel’s research is almost 50 years old, in 2013 disparities in income continue to exist. In 2013, white men earned $8,892 more annually than Black men and $13,728 more than
Not only do income disparities continue to exist in the 21st century, but disparities in access to jobs also persist; Black men may not have the same access to certain jobs as whites. Siegel’s study was conducted in 1964, a time when Black students began enrolling in colleges and universities, specifically PWIs, in significant numbers. At that time, Siegel found that the wage differential between Black American and white men is actually amplified with increasing education, even within the same occupations. For example, Black American men must earn two educational levels higher than white men employed in the same position in order to earn the same wage or salary (O’Sullivan et al 2014). Although education significantly closes the wage gap and increases Black American earning potential, the gap still exists. Also in the 1960s, Walter Fogel (1966) used 1960 census data to show that a given educational attainment has less income value for disadvantaged minority groups than for whites. Fogel’s goal was to show the effects of educational attainment on the economic welfare of specific minority groups. Fogel finds support for his proposition that market discrimination is directly relatable to the observable phenotypical differences between whites and disadvantage minority groups.

Siegel and Fogel’s research from the 1960’s is employed because they address the issues of systemic and institutional racism. Most importantly, Siegel and Fogel’s works were written during desegregation, showcasing the undertone of optimism. Sadly, fifty years after desegregation, income disparities between races as well as genders continue to persist (Pew Research 2011). According to the Pew report, since the 1960s, the difference in household
income between Black Americans and whites increased from $19,000 to $27,000\textsuperscript{14}, meaning that Black households on average earn just 59\% of their white counterparts. According to an Urban Institute’s report (2012), Black Americans earned 65\% of what whites earned in the early 2000s, but the recession destroyed those gains. The optimism of desegregation did not account for systematic inequality and the unintended consequences of unilateral integration. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (United States Department of Labor) latest report, the median weekly\textsuperscript{15} earnings for persons over 25 earning a full time wage or are salaried with at least a bachelor’s degree is $934 for Blacks and $1,144 for all others (Table 5.1).

\textbf{TABLE 5.1}

\textit{Weekly Earnings among Full-Time Workers by Race}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median Weekly Earnings</th>
<th>Black Only</th>
<th>Non-Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 25 Years and Over</td>
<td>$638</td>
<td>$782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>$426</td>
<td>$444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School, No College</td>
<td>$532</td>
<td>$626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College or Associates</td>
<td>$614</td>
<td>$734</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree

| Bachelor’s degree and Higher | $934 | $1,144 |
| Bachelor’s Degree Only      | $974 | $1,038 |
| Advanced Degree             | $1,065 | $1,351 |


\textsuperscript{14} Controlling for inflation

\textsuperscript{15} Median earnings are typically calculated on a monthly or annual basis. By including weekly earnings, those who are not salaried or are unemployed year-round are included in this evaluation.
Income Disparities Experienced by the Talented Tenth

There are even income disparities between races among members of Congress. The salary for members of the 113th Congress is $174,000 annually (Congressional Research Service 2012)\(^6\). Interestingly, Congressional members are able to retain their private careers and business interests while serving in Congress; this is where disparities occur. According to Roll Call, an online source related to the legislative process, the fifty richest members of Congress are all white. In order to calculate salaries and overall wealth, Roll Call added up the minimum value of total assets reported by each member on their annual financial disclosure statements and subtracted their minimum liability from that value. There are no Black members of Congress (Black American or Hispanic) included on the 113th, 112th, or 111th “Richest Members of Congress” congressional session lists. Although Black members of Congress receive the same salary as other members, their limited investments and holdings may be related to issues of institutionalized racism, resulting in limited access and opportunity to institutions of wealth in this country.

In an address at the Congressional Black Forum on “Economic Empowerment in the Black Community,” Robert L. Johnson called for a renewed national discussion on the growing wealth gap, which he referred to as a “wealth gap tsunami threatening African Americans” (The RLJ Companies 2012). The former Black billionaire\(^7\) stated, “We must admit the harsh reality of a history of institutionalized racism and economic discrimination against African Americans is the primary cause of wealth disparity between Black and white Americans” and “we must be

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\(^7\) Forbes listed American television network executive Robert “Bob” Johnson as a billionaire, but dropped him after his fortune was split in his divorce. His net worth is now listed as $550 million.
willing to talk about race recognition remedies at the highest levels of government as well as between Black and white Americans.”

Many are of the opinion that Black Americans with high levels of education also have high income, making them members of the Black economic and even social elite. However, as a result of income disparity and disparities in professions, having a high level of education does not always yield high income for Blacks. Many Talented Tenth members have earned incomes that are lower than the incomes of whites with similar levels of educational attainment. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics illustrates the education statistics of Blacks. Descriptively, Figure 5.1 shows that most Blacks have at least a high school diploma, but what does this mean in relation to income and wealth? Citing a Brandeis University study Robert Johnson further stated, “The indisputable facts point out that middle income whites have far more wealth than even some high income African Americans. Equally disturbing, educational success achieved by many African Americans has not lead to racial wealth equality. To change this reality, we have to increase access to capital (2012).”

![FIGURE 5.1](image-url)

**National Levels of Education among Black Americans**

- Bachelors degree and Higher Earned 28%
- High School Diploma, No College Earned 32%
- Some College or at least Associates Earned...
- No High School Diploma Earned 7%

The preliminary survey I administered illustrated that many of those I surveyed were educators, especially the women. The women surveyed, while Talented Tenth members, were not the highest paid professionals in society per their own admission, although they are often regarded in Black literature as some of the Black community’s most important grass root advocates (Dandridge 2004, 69). Interestingly, according to a 2012 census report (American Community Survey Brief), education was the second most popular bachelor’s degree major, with 8 million people regardless of race holding that degree. The median salary for educators with a bachelor’s degree is $44,000, while the median for an educator with an advanced degree is $58,000 (American Community Survey Brief). As a result of the significant number of survey respondents who stated that they were educators, this is an example of how career choice can contribute to lower average income levels among even among the college educated.

Conservatism among Blacks: The Influence of Education

In regards to education W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, “No more critical situation ever faced the Negroes of America than that of today- not in 1830, nor in 1861, nor in 1867. More than ever the appeal of the Negro for elementary justice falls on deaf ears. Three-fourths of us are disenfranchised; yet no writer on democratic reform says a word about Negroes” (Sundquist 1996, 431). According to Ira Katznelson (2005), Du Bois had written the above statement in 1935, a time of great achievement for President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal (ix). African Americans began to leave “the party of Lincoln” for Roosevelt’s party, the one which allowed Americans to band together in industrial unions and developed Social Security. Du Bois further wrote:

18 The survey did not include a question about income as a result of the income disparities between races. Since the focus of this research was African Americans, and only 5 white American completed surveys there was no way to make an income comparison.
Negro children are systematically denied education; when the National Educational Association asks for federal aid to education it permits discrimination to be perpetuated by the present local authorities. Once or twice a month Negros convicted of no crime are openly and publically lynched, and even burned; yet a National Crime Convention is brought to perfunctory and unwilling notice of this only by mass picketing and all but illegal agitation. When a man with every qualification is refused a position simply because his great-grandfather was Black there is not a ripple of comment or protest.

The juxtaposition of the policy advancement of the 1930s and Du Bois’s “mordant appraisal of the pervasiveness of racism at the height of the New Deal” (Katznelson x) challenges the conventional understanding of practical attempts at disparity reduction especially in public education. Arguably, when policy does not specifically address race or racial inequality as Du Bois advocated, disparities continue to persist between Blacks and whites. Examples of this are prevalent in today’s public education sector, making access to quality education one of the greatest civil rights issues of the 21st century. Du Bois’s response to Roosevelt’s New Deal mirrors Black Americans criticism of President Barack Obama, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Formal education may not result in Talented Tenth members acquiring the same compensation as their white counterparts, but formal education has other effects on members of the Talented Tenth. The theoretical framework presented by Frederick D. Weil (1985), shows that the effects of formal education on liberal values are not universal. Earlier research illustrated that there was a positive relationship between higher levels of educational attainment and social and political liberalism, especially related to tolerance (Stouffer 1955; Davis 1975; Nunn 1978). However, the impact of race of the respondent was not included in these earlier studies. The race of the respondent is important to the relationship between education and liberal attitudes because race influences educational attainment and the motivation for receiving an education. The effect of race on education operates differently for Blacks than for whites and these differences can
often be traced back two or three generations. Whereas race is not an educational hindrance for whites, for Blacks it often results in having to overcome numerous obstacles related to widespread discrimination in housing, education, and employment that Black student’s grandparents faced (Jencks and Phillips 1998). Having to overcome the aforementioned obstacles may contribute to the development and articulation of social and political ideologies.

There is little to no research that specifically highlights the effects of education on political ideology for Black Americans. Yet a cursory review of the behavior of Talented Tenth members who became Black American political leaders illustrates that their commitment to education and Black American causes resulted in a message of personal responsibility calling upon Black Americans to become involved in improving their lives. One may expect that because higher education should result in higher income, members of the Talented Tenth may subscribe to at least fiscally conservative values in order to protect their financial interests. But because Talented Tenth members are not guaranteed to receive higher income or compensation that reflects their level of education attained, these fiscally conservative values may not manifest.

Also, the impact of race (and in some cases religion) is important to the discussion on how members of the Talented Tenth frame their social interests, therefore rendering it unlikely that income alone explains the fiscal ideologies of the Talented Tenth. Black Americans tend to be fiscally moderate as illustrated in their opposition to higher taxes (Parkinson 2010), and fiscally liberal when the policy specifically results in their socioeconomic disparities being diminished (Shelton and Wilson 2006; Wilson 2000 and 2001). Opposition to higher tax rates stands in contrast with Black American support for social or government programs which require a sufficient tax base in order to operate. But as one survey respondent stated, “(We) can’t afford to pay high taxes.”
Understanding Social Conservatism: Religion and the Talented Tenth

Given the vast amount of literature and discussion that generally groups Black politics into two time periods, pre- Civil Rights Era and post-Civil Right Era, the connection to the Black religious experience cannot be lost. The connection between the Black religious experience and the struggle for civil rights, results in an understanding of the world and politics that is “a precipitate of its own culture, developed from and in response to its own experience” (Lincoln 1999, xxi). Of particular interest is the role of Black American religiosity in shaping the nonviolent protests, boycotts, and sit-ins of the 1950s and 1960s. The message of nonviolence, advocated by many clergy members of various faiths, was guided by the notion that God was on the side of oppressed people. God’s support of oppressed people was a message that both Christians and non-Christians alike could rally around. The God of the oppressed, who guided the Civil Rights Movement, symbolized progress towards an earthly reward for Black Christians. For many non-Christians, the chants, songs, and marches mobilized them to fight for civil rights, but not as a result of God’s promises; for them the Civil Rights Movement was a secularized “religious” experience (Jewish Women’s Archive).

Nonviolence was not the only option for African American Christians. According to Allison Calhoun-Brown (2000), civil rights activist Hosea Williams poignantly expressed this sentiment by stating, "Nonviolence as a way of life was just as foreign to Blacks as flying a space capsule would be to a roach” and as E. Franklin Frazier commented concerning the Civil Rights Movement that the ideas of Gandhi had "nothing in common with the social heritage of the Negro" (172). The message of nonviolence was preached to Black Americans by clergy and community leaders, ultimately encouraging them to join the nonviolent movement, using the

Morris (1992) explained that the development of this kind of "oppositional consciousness" is an important component in political mobilization. Many of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement attempted to draw upon this religiously based oppositional consciousness by referencing biblical stories that reflected God's willingness to work for the benefit of the oppressed…

The ideas underlying nonviolent action, particularly the notion of the "Beloved Community," have often been given little attention. This is probably because most researchers have taken the relationships among nonviolent direct action, Black Christianity, and the Black church as a given. To be sure, organizations like the SCLC worked hard in churches to make political activism an expression of practical Christianity, but the fact that many ministries refused to become involved in supporting nonviolent protests for the cause of civil rights demonstrates that the translation of Black Christianity through Black churches into a nonviolent political movement was by no means automatic. Even Martin Luther King Jr. was critical of the involvement of his fellow clergy members in movement politics. He charged them with being both apathetic and otherworldly.

Seemingly, religion as well as pre- and post- Civil Rights Movement experiences have had a great influence on the Talented Tenth’s ideological formation. During one particular focus group session, one hour and fifteen minutes of an hour and forty-five minute session was spent connecting the themes of political philosophy, the role of government, the Black American experience, and participants’ individual ideologies to their religious experiences. The direction of the discussion and the amount of time spent on it illustrates the importance of religion on informing the political lives of Talented Tenth members. The Talented Tenth’s religious experiences are often rooted in their cultural and racial experiences in the United States. Since the antebellum period, when slave owners juxtaposed religion and white supremacy, the Black American religious experience has affected the socialization and ideological formation for Blacks in America.
Although many enslaved people practiced the Christianity of their oppressors, a significant proportion of enslaved peoples practiced Islam prior to their capture (Diouf 1998). Sylviane Diouf writes, “There is ample evidence that the Muslims actively used their cultural and social background and the formation they had received in Africa as tools to improve their condition in the Americas.” Early Africans in the Americas used both Christianity and Islam as tools to express communal solidarity and create a secret religious language expressed through the use of Negro spirituals (Christianity) or Arabic language (Islam) in order to plan escapes and revolts; this represents their earliest use of religion to express their political agency. As a result, religion and politics have always been inextricably linked for Black Americans.

Communal religious participation is illustrative of one of the ways in which linked racial fate is fostered within the Talented Tenth’s daily lives. Focus group attendee Laura, a former university department chair, discussed the communal and community focus of Black American religious participation. Laura said:

If we take a look at spirituality in the traditional African American denominations we’ll see that they have historically been in the urban centers, in the cities. I’m American Baptist; there are tons of American Baptist churches here in the town of Pittsford. I have always, since I set foot in Rochester attended Mount Olivet in the city and made sure that my children attended that church. We commuted. Most of my church, I’d say 80 percentage of the people don’t live in the neighborhood, but they communicate to the church. So there’s something about the historical significance and I remember when my kids were little they used to ask me. “Why can’t we go to that Baptist church here, why can’t we go to that Baptist church there?” And I’m like, “I don’t think so.” But the point is when I go to worship at First Baptist Church on Clover Street [in the town of Pittsford], which I do, it’s a very different experience. When I go to white Baptist churches the liturgy is even different, the hymns are different. I’m saying it’s not a matter of convenience. It’s something that’s intangible, that sense of community whether it’s contrived or not we all drive into the city to get that experience. All I know is that I have to drive into the city to get that feeling. I’m not going to get it where I live.
In general, conservative Black American philosophers have been critical of “white Christianity,” believing that racism had ruined the true intentions of Christianity. For example, Du Bois lamented that white Europeans and Americans had “twisted” the “high, ethical dream of a young Jew … beyond recognition to any end that Europe wanted. If that end was murder, the ‘Son of God went forth to war!’ If that end was slavery, God thundered, ‘Cursed be Canaan,’ and Paul echoed, ‘Servants obey your masters!’ If poverty was widespread and seemingly inevitable, Christ was poor and alms praiseworthy!’ (1969 [1940])” To Du Bois, white American Christianity seemed to be little more than a tool used for economic and social oppression. While challenging “white Christianity,” Du Bois, and to a greater extent, Garvey with his contributions to the development of the Rastafarian Movement, both saw Black churches as the one institution in which Black Americans were in control and could help combat social, economic, and political problems. Unlike Du Bois’s NAACP, Garvey’s UNIA blended Black Nationalism with Christianity so that Black Americans could, “view God through their own spectacles.” Although many modern Black churches may not subscribe to Black Nationalism, many Black American churches are rooted in the Black experience and Black culture even in an era where explicit racialized messages are seemingly absent from Black leadership.

Laura went on to say:

I think the very thing that binds us as African Americans and what binds us spiritually as Christians is also divisive just in the same way it is for white folks. We need to have more frank discussions about things like sexual choice, pre-marital sex, like abortion, and the LGBT community. I know in the Baptist church, in the Baptist tradition that I grew up in those things had a strict spiritual interpretation. I grew up in a Bible thumping, old-school, burn in hell, hell is real and you know the embers are going to be on top of you kind of background. We didn’t talk about it, we just didn’t talk about it. When I was growing up if a girl got pregnant she just “disappeared.” The other issue is women in the ministry, that’s a huge one. I think those are issues that we need to talk about. I know in the Black community it is disrespectful to talk about certain topics, certain topics are taboo. I think there’s an anxiety.
In spite of secularization theory, which posits that as societies progress they will become less religious (Sommerville 1998), large percentages of Black Americans continue to associate with religious/faith based communities. According to a Pew Poll (Religious Landscape Survey 2008), Black Americans (of various ethnicities and nationalities) are more likely than whites and members of other ethnic groups to report a formal religious affiliation. Even among those Blacks who didn't select a particular religion on the Pew survey, three out of four, or 12% of all Black respondents identified as "religious unaffiliated"; the “religious unaffiliated” category indicates that those who did not choose a denomination but said that religion was either somewhat or very important in their lives. Although some Blacks are religiously unaffiliated, overall Blacks are still more likely to be religious than the overall population, one third of which is not religious, and this could be attributed to the cultural nature of Black American religion; only 1 percent of Blacks identify as atheist or agnostic. About six-in-ten Black adults (59%) are affiliated with historically Black Protestant churches; only about two-in-ten are members of predominantly white evangelical (15%) or mainline (4%) Protestant churches (41).

The same Pew poll (Religious Landscape Survey 2008) also illustrates the link between education and religion. Although this link does not directly speak to the Talented Tenth’s ideological preferences, it does help provide greater insight into the Talented Tenth because both education and religion serve as major socialization agents for Americans (Brown and Gary 1991). According to the Pew poll, nearly one-in-three adults in America (31%) with less than a high school education are members of evangelical Protestant churches, while almost one-in-ten (9%) are members of historically Black Protestant churches. Although there is a correlation between Black American religious affiliation and amount of education obtained, religious affiliation does not cause or dictate educational attainment. My preliminary survey sample’s
religious breakdown is illustrated in Figure 5.2; the majority of the 234 survey respondents self-identified as Protestant, which included many who were members of Mainline Protestant and historically Black churches.

![FIGURE 5.2
Religious Affiliation of Talented Tenth Survey Sample](image)

Source: Talented Tenth Survey

According to the same Pew poll, historically Black Protestant churches are more highly represented among Black adults with a high school education or less than among Blacks with higher levels of education. For instance, among Blacks who have obtained a college degree, a little less than one-in-four (22%) belong to the evangelical tradition\(^{19}\), while only 5% belong to historically Black churches. Among Blacks who have obtained post-graduate education, the comparable figures are 16% and 3%, respectively (Pew 2008, 54-55). Among Black Protestants, members of evangelical and historically Black churches tend to have lower levels of education compared with those belonging to mainline churches. For instance, nearly six-in-ten Black

\(^{19}\) Christian groups in the U.S. are generally placed in four main traditions: Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Historically Black, and Roman Catholic. Although some Blacks are members of Evangelical Protestant churches these churches are not affiliated with the Historically Black religious tradition.
members of evangelical (56%) and historically Black (59%) churches have a high school education or less, compared with 42% among Black members of mainline churches (56).

Interestingly, Table 5.2 indicates that Talented Tenth members seemingly have the tendency to have a religious preference for something other than Mainline Protestantism or affiliation with Historically Black churches. The frequencies indicated that other than the denominations listed adjacent to Protestant (such as Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian), Talented Tenth members identify in high numbers as “Other Christian” and Catholic. “Other Christian” includes many Protestant “denominations” such as non-denominational affiliations and African American Protestant traditions, which survey respondents may not necessarily associate with mainline Protestant denominations such as C.O.G.I.C. (Church of God in Christ), Church of Christ, and other unaffiliated holiness traditions.

As shown in Table 5.2, the relationship between education and religious preference for my preliminary survey respondents is insignificant; the $p$ value is greater than the desired level of significance. Religious preference for “other Christian” includes those who are members of Protestant non-denominational, holiness, and evangelical churches. Talented Tenth members may prefer these types of Christian churches for various reasons, including these churches’ ability to incorporate Afrocentric spirituality or allow membership to control the church rather than clergy. This is explained by a focus group participant who expressed the importance of individual thinking in Christianity. In Rochester, focus group attendee Warren began by saying:

The thing that I really admire about Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey is not so much what they did, it’s their thinking. If I could think as deeply because that’s where I am right now in transforming myself, folks are taught that Jesus is out there, especially in some Baptist churches, you’ve got to qualify to get into church. You’ve got to qualify to be a part of it. You ain’t got to
qualify! I’m finally getting it in the last few years, two or three years because someone is teaching in a particular manner and being taught that it is in you. Jesus is in you and therefore if He’s in you, you can’t be somebody on Sunday and somebody different on Monday. You don’t report to the church…

Warren was interrupted by Angela, a former Chief Diversity Officer, who stated:

The reason I’m interrupting is because we started out talking about education and we were talking about the importance of education. The one thing we don’t do also is and I’m guilty of this too, but I’m doing better now at this stage of my life, is we don’t study the Bible for ourselves. Whatever somebody says up in the pulpit, if somebody says they have more religion than us then we take that… when you get into an environment and you make a commitment and you start to study and read for yourself then we begin to really pay attention to who Jesus Christ was and how He really did the outreach and how He accepted people and how… Acceptance! Black people, African American people need acceptance. We want to be affirmed by our own people.

| TABLE 5.2 | Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Religious Preference among survey Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mainline Protestant | Catholic | Historically Black/Other Christian | Spiritual, Not Affiliated | Other Non-Christian | None |
| Non-Talented Tenth (n= 36) | 81% (29) | 8% (3) | 11% (4) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |
| Talented Tenth Member (189) | 68% (129) | 10% (18) | 13% (25) | 5% (9) | 2% (4) | 2% (4) |
| All (225) | 70% (158) | 9% (21) | 13% (29) | 4% (9) | 2% (4) | 2% (4) |

Chi-square: 4.04  
*p value: 0.544*

Although Warren and Angela did not explicitly discuss the institutional Black church or their Black church experiences in terms of their educational attainment, they did speak in terms of how individuals must be able to make sense of religious teachings for themselves. The ability to read and interpret the Bible arguably requires a certain degree of intellectual skill, which may or may not be learned through basic pursuits in higher education. Although courses in exegesis
and hermeneutics are taught in seminary and some philosophy courses, the average church member may not have the expertise required to engage biblical text with intellectual authority, notwithstanding those who engage in weekly bible study classes. Interestingly, research shows that membership in institutional Black churches began to decline soon after end of the Civil Rights Era, in part because there was a shift in orientation with respect to the public mission of the church; some churches turned their efforts toward spiritual concerns, moving away from public affairs (Pinn 2013). This “deradicalization of institutional Black churches” made the religious setting less appealing to those who needed the church as an organization to help meet their political and social needs and were arguably less concerned with the spiritual and intellectual needs that the church could meet.

Interestingly, because certain races or ethnicities are drawn to specific religious denominations and practices, often times as a result of culture, there is a link between education, income, and religion (Kellstedt and Green 1993; Religious Landscape Survey 2008). When the survey further breaks down individual religious traditions into income categories, the results illustrate that Hindus and Jews report higher incomes than others. This is not surprising given their high levels of education; more than four-in-ten individual households of these groups (43% and 46%, respectively) make more than $100,000 per year. Individual households of mainline Protestants, Mormons, Buddhists and Orthodox Christians also tended to have higher income levels, with segments of each of these groups making more than $50,000 per year (Religious Landscape Survey provides salary per household). Meanwhile, other ethnic minorities who make up the majority of membership or parishioners at evangelical churches, historically Black churches, Kingdom Halls (Jehovah’s Witnesses), and mosques (Muslims) earn less than $50,000
per year (per individual). The low income of members of ethnic minority groups results, in part, from racial inequality.

**Conservatism among Blacks: Religiosity and Gender**

According to a 2012 Kaiser Foundation/Washington Post poll, African American women are among the most “steadfastly” religious groups in the United States. Only 2 percent said that being religious was not important to them at all (compared to 15% of white men), while 74% said that it was extremely important. Numerous surveys produced by the Pew Research Center’s Religion and Public Life Project have touted the decline of American religiosity within the past decade and yet, in an era of economic depression for the African American community, the need to be devout or church-ed-up has not diminished for most Black American women, despite the often patriarchal, heterosexist orientation of the institutional Black Church. One of the Rochester focus group sessions was held in the midst of the 2013 government spending shutdown. In response to the question “How do your religious views or spirituality affect how you engage in politics?” a female respondent said:

This is what I said this morning when I heard that we were going to be on a government shutdown. I said, “Jesus, it’s not a problem because the economy where you are is 100% so I’m going to look at something higher than just this plane [heaven].” If the government is shutting down here [on earth] I know one thing to be true, it has not shut down heaven.

Another female respondent answered that aforementioned question by saying: [My politics] makes me uncomfortable in a church that doesn’t allow women in the pulpit. I don’t think I’d be at home in a church that didn’t espouse women in ministry, that’s just me personally. I know there are some here that don’t believe that women have a place in the pulpit and I am just not willing to support that.

While the former response is illustrative of the “otherworldly” theology that has pervaded much of Black church culture, the latter response echoes womanist theology created by Black
women in the 1970s/1980s (Delores Williams, Alice Walker, Katie Cannon, et cetera).

Womanist theology was a politicized response of Black women to Black theology’s inherent sexism in the church and in Black politics (Grant 1989). It is impossible to not discuss sexism in both the church and politics, for they were often one and the same. Discussions about Talented Tenth members can be better understood by including discussions about sexism. For this reason, I include discussion on the life and politics of activist Ella Baker believing her life’s trajectory is necessary for better understanding sexism, and to a lesser degree, religion as it relates to members of the Talented Tenth; Baker’s politics challenged Du Bois’s original conception of the Talented Tenth.

**Ella Baker- Black Feminism, Womanist Theology, and Conservatism**

According to Pascal Robert (2013), Ella Baker had a method of organizing that was both effective and revolutionary, and that completely dismissed the traditional paradigm of leadership that had plagued the Black community from its earliest history. Robert argues that this paradigm stems mostly from the institutional Black church: charismatic masculine leadership based on oratory and exhibitionism. He argues that Baker believed in empowering the most common person, whether a sharecropper, teenager, or “illiterate vagrant,” with skills to make demands on the political establishment. Robert further states that Baker believed that “people did not need fancy leaders with degrees and pedigree to tell them what was best for them. She believed in giving people the power to choose their direction and make demands, and put pressure on institutions without depending on big shots with fancy suits” (Robert 2013). Robert cites Barbara Ransby’s *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (2003), in which Ransby writes:
At every opportunity [Ella] Baker reiterated the radical idea that educated elites were not the natural leaders of Black people. Critically reflecting on her work with the NAACP, she observed, "The Leadership was all from the professional class, basically. I think these are the factors that have kept it [the NAACP] from moving to a more militant position."

Moreover, Ella Baker was very critical of the hotshot Black preachers who seemed to mesmerize their audiences with soaring oratory, then leave and expect others to implement an agenda. At one point Ella Baker asked Dr. King directly “why he allowed such hero worship, and he responded simply, that it was what people wanted. This answer did not satisfy Baker in the least.”

Baker described [Dr. King] as a pampered member of Atlanta’s Black elite who had the mantle of leadership handed to him rather than having had to earn it, a member of a coddled “silver spoon brigade.” He worse silk suits and spoke with a silver tongue.

Ella Baker not only offers a womanist approach to understanding Black American politics and the institutional Black church, but her political ideology is also an amalgam of the conservative philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey. In “The Grassroots Political Philosophy of Ella Baker: Oakland, California Applicability” author K. Tutashinda (2010) argues that:

Ella Baker’s main focus was the mobilization, organization and empowerment of the grassroots, the masses. Although influenced significantly by the socialism of Max Yeargan, the early anarchist philosophy of George Schyler and Marxist literature she read in the thirties, Baker’s grassroots focus originated more from her communal–like upbringing in rural North Carolina, and her closeness to her grandparents’ slave heritage. Through her mother, she inherited a sense of service and dedication that combined the organizational skill of the Black Baptist Missionary Movement with the intellectual urgency of W.E.B. Dubois’s talented tenth philosophy (26).

Ella Baker’s socialization through her community, church, and school gave her a perspective that was grounded in activism and economic equality. I argue that any discussion or research on Black economic growth should include the influence of religion or the institutional Black church. Some scholars have found that economic growth depends on the extent of believing relative to belonging to certain groups, but scholars have not highlighted how affiliation with a religious group, specifically, impacts economic growth (Barro and McCleary...
Robert Barro and Rachel McCleary’s data revealed that economic development is associated with less religiosity, measured by church attendance or religious beliefs. Interestingly, Black Americans continue to be the most religious ethnic group in the United States, even in the midst of the widening wealth gap between Blacks and whites. Table 5.3 indicates that religion is important to respondents, regardless of their level of education.

TABLE 5.3
Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Importance of Religion among NBES (1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth</td>
<td>90% (846)</td>
<td>10% (89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n= 935)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth</td>
<td>87% (228)</td>
<td>13% (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(261)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>90% (1074)</td>
<td>10% (122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1196)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 2.18  
$p value: .140$  
Kendall’s tau $b$: .043 $p$ value: .169

Religion as Black Authenticity

According to the Urban League’s *State of Black America Report* (2012), as a result of the economic recession knocking Black middle class members back into poverty, the widening wealth gap, between Blacks and whites, has been coupled with the downward mobility of the Black middle class. The recession lasted from 2007 to 2009, and by 2010, the overall unemployment rate had fallen from 9.4 to 9.1 percent, while the black unemployment rate had risen from 14.7 to 16.2% (Department of Labor). In April 2010, Black male unemployment hit the highest rate since the government began keeping track in 1972, with only 56.9% of employable Black men over 20 working, compared with 68.1% of white men (Washington 2011). The widening wealth gap between Blacks and whites, coupled with the downward
mobility of the Black middle class, may amplify the role of religion in Black life, arguably because religion and religiosity thrives in the presence of socioeconomic and political turbulence (Hutchinson 2013).

Since approximately six-in-ten (59%) Black adults, regardless of level of education, are affiliated with historically Black Protestant churches commonly referred to as “the Black church,” much of the literature on religion as it relates to Black Americans is focused on the role of the institutional Black church in society. The literature on the institutional Black church focuses on the salvation of individual adherents rejecting contemporary community issues for more otherworldly experiences, a perspective that sees the work of the church as being solely involved in sacred affairs (Sewell 2001). Again, the discussion during the second focus group hosted in Rochester, New York included conversation about the role of the church in African American communities. Amir, a graduate student contributed to this discussion by saying:

I think we all have to understand who is willing to carry the burden. I’m at ease because of what my grandmother did, my mom’s mom, my dad’s mother and grandmother, what they went through in Florida, what they went through in Memphis, it wasn’t about them. They might have had their different sections, but they understood that it was about their greater good, it was about the people coming next. So what’s happening right now is that we got to say that “We’re going to carry on the burden so that we can further this work.” Fifty years into the ‘I Have a Dream’ speech and there’s a big debate about whether it was realized or not. Whatever the case may be, we have to realize that it’s not about us and we’re in this for the long haul. It’s okay if someone is in different religious denominations, that’s man made. So we’re talking about spirituality, that’s about purpose. There’s a purpose, there’s a higher being, there’s a higher power and that goes all the way back to our history [as a people]. These traditions are manmade, if we all believe in that same peace that we say that we believe in and that’s Jesus Christ, as far as Christianity we shouldn’t even be having this discussion because we should all work together and I think that’s one of the things that turn kids off to the church… I want to be a part of

---

20 This category includes the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME)Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated, the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Church of God in Christ.
something bigger than me so that’s why you get these other churches that have white pastors. I’m not downing them, but if you look at their churches they’re trying to look like heaven according to Revelations, all different types of people, races, this is bigger than that, it’s bigger than just Black church.

To Amir’s final statement Clifton added several questions about the Black experience, which is often manifested through the Black American church experience. Clifton asked:

So what happens to the authentic African American experience? Are we losing that identity? Is there an identity crisis? Are we trying to hold onto that authentic African American experience, which moving forward is not going to exist? It’s not going to exist, this world is not global. It’s not the wars; the wars are not between countries now one person can destroy a whole financial system of a country. Now it’s about nation states.

It appears as if focus group participants recognize that the role of the institutional Black church must change in the 21st century in order to remain relevant in a global society and attract young people. Participants seem to be unsure, however, how Black churches can meet these needs while remaining true to the Black experience or an authentic Black American experience.

In *Black Americans* (2000), Alphonso Pinkney illustrates that most Black denominations and Black congregations have historically chosen to avoid addressing problems facing their members and have chosen an "other-worldly" view of its role. Examples of this “other-worldly” view can be seen in pastoral rhetoric about the reward for suffering in this life, being gained in heaven; heaven is presented as life’s goal.

Essien Udosen (E.U.) Essien-Udom also discusses this “other-worldliness” in his work entitled *Black Nationalism* (1962). Essien-Udom refers to the institutional Black church as accommodating (358), choosing to focus its attention on heaven and the eternal life. Harold Wingfield (1988) further writes that the institutional Black church was strictly a place in which to engage in the religious experience; it had very little to do with confronting the problems they
faced in society. Wingfield further asserts that such an orientation caused many to conclude that the institutional Black church has an orientation toward black passivity.

Alternatively, Fredrick C. Harris’s (1994) work illustrates that religion serves as tool for mobilization for Black Americans, specifically when it comes to increase voting and collective action. Respondents seemed to echo Wingfield’s assertions about the church’s role in fostering spiritual development, as exhibited in focus group participant Heather’s response about the church’s role in salvation and evangelism. Heather stated:

The church, we are losing because I know that I go every Sunday, and my concern is that we do not have a youth population. Every year, and I’m about in tears... Raise your hand if you’re trying to get to heaven [participants begin to raise hands]. Take the children with you and do not let them go to hell. We are letting them go to hell because they are not in our pews and just like you said, here is a comment from the young people “They’re some hypocrites sitting up in there. All they do is talk about each other and I don’t want to be a part of that.” This is being said and we play church and tradition is killing us. Tradition in the Black church is killing us. You know, young people come in and we’ll say, “Oh, she’s wearing that to church?” and I’m thinking will you please save her soul, talk to her about her dress later. What we want to be able to do is come in and share Jesus Christ with the young people and I know that they don’t know Him, and they don’t want to talk about Him. So there’s a problem with us. Can I go to the Talented Tenth? What are the Talented Tenth doing about it? This is why we’re here, we are here for that greater being and I know that if today was your day I want to see Jesus in heaven. I want to do what I need to do in my calling, to tell you about Jesus and I want to point you there.

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya’s perspective is touted as the traditional perspective of the institutional Black church. They view the institutional Black church as having a “pie in the sky” attitude, which ultimately neglects the political and social concerns of parishioners or members. Lincoln and Mamiya’s perspective of the Black religious experience “advances that neither the Black church nor its clergy were used to keep African Americans in subjugation, but as a means of relief for those affected by slavery” (12). Although this perspective is arguably not the dominant scholarship on Black religion, Gary Peck (1982) argues
that “religion functioned as a vehicle of individual expression in order to meet the needs of the individual” (161). When functioning as a vehicle for expression, religion can also influence group political opinions and individual political ideology. What links Lincoln and Mamiya and Peck’s perspectives is the church’s role in meeting the spiritual needs of Black Americans as a result of their secular experiences. Although Black churches and their congregations have operated separately and distinctly from both mainstream religious organizations and white society, they did so in order to “fight the ravages of racism” (Calhoun-Brown 2000, 169).

A Case for Racialized Religion: Trinity UCC

In *After Freedom: A Cultural History of the Deep South* (1968) Hortense Powdermaker writes:

In both its secular and its religious character, [religion] serves as an antidote, a palliative, an escape by helping the Negro to endure the status quo, this institution has been a conservative force, tending to relieve and counteract the discontents that make for rebellion. At the same time, the equally vital function of maintaining the self-respect of the Negro individual is by no means a conservative one (39).

Powdermarker’s claim that the institutional Black church has been “a conservative force” is worth significant attention because for many Black Americans, the institutional Black church serves as an institution having the greatest impact on their political and cultural socialization. The uniqueness of Black American cultural and political socialization in the institutional Black church environment is clearly visible at any Black church, even mainline Protestant denominations with large Black American congregations, on Sunday morning. Such is the case at prominent Black churches, which fall somewhere between “an embrace of capitalism (democratic dreams) and advocacy of Black power nationalism” (Pinn 2003, 159). Although these churches are not nationalistic in the same way as the Nation of Islam, “recent conversations have pointed out continued attention to Black consciousness and the formation of independent
identity as the hallmark of some churches” (159). A great example of this is Trinity United Church of Christ, commonly referred to as “Trinity”, in Chicago, Illinois. Trinity made headlines during President Obama’s first run for president when remarks made by Reverend Jeremiah Wright, President Obama’s former pastor, were released to the media. The former pastor’s remarks were viewed as “racist” by some media pundits, although many of his remarks were simply pro-Black as illustrated in his earlier works (1995). His statements were simply reflective of the church’s mission, which reads as follows:

Trinity United Church of Christ has been called by God to be a congregation that is not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that does not apologize for its African roots! As a congregation of baptized believers, we are called to be agents of liberation not only for the oppressed, but for all of God’s family. We, as a church family, acknowledge, that we will, building on this affirmation of “who we are” and “whose we are,” call men, women, boys and girls to the liberating love of Jesus Christ, inviting them to become a party of the church universal, responding to Jesus’ command that we go into all the world and make disciples!

We are called out to be “chosen people” that pays no attention to socio-economic or educational backgrounds. We are made up of the highly educated and the uneducated. Our congregation is a combination of the haves and the have-nots; the economically disadvantaged, the under-class, the unemployed and the employable.

The fortunate who are among us combine forces with the less fortunate to become agents of change for God who is not pleased with America’s economic mal-distribution!

W.E.B. Du Bois indicates that the problem of the 20th century was going to be the problem of the color line. He was absolutely correct. Our job as servants of God is to address that problem and eradicate it in the name of Him who came for the whole world by calling all men, women, boys, and girls to Christ. – Trinity Church “Mission Statement”

Trinity United Church of Christ is deeply aware of and committed to the welfare of Black Americans in the United States; this is the essence of conservatism among Blacks. This contradicts much of the criticism of the institutional Black church described earlier, which states that it has a “pie in the sky” attitude. One reason that Trinity defies this criticism is that the church is affiliated with the United Church of Christ (UCC), a mainline Protestant denomination
which is not typically included in “the institutional Black Church” grouping. Historically, the UCC “places high emphasis on participation in worldwide interfaith and ecumenical efforts” (UCC website). At the national level the UCC has historically favored more liberal views on social issues such as civil, gay, women’s, and abortion rights. It is important to note here, however, that individual UCC congregations are independent in matters of doctrine and ministry and may not necessarily support the national body’s theological or moral stances: it is “an extremely pluralistic and diverse denomination” (Zikmund 1987). Black UCC congregations have been able to preserve their essential character over time. According to *Hidden Histories*, “this legacy can be summarized in four statements: They were fiercely independent; they maintained simple organizations; they upheld the centrality of Christ; and they preserved the African idiom” (20).

The history of the UCC and Trinity in Chicago is important to the discussion of religion, linked racial fate, conservatism among Blacks, and the Talented Tenth because it speaks to Black American commitment to community. The church’s membership advances a connection to the continent of Africa and the unique legacy of Black Americans in the United States beyond slavery. According to Pinn (2013), part of this process involves reading the Bible as well as interpreting socio-political and economic developments in the United States through Black American culture and the Black American experience (160). The “Black Value System” discussed on Trinity’s website outlines the various commitments of the church, which include: (1) devotion to the advancement of African Americans on the level of spiritual health (embrace of God leading to salvation and a life guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and participation in the community of the faithful as part of God’s chosen people); (2) the welfare of the collective African American community; (3) the safeguarding of African American families; (4) the
creation of educational opportunities as a means by which to counter racism; (5) offering young people tools and capacities necessary to thrive; (6) attention to nurturing the full capabilities of the individual; (7) promotion of a positive attitude toward work as well as a strong sense of self measured in terms of intentionality in all activities and respect for self in relationship to the larger community (Pinn 160).

**Conservatism among Blacks: Black Liberation Theology**

The “Black Value System” articulated by Trinity Church incorporates Black American sociopolitical and religious values with traditional Black American political philosophy and therefore speaks to the precarious situation of Blacks in the 21st century. The first few principles covered by the “Black Value System” arguably embody the church’s criticism of the emphasis placed on capitalism and individualism by secular society. Early American classical republicanism, which concerned itself with the subordination of individualism and individual self-interest to the interest of society, stands in contrast with the “Black Value System” (McClain and Tauber 2013, 13). Classical republicanism was also seen in the Republican Party (Democratic Republican Party) of Thomas Jefferson, whose principles guaranteed liberty, while ensuring that individuals could elect others to represent them. The “Black Value System” challenges classical republicanism, often viewed as “American values” by juxtaposing Black liberation theology and traditional political beliefs. American theologian, James H. Cone explains Black liberation theology in *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1986). In *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Cone provides a clear statement concerning the emergence of a new way of doing theology and a new set of responsibilities and possibilities for Christian churches interested in proving themselves relevant in the post Civil Rights Era. Cone argued that any
effort to build a new theology appropriate for addressing the needs of African Americans could not take as its starting point the perspective and assumptions of European theologians and white Americans. Cone further argued that this theology must be framed in terms of Black American need and Black American resources. Cone writes (1986):

Those who want to know who God is and what God is doing must know who Black persons are and what they are doing. This does not mean lending a helping hand to the poor and unfortunate Blacks of society. It does not mean joining the war on poverty! Such acts are sin offerings that represent a white way of assuring themselves that they are basically ‘good’ persons. Knowing God means being on the side of the oppressed, becoming one with them, and participating in the goal of liberation. We must become Black with God (65)!

It is out of Cone’s intentional effort to frame Black American theology using Black American culture and experiences that I now attempt to frame Black American conservatism in the 21st century using a new ideological dimension. In doing so, I reference Black American political experiences and traditional Black American political philosophies, rather than the European and white American political philosophers’ perspectives generally used. Again, conservatism among Black Americans does not result in concrete conservative policy preferences or support for conservative candidates as understood by using the traditional ideological dimension; rather, it shapes the perspective by which Black Americans understand policies and their implications. Because conservatism among Blacks is rooted in race and racism, but operates within a system that is often unwilling to address the implications of these experiences, the effects of these experiences are often misunderstood when using the traditional ideological dimension, which disregards the implications of race.
Empirically Explaining the Talented Tenth’s Political Ideology

First, based upon the literature on Black American religious and cultural socialization I offer the general hypothesis (hypothesis 2) that the Talented Tenth’s racialized socialization results in a variety of conservative political ideology that is rooted in Blackness. I express this hypothesis more formally as follows:

\[ H_2: \text{Members of the Talented Tenth will display higher levels of conservatism among Blacks- a dimension of ideology distinct from fiscal and moral conservatism- than non-members.} \]

I consider the racialized experiences of Blacks in the United States in order to better understand how Black Americans articulate their political ideology. These racialized experiences, when understood as a series of both indirect and direct socializing events, influence how Black Americans express their political ideology and interpret various political philosophies. For many Black Americans the cultural experiences and theological interpretations of their racialized religious experience or socialization directly affect their political and social norms. While much empirical work has been devoted to how religion affects Black political participation (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1999; McKenzie 2004), little empirical work has been devoted to how racialized religious experiences affect Black political ideology.

As a result of the racialized religious experiences having such a tremendous impact on Black socialization, I posit a third and fourth hypothesis (hypotheses 3 and 4) that:

\[ H_3: \text{Racialized ideology (conservatism among Blacks) will be associated with lower levels of support for Democrats or Democratic policy, even if average levels of support for the Democratic Party remain high.} \]

\[ H_4: \text{Due to the Talented Tenth’s religiosity/Black liberation theology, higher levels of religiosity will be associated with higher levels of conservatism among Blacks.} \]
I hypothesize that the Black religious experience influences the Talented Tenth’s political ideology and their support for the Democratic Party. While the Black religious experience often results in a socially conservative ideology as illustrated in the “Black Value System,” members of the Talented Tenth continue to articulate explicit support for policies that socially or economically benefit Black Americans. The new ideological dimension of conservatism among Blacks reflects the need for a dimension that allows for the inclusion of race in explaining Black ideological thought. An example of this includes the 2004 reelection of President George W. Bush. President Bush was reelected with the help of unusually high turnout of Black Christian Democrats; President Bush won 16% of the Black vote in Ohio, up from 9 percent in 2000 (Campbell 2007). If anyone understood that race influenced the ideological dimensions of African Americans, it was Karl Rove; President Bush’s chief political strategist. I argue that Rove recognized that even though Black American voters traditionally supported Democratic candidates, their Black cultural values, when juxtaposed with their Christian values, would yield support for President Bush and his faith-based community initiatives. Karl Rove’s 2004 strategic blueprint, which arguably drove a wedge between two Democratic constituencies-- Black church goers and supporters of gay marriage—illustrated that the Civil Rights movement was still salient for many Blacks and many also believed that being gay was a choice and not a result of genetic disposition (Moore and Slater 2007). I posit that Rove recognized the existence of this unique conservatism among Blacks as well as the traditional social conservatism among Blacks. Rove represents the challenge Republicans face in courting the Black vote; Republicans must not only recognize Black cultural and social norms, but acknowledge that racism continues to pervade the daily lives of Blacks.
Despite the Republicans’ best efforts members of the Talented Tenth were not distracted by Republican efforts to attract Black conservative Christians, knowing that Republicans would continue to ignore issues of race and racial disparities, which are arguably more salient to Black voters than moral issues. Based upon the narrative inquiry of the Talented Tenth, it is clear that even with the significant time spent discussing religion and religiosity, racial disparities and racism was of utmost importance. Therefore, understanding conservatism among Black Americans means understanding racialized religious experiences and racialized social experiences.

While race “colors” Black experiences and perspectives, the new dimension of conservatism among Blacks can be understood in contrast to Michael Dawson’s argument that education has a liberalizing effect on Blacks (1995). According to Dawson, linked racial fate is the belief that what happens to a Black individual is felt by many in the same racial group. The linked feelings can be exhibited whether the event or experience is joyous or sorrowful all because Black individuals share similar experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and overcoming in the United States, and I would add throughout the African Diaspora as well. Therefore, although Black Americans embrace various political ideologies, support diverse political candidates, and belong to various religious denominations, their experiences with race and racism ultimately brings them together. The 20th century debates between Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey, reflect this 21st century Black American experience and this new dimension of conservatism exhibited by Black Americans. By all accounts, the methods employed by Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey were all conservative in nature; they all promoted retaining traditional social intuitions controlled and defined by Blacks (Black sovereignty). Although Black Americans may not agree on the method for overcoming
systematic inequality they can agree, for the most part, that institutional racism exists and must be overcome. The new Black American ideological dimension of conservatism among Blacks, as further described in the next section, was born out of this understanding.

**Understanding the Two Sides of Black American Conservatism**

As described earlier, conservatism among Black Americans and its corresponding ideological dimension are rooted in linked racial fate (income and education disparities as well as racial oppression), cultural and religious experiences, and measured along a racialized ideological dimension (Table 1.1). The ideological dimension in which conservatism among Blacks operates includes aspects of linked racial fate and a pro-Black position. As a result, the dimension of conservatism among Blacks is differentiated from traditional conservatism. Again, conservatism among Blacks is rooted in Blackness: a racialized experience in the United States. Arguably, white Americans also live a racialized experience in the United States, although they are operating on the other side of white supremacy. I argue that Black Americans understand that their conservatism and subsequent political values operate within their Blackness. There is significant literature on Black electoral behavior and political attitudes that continues to portray a love-hate relationship with the deracialization construct, which refers to a combined rhetorical, electoral, and governance strategy in which Black candidates and even voters deemphasize “race specific issues” (McCormick and Jones 1993; Albritton et al 1996; King-Meadows 2010). Race, however, is a central issue for Talented Tenth members and non-members. Recall, when respondents were asked “With which racial, ethnic, and national characteristics, as listed below, do you most identify?” 66% of respondents answered “African American and American” and 15% responded “African American” only, while just 10% responded “American” only (figure
4.1). Black American identity is uniquely rooted in Black cultural identity as well as the American experience; therefore Black American issues, which are race specific, are also unique to the American experience.

Clearly, race “colors” religious and educational experiences and it also influences income. Therefore, it is more difficult to show how it influences political ideology, which is typically measured using moral and fiscal dimensions. The political philosophies of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey are all expressive of conservatism rooted in Blackness. Historically, Booker T. Washington is noted as a Black conservative who shaped 20th/21st century Black conservative thought. Generally, Black Republican identifiers have embraced Washington as their “linear father” (Watson 1998, 75). Despite their seemingly progressive ways, both Du Bois and Garvey are also lauded as “the preeminent Black conservatives of the last century.” When the label of “conservative” is applied to Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey, this illustrates the fluidity of the term conservatism among Blacks. Despite the differences in varieties of conservatism expressed by Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey, each man’s conservatism was rooted in their Blackness. Ultimately, conservatism among Blacks is expressed through support for voluntary and equal segregation and limited government interference in Black daily lives, Black pride, and even an opposition to the respectability politics that Black Americans often succumb to when interacting with white Americans.

Arguably, as a result of race, understanding conservatism among Blacks requires a new dimension that is separate from the traditional ideological spectrum, while allowing Blacks to maintain affiliation with the larger two party political system. Through focus group narratives and empirical evidence, I will show that the conservatism among Blacks dimension is defined by
religious experiences, which are rooted in the Black sociopolitical and cultural experience. As such, I further illustrate that my conception of conservatism among Blacks diverges vastly from what it means to be a white conservative. For example, while the literature on conservative Blacks that links Black Americans to the Republican Party and devotes significant attention to individuals such as Justice Clarence Thomas, Alan Keyes, Star Parker, and Michael Steele conceives of conservatism in the traditional sense, and likens the political thought of these figures with the political thought of prominent figures who are traditionally thought of as conservative whites, the variety of conservatism among Blacks that I describe is of a very different sort. Thomas, Keyes, Parker, and Steele may be known as Black conservatives, but they do not display high degrees of what I refer to as conservatism among Blacks. As such, discussion of their political thought is not germane to this study, with the possible exception that it can be contrasted to feelings of linked racial fate or the saliency of race.

Again, in order to distinguish Black Republican identifiers from conservative Blacks, I use Clarence Page’s (1996) assessment:

I distinguish between “Black conservatives” and “conservative Blacks.” The former is a relatively small, if high profile, movement of avowed conservatives who happen to be Black. The latter best describes the Black masses who harbor many conservative attitudes, but part company with traditional conservative party lines, especially the line that says Black people make too much of racism (194-195).

As illustrated in Table 5.4, among focus group members, both Talented Tenth members and nonmembers tended to identify as Democrats rather than Republicans, Independents, or Others. This stands in contrast to the Republican partisanship of figures such as Thomas, Keys, Parker, and Steele. A cursory look at political and social trajectories of these figures illustrates that they advocate personal responsibility of Black Americans, but are not, by their own
admission, culturally or socially connected to Black Americans as a group (Onwuachi-Willig 2004). Mark Tushnet (2003) explains these trajectories as exhibiting the tension between Black pride and a deep commitment to individualism. Based upon the most basic definition of Talented Tenth, these men and woman are all members; however because they do not feel an obligation to help uplift other Black Americans they don’t fit Du Bois’s original definition. Illustrating their lack of commitment to Black Americans are Clarence Thomas’s words at “the Fairmont Conference,” organized for Black conservatives by well-known conservative economist and social theorist Thomas Sowell in 1980. Clarence Thomas is quoted as saying, “I marched. I protested. I asked the government to help Black people… I did all those things. But it hasn’t worked. It isn’t working. And someone needs to say that” (Williams 1980).

Some might interpret Thomas’s statement to mean that new tactics must be used in order to secure Black American equality, while others may take Thomas’s statements to mean that Black leaders and their methods should be publicly criticized. The Black conservative approach advocated the latter, while the dimension of conservatism among Blacks captures employment of methods that fit with the post-Civil Rights era (such as gaining seats in the legislature and

| TABLE 5.4 Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Political Party (Party ID) |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                 | Democrat      | Independent    | Republican     | Other          |
| Non-Talented Tenth              | 71% (25)      | 23% (8)        | 6% (2)         | 0% (0)         |
| (n= 35)                         |               |                |                |                |
| Talented Tenth                  | 82% (152)     | 12% (22)       | 2.7% (5)       | 3.3% (6)       |
| (185)                           |               |                |                |                |
| All                             | 80% (177)     | 14% (30)       | 3.3% (7)       | 2.7% (6)       |
| (220)                           |               |                |                |                |
| Chi-square: 4.99                |               |                |                |                |
| p value: 0.172                  | Kendall’s tau b: .038 |                 | p value: .614  |
continued use of the courts) to garner public policy initiatives to aid in Black economic and social growth (Lowery and Marszalek 1992). According to Thomas, expanding the welfare state will not help Black people; in fact, Thomas argued that it stifles individual motivation (Jones 2013, 368). Justice Thomas has used his personal background and experiences as anecdotal evidence to “buttress” his arguments (368). By utilizing his personal experiences but situating them within individualism rather than within his membership in the larger Black community, Thomas eliminates his racial linkedness to other Black Americans as if he is the exception to the communal or community rule; however, the statements below illustrate that Thomas had early experiences that were similar to many other Blacks in the American South.

In a 1987 speech entitled, “Why Black Americans Should Look to Conservative Policies” Justice Clarence Thomas begins to explain the ordinariness of conservatism among Blacks and how it meets the social and religious needs of Blacks. Thomas said:

Many pundits have come along in recent years, who claim an understanding of why so many Blacks think right and vote left. They offer “the answer” to the problem of Blacks failing to respond favorably to conservatism. I, for one, am not certain there is such a thing as “the answer.” And, even if there is, I assure you I do not have it.

I have only my experiences and modest observations to offer. First, I may be somewhat of an oddity. I grew-up under state enforced segregation, which is as close to totalitarianism as I would like to get. My household, notwithstanding the myth fabricated by experts, was strong, stable, and conservative. In fact, it was far more conservative than many who fashion themselves conservatives today. God was central. School, discipline, hard work, and knowing right from wrong were of the highest priority. Crime, welfare, slothfulness, and alcohol were enemies. But these were not issues to be debated by keen intellectuals, bellowed about by rousing orators, or dissected by pollsters and researchers. They were a way of life; they marked the path of survival and the escape route from squalor (377).

Justice Thomas advocated for personal responsibility. While this was echoed in several of the statements made by Talented Tenth focus group respondents, personal responsibility was
framed quite differently. Respondents were asked, “What responsibility, if any, do you think that you have to the Black community given your race and educational achievements?” In contrast to Thomas, while participants advocated for personal responsibility, their language was often rooted in Black Nationalism and pride for Black people and Black community.

One focus group attendee in New Orleans answered this question by saying:

To vote, to be an informed voter. I am not interested in your conversation or your comments if you don’t have a voter registration card… and to be educated. Not just to have a card, but you’ve got to know who you’re voting for and why you’re doing it, and how it’s going to impact your community. Because if it’s not in my backyard, it’s in your grandmother’s, it’s in your church, it’s at your HBCU because all of them are in Black communities so the question is how is it going to impact your community as a whole. So you’ve got to be aware and recognize and be proactive, not reactive, that’s one problem with Black folks as a whole, we love to be reactive. We sit and we wait and when everything falls apart, now we want to fix it. Just like you’re saying, where were they with the 14 year old [charged with murder]? Why don’t we have Head Start to keep these children in school? Why don’t we have summer camps to keep them off of the streets and drugs? Why don’t we have all of these things? We can eliminate a lot of problems. Where did all of these problems start? You took prayer out of schools and you say “I’m not my brother’s keeper.” Yes, we have responsibilities and a duty to our children period and to one another. You take prayer out of schools and then you wonder why children are disobedient, you wonder why folks are confused whether they’re male or female. You’ve got all kinds of problems and everybody is looking confused as to what happened and its real simple, when you take God out of things, you’ve created a whole host of problems.

Another focus group member in New Orleans stated:

Everybody in this room is very hard working, but we are the very fortunate Black people that have managed to rise above the institutional racism that has conspired against our communities and the communities of poor people so yes we have a responsibility to vote. I met a man who said he had been exonerated from Florida’s death row, but he said that you get out of bed every day and you ask “what have I done for my people today?” And make sure that you can think of at least one thing. I live a largely selfish life and the deeper into my middle age I get I try to put that pressure on myself harder. I teach for a living and it takes up all of my time trying to keep up with their standards, but it is a good standard to have. Ask, “What I have done this day to try to change something for this community?” In the Black community, given the way that racism works in this country, something terrible is going on out there and we are, in as much as the media wrongly portrays most African Americans as criminals… It’s like for the record we saw
one young Black man shooting and I think there were eight doing beautiful triage work on the ground, really beautiful images that WDSU has of our men [referring to Mother’s Day shooting of 2013 in New Orleans]. But with that said the stereotypes are bad, but the disadvantage on which most African Americans live that say those of us who go out a little bit we damn sure better be waking up every day and making sure that we’re asking “what the heck have we done?”

Finally, a recent college graduate responded to this question by saying:

I think especially as educated Black people, our responsibility to the community is to educate them and not to just educate them by putting out flyers or putting out nice things for people to understand, but to educate them to change. I’m educating them about it but then I’m also going to challenge you to find more resources on your own as to why that is somebody you want to vote for. I’m going to challenge you to find more resources to get you into college, or to get you out of the housing system and into your own home, it’s that constant challenge. I think sometimes the 10 percent [Talented Tenth] only thinks about the 10 percent and I don’t think the 10 percent ever looks back and says “No my brother, no my sister I’m not going to give you what I have but I am going to give you the resources to get what I have and I’m going to help you along your journey instead of giving you everything.”

Although the statements from these three respondents reflect three different ways of advocating for personal responsibility, each response was rooted in holding Black community members accountable while assisting them. Du Bois’s call to the Talented Tenth was to sacrifice their own self-interests in order to improve the lives of other Black Americans. Participants expressed willingness to improve the lives of other Black Americans while maintaining their self-interests because, as Michael Dawson suggested, they saw their self-interests as those of the African American community.

Justice Thomas’s assertions that his Black American household was “far more conservative than many conservatives today, where God was central, and school and hard work were priorities.” speak to the “Black Value System” as expressed in varying degrees in the three aforementioned quotes about personal responsibility. Respondents never come out and explicitly said “I am conservative” or “I am a conservative Black,” but adherence to the “Black Value
System,” at least in part, results in support for a more conservative social program. Despite overwhelming identification with the Democratic Party in the 21st century, Black people tend to agree with many of the Republican Party’s positions on moral-cultural issues. According to Kenneth Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown (2011, 280), “the data indicate and several studies have confirmed that Black Protestants are very likely to believe that homosexuality is wrong, believe prayer in schools is right, and believe the government should protect morality in society.”

If the institutional Black Church is one of the largest and most influential intuitions in the African American community, then it is easy to see, at least for theological reasons, why traditional conservative rhetoric resonates with some Black Americans. Conservatism among Blacks diverges from this traditional conservatism, however, in how it relates to race. Black American social conservatism does not always result in support for conservative moral policies that are a function of biblical teachings or the “Black Value System” (i.e. opposition to abortion or gay marriage). Since race is not explicitly addressed by either of the two major political parties, African Americans have in many ways created their own political space to negotiate their unique political desires in both the Democratic and Republican Parties. But this does not mean that members of the Talented Tenth typically support Republican candidates.

Terri in New Orleans said the following in response to the question, “Under what circumstance would you cast your vote for a Black Republican candidate?”:

I would not vote for a Republican because I don’t trust the late 20th century post-Goldwater Republican Party. They’re nice people who keep very dangerous company. We have a social safety net they they’ve been snipping to pieces with a pair of scissors and I’m looking for the person to yank the scissors out of their hands. I do believe we might ask them to be more judicious as they chop up the net. But I’m an upper middle class person with a fancy education and I’m not going to fall through.
In New Orleans, Robert was one of the few participants to explicitly say that he was a registered Republican. He explained why he was a Republican and under what circumstances he would vote for a Black Republican candidate. Robert said:

I’m registered as a Republican, but I don’t know that I’ve ever voted Republican. I know one time I voted Republican for the President, but other than that I think that the Democratic ticket has been more in tune with those things that are important to me. I don’t think I’ve found a Black Republican candidate that says a lot about us [our issues]. It seems like they go and they adopt these different behaviors. They’re less concerned about the domestic issues going on, what’s going on right here. They’re more concerned about getting this guy’s oil or all of these other things. While we suffer they accumulate stuff.

Upon identifying himself as a Republican Robert then explained why he was a registered member of the party. He said:

I know why I signed up for that team [the Republican Party]. At the time it was like they were supporting those things that were important to me. I was going into medicine and they sort of supported some of the things that would be beneficial to that and I think some of the doctors believed that the Republicans are for them, while the Democrats are against them because to spread the wealth, to spread it out with this national health system, taking money out of their pockets directly effects them. Whereas the Republican agenda kind of makes sure that those, I don’t know how it does that for the people that are not on top, but those people on the top keep on getting benefits. It’s like when Exxon made all of that money, $10 billion in one quarter, while everybody was paying these exorbitant prices for gas, while they were just getting ungodly profits and then you look at it and say well Halliburton and Vice President Cheney, he’s not going to punish his own guys and make sure they don’t get in any trouble with the SEC…

**Ideology and Strength of Support for the Democratic Party**

Black American support for the Democratic Party is undeniable. Arguably, an unhealthy dependence on the party and its elected officials has resulted in support for a party that has not acknowledged all of the implications of racism and white supremacy. Blacks who fall towards the conservative end of the conservatism among Blacks dimension may be particularly aware of this problem (Carmines and Berkman 1994), and therefore may strongly encourage other Black
Americans to question their whole-hearted allegiance to the Democratic Party (Pinderhughes 1986; Niemi and Jennings 1991; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Dawnson 1994; Glaser 1995; Wielhouwer 2000). I examine the relationship between traditional ideological dimensions and support for Democratic candidates by comparing the strength of support that Talented Tenth members display for the Democratic Party to the strength of support displayed by non-Talented Tenth members. Strength of support is measured in columns 1, 2, and 3 using a variable that utilizes a 7-point party identification score, where higher values indicate closeness to Democrats and lower values indicate closeness to Republicans; in columns 4 and 5, a similar scale was created to match the aforementioned values. In model 6, Democratic Feeling thermometer scores serves as the dependent variable. The results are reported in Table 5.5.
**TABLE 5.5**

*Regression Model: Factors Influencing Strength of Support for Democratic Party*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>NAES (1)</th>
<th>NAES (2)</th>
<th>NAES (3)</th>
<th>NBES (4)</th>
<th>NBES (5)</th>
<th>NBES (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.068)</td>
<td>(.067)</td>
<td>(.071)</td>
<td>(.182)</td>
<td>(.203)</td>
<td>(1.818)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.010*</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-1.728**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.007)</td>
<td>(.007)</td>
<td>(.007)</td>
<td>(.050)</td>
<td>(.059)</td>
<td>(.895)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.009**</td>
<td>.010**</td>
<td>.007**</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.258**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.005)</td>
<td>(.006)</td>
<td>(.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Ideological 7-point Scale</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.240**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1 (Moral Dimension)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.216**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>-.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.046)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.083)</td>
<td>(.792)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2 (Conservatism among Blacks Dimension)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.180*</td>
<td>-1.907*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.047)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.096)</td>
<td>(.783)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3 (Fiscal Dimension)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>-.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.030)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.098)</td>
<td>(.787)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>5.953</td>
<td>6.756</td>
<td>5.820</td>
<td>5.573</td>
<td>5.553</td>
<td>70.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.123)</td>
<td>(.137)</td>
<td>(.164)</td>
<td>(.263)</td>
<td>(.292)</td>
<td>(3.219)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| R²                                      | .017     | .074     | .028     | .005     | .019     | .065     |
| N                                       | 2274     | 2243     | 2080     | 441      | 369      | 654      |

** Significant at p < .05 level   * Significant at p < .1 level

Using the traditional ideological 7-point scale (in models 1-5), I find that Black Americans’ strength of support for the Democratic Party is significantly lower among Talented Tenth, among younger and higher-income Blacks, and among those with conservative scores on the moral and ideological scales. Table 5.5 reveals that Talented Tenth membership decreases Black Americans’ strength of support for the Democratic Party (statistically significant in models 1-3 and 6). This reduction in strength of support for the Democratic Party as a result of college

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21 Strength of support for the Democratic Party as well as factors 1, 2, and 3 are coded so that higher numbers are associated with greater support or greater conservatism.
education challenges early literature, which posits that those with a college education hold more liberal opinions on controversial social issues (Stouffer 1955; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams 1978; Bobo and Licari 1989). The aforementioned literature is absent of the effects of college education on Black American political attitudes and linked racial fate. Therefore, this research, in part, fills a missing gap in the literature and may help explain why Talented Tenth members articulate some disdain for the Democratic Party (model one).

I find that age also influences support for the Democratic Party. This finding may be explained by the fact that older Black Americans were socialized during a time when the Democratic Party was explicitly advocating for policies that substantively represented their social and economic needs; therefore, support for the Democratic Party continues with older generations of Black Americans. Talented Tenth not only influences party support, but traditional political ideology as well. Traditional political ideology appears as independent variable in only one model (model 2) within Table 5.5, and this is the model where the independent variable, income, is found to be statistically significant. Therefore, it is a possibility that income, even for Black Americans, affects their support for the Democratic Party. Income is also significant in model 6, where the dependent variable is Democratic Feeling thermometer score. In model 6 income results in lower feeling thermometer scores. Running a simple regression demonstrated that income and traditional political ideology are statistically related at the $p < .001$ level (.000).

While strength of support for the Democratic Party is influenced (reduced) by Talented Tenth membership, being college educated and Black may also influence the racialized ideological dimensions. From the results in Table 5.6, I get a clear sense of how demographic
indicators influence where Blacks fall on the traditional ideological dimension as well as three racialized dimensions. Talented Tenth membership is statistically and significantly related to all ideological dimensions except for the fiscal dimension. Talented Tenth membership may not influence the fiscal dimension as a result of the income disparities that Blacks face and Black support for paying taxes to support public policy initiatives. Age is also found not to be statistically significant on the conservatism among Blacks dimension. I suspect that age is not statistically significant because arguably, conservatism among Blacks has no respect of age for it is informed by race, at birth, and a lifetime of experiences of being Black in America. Conservatism among Blacks results from a lived Black experience and therefore age does not determine placement on this dimension.

The three racialized dimensions that I created (illustrated in figures 1.1 and 1.2) more fully capture Black political thought than the traditional ideological spectrum. Each of the dimensions: moral, fiscal, and conservatism among Blacks all include variables that manifest differently for Black Americans than for whites. Certainly, the conservatism among Blacks dimension contains variables that specifically relate to Black experiences in the United States. These variables include: support for Black controlled economies, support for Black-owned stores, support for Afrocentric schools, and Blacks voting for Black candidates. Black Americans who support these variables are considered conservative on this ideological scale. As illustrated in Table 5.6, non-Talented Tenth members are more conservative on this scale than Talented Tenth members; as a result, these respondents support patronizing Black owned stores and building Black economies. Talented Tenth members may be more knowledgeable about the necessary steps involved in making Black self-sufficiency a reality; hence, it would follow that they are less likely to support these efforts without further developing these ideas. This could
also be related to the fact that non-Talented Tenth members demonstrate a greater degree of Black Nationalism, as articulated in focus groups. While the racialized nature of the conservatism among Blacks dimension is clear, the moral and fiscal dimensions are a little more racially nuanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression Model: Determinants of Location on Ideological Dimensions (NAES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at \(p < .05\) level  
* Significant at \(p < .1\) level  
\(b\) recoded so that higher numbers reflect greater religiosity

The new moral dimension includes variables such as position on abortion, position on gay marriage, feeling thermometer for gay men and lesbian women, and position on the death penalty in the case of murder. Here, Black Americans’ traditional conservatism arguably, as a result of their religiosity, influences their opposition and low thermometer scores to these variables. Black American traditional liberalism may also manifests on this dimension as a result of lived Black experiences. Additionally, those respondents with less education (non-Talented Tenth members) are more conservative on the new moral dimension. Talented Tenth members may recognize the limitations of solely looking to their religious theology to inform their moral
stances; hence, it would follow that they are less likely to be strong conservatives on moral issues. Talented Tenth members may support abortion or may be more inclined to be pro-choice. Table 5.6 illustrates that respondents become more conservative on the racialized moral dimension as their religiosity increases. This was reflected in the focus group discussions earlier in this chapter by focus group member Laura.

According to a poll performed by the Public Religion Research Institute, 67% of Black (African American and Hispanic) respondents believed that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, 57% said that there should be abortion services in their communities, and 66% said that they believed that abortion clinics are, for the most part, safe (Joffe 2013). The differences in opinions may result from their understanding of other factors that influence a woman to have an abortion. While Blacks continue to overwhelmingly (51%) believe that abortion is morally wrong, some believe that it should be legal; support for legalizing abortion increases with level of education (Jones and Cox 2012). Black support for legalized abortion may be influenced by the lower economic standing of some Blacks and Talented Tenth members recognizing the impact of lower economic standing on Black decision making. Arguably, support for abortion, as a legal option, is driven by low-income families who cannot afford more children or lack the financial resources to prevent unplanned and untenable pregnancies. The role of the economy or economic standing in reproductive issues can also be seen in support for oral contraceptives. The Public Religion Research Institute survey also found that 92% of Blacks surveyed exhibited strong support for expanding access to birth control for women who cannot afford it. In 2009, 23% of Blacks were uninsured, compared to 14% of whites; 26% of Black American women were uninsured (Finer and Zolna 2011; Jones and Cox 2012). Disparities in healthcare due to race and inaccessibility are also contributors to support for abortion. The position on abortion is
an example of how the moral dimension is an amalgam of religiosity and racialized social experiences, which are not accounted for in the traditional moral dimension, further illustrating why this new dimension is necessary.

Black self-help and control of Black economies are foundational to understanding the new fiscal dimension. Focus group respondents discussed the “unhealthy dependence” that generations of Blacks have had on whites and the government. This “unhealthy dependence” manifested in the development of a fiscal ideology, which reflects Black pride and Nationalism. The new fiscal dimension was creating using variables such as: taxes, free trade, federal funding for food stamps, and federal funding for Medicare. From Table 5.6, I find that lower income results in respondents’ fiscal conservatism. This is an example of how this new fiscal dimension is different from the traditional measure and why it is appropriate to use when studying Black Americans. Arguably, lower income results in Blacks being fiscally conservative because Blacks with lower income may believe that it will be more difficult for Blacks to achieve full economic equality; since it will be difficult for Blacks to achieve full economic equality, then they may be less supportive of government assistance and economic intervention. Table 5.6 also illustrates that younger respondents are fiscally conservative. I suspect that, generally, younger respondents are fiscally conservative given the fact that younger people are the least politically and socially developed and have limited experience paying income taxes. Younger Black respondents may be more conservative on the new dimension, but are seemingly not supportive of free trade as a result of its effects on their employment prospects; the phrase “last ones hired, first ones fired” may resonate with younger respondents.
As predicted in hypothesis 3, the three racialized ideological dimensions, including conservatism among Blacks, influence Black American strength of support for the Democratic Party (Table 5.5). More specifically, one’s strength of support for the Democratic Party decreases as their level of conservatism among Blacks increases. As I have argued previously, it is important to use racialized conceptions of ideology in order to sufficiently capture the nuances of Black political thought. While the strength of support for the Democratic Party is related to the traditional measure of ideology, such as the one used in the American National Election Study (ANES), I argue that the measure consists of elements of the three ideological dimensions rooted in Blackness. It is possible that respondents who display a high degree of conservatism among Blacks are less supportive of the Democratic Party while not necessarily shifting towards moral or fiscal conservatism on the traditional ideological spectrum. The strength of support for the Democratic Party may also be tied to an ideological shift in the party (Bartels 2000), but, again, this shift is not towards moral or fiscal conservatism, but rather the new dimension of conservatism among Blacks. Another significant finding is that income, age, and religion are all statistically significant predictors of the racialized fiscal dimension (Table 5.6). The data suggests that as income and age decrease and religion increases so does support for the racialized fiscal dimension. This may help illustrate that income especially does not have the same effect on Black Americans that it has for whites when the traditional ideological spectrum is used (Hutchinson 1999; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997).

Table 5.5 helps further explain strength of partisan support as a result of the linked racial fate built into Talented Tenth membership and the three racialized ideological dimensions. Michael Dawson (1994) argued that Black Americans overwhelmingly support the Democratic Party out of a sense of racial solidarity. My reading of this support differs from Dawson. I
suggest that racial solidarity results in an increased sense of linked racial fate, which may result in Black Americans self-identifying as somewhat liberal and moderate along traditional ideological lines, rather than very liberal or conservative. Table 5.7 help illustrate that the traditional ideological terms that Black Americans often use to self-identify don’t capture the complexities of Black ideological identity. As Table 5.7 illustrates, most respondents self-identify as moderate, while still expressing “some” or “a lot” of linked racial fate.

**TABLE 5.7**

*Cross Tabulation: Combined Linked Racial Fate and Political Ideology (Traditional Dimension)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Somewhat Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate or Middle of the Road/Other</th>
<th>Somewhat Conservative</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Extremely Conservative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot (n=699)</td>
<td>8% (54)</td>
<td>27% (192)</td>
<td>15% (102)</td>
<td>35% (247)</td>
<td>7% (53)</td>
<td>6% (46)</td>
<td>1% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some (828)</td>
<td>4% (35)</td>
<td>22% (181)</td>
<td>12% (99)</td>
<td>44% (368)</td>
<td>10% (83)</td>
<td>7% (56)</td>
<td>1% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None At All (98)</td>
<td>8% (8)</td>
<td>27% (26)</td>
<td>14% (14)</td>
<td>28% (27)</td>
<td>13% (13)</td>
<td>6% (6)</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (1625)</td>
<td>6% (97)</td>
<td>25% (399)</td>
<td>13% (215)</td>
<td>40% (642)</td>
<td>8% (151)</td>
<td>7% (108)</td>
<td>1% (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 46.508  p value: 0.000  Kendall’s tau b: 0.080  p value: .000

Arguably, these “somewhat liberal”, moderate, and even “slight conservative” ideological identities express linked racial fate better than partisan identification. In Table 5.8, respondents who identified as “somewhat liberal”, moderate, and “slightly conservative” agree (to varying degrees) that Blacks should shop at Black owned stores. Black Americans on both sides of the traditional ideological spectrum support Blacks shopping at Black owned stores; therefore, traditional ideology is insufficient for understanding Black ideology. If the traditional reading of ideology was sufficient I would expect that only respondents who identified as conservative
would support shopping at Black owned stores. The economic and even political independence exhibited by support for Black owned stores is a manifestation of linked racial fate. In this example, linked racial fate will help develop businesses, institutions, and organizations which will sustain the Black community. Here, linked racial fate is expressed through economic independence. Arguably, businesses, institutions, and organizations, not only promote economic independence, but also build businesses, institutions, and organizations, which serve as tools for Black self-reliance. Ultimately, self-reliance allows for Talented Tenth members and non-members to challenge white oppression without the assistance of white agents or institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Liberal (n=156)</td>
<td>36% (56)</td>
<td>26% (41)</td>
<td>19% (30)</td>
<td>19% (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal (n=479)</td>
<td>23% (112)</td>
<td>38% (182)</td>
<td>26% (126)</td>
<td>13% (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Liberal (n=306)</td>
<td>25% (77)</td>
<td>44% (135)</td>
<td>18% (54)</td>
<td>13% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate, Middle of Road</td>
<td>22% (192)</td>
<td>41% (365)</td>
<td>24% (212)</td>
<td>13% (118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=887)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Conservative (n=199)</td>
<td>25% (50)</td>
<td>49% (98)</td>
<td>19% (37)</td>
<td>7% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative (n=189)</td>
<td>21% (40)</td>
<td>35% (66)</td>
<td>20% (38)</td>
<td>24% (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Conservative</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
<td>40% (8)</td>
<td>15% (3)</td>
<td>30% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All (n=2236)</td>
<td>24% (530)</td>
<td>40% (895)</td>
<td>22% (500)</td>
<td>14% (311)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square: 65.56  p value: .000  Kendall’s tau b: .021  p value: .247

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Religion and Conservatism among Blacks

A racialized perception of ideology and linked racial fate should result in a unique political calculus based upon the racialized experiences of Black Americans. Such is the case with Black American religion, which birthed a womanist theology (at the intersection of race and gender) and Black liberation theology as a tool for understanding more general religious experiences. Although religion, and, more specifically, churches, have been a traditional venue for civic engagement, religion also informs Black American political ideology. Research shows (Bositis 2009) that although younger Black Americans in the post-Civil Rights Era are less attached to political parties than their parents and grandparents who came of age in the pre- and post- Civil Rights Era, they (young Black Americans) continue to support the same religious institutions as their parents and grandparents (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life’s Religious Landscape Survey 2012). The literature on partisanship and ideology says little about the impact of racialized religious theology and experiences. While I do not measure the decline of partisan identity, I do show that race and religion impact how African Americans understand and are engaged in politics.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, research in sociology and political science has illustrated the significance of religious institutions and religious theology to the political development of the African American community. As with the moral and fiscal ideological dimensions, both secular and religious life influences how Black Americans interpret and understand these ideological dimensions. Within the dimension of conservatism among Blacks, I

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22 Black millennials, ages 18-29, are not leaving the institutional Black church. A 2007 report, by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life’s Religious Landscape Survey shows that Black millennials make up 24 percent of Historically Black churches, the same percentage as their parents. Religious affiliation for young Blacks has remained stable. The trends between the 2007 and 2012 surveys, illustrates that there is no difference in the number of Black millennials in the institutional Black church.
suspected that religion would be fairly important in its influence on this dimension as a result of
the ways in which it often informs Black political thought and behavior. Therefore, I assessed
whether or not religion played an important role in determining respondents’ ideological
positioning on the conservatism among Blacks dimension. With respect to hypotheses 2 and 3,
which posit that the Talented Tenth’s racialized socialization results in conservative political
ideology rooted in Blackness and that the Talented Tenth’s religiosity/Black liberation theology
results in their unique dimension of conservatism among Blacks, the null hypotheses are
rejected. In this analysis the relationship between religion and the conservatism among Blacks
dimension is statistically significant. The results in Table 5.9 illustrate that there is a significant
relationship between conservatism among Blacks and the importance of religion.
TABLE 5.9
Regression Model: Factors Influencing Conservatism among Blacks

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<th>Variables</th>
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<tr>
<td>Think About Being Black</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Worship Encourages Vote</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Religion Important</td>
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<td>.112**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend Religious Services</td>
<td>.151**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.022)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Denomination (Dummy - All Christians =1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.046)</td>
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<td>Talented Tenth Membership</td>
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<td>-.166*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.078)</td>
<td>(.089)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>-.004**</td>
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<td>(.002)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(.002)</td>
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<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at $p < .1$ level
** Significant at $p < .05$ level

b recoded so that higher numbers reflect greater religiosity

While higher scores for income and education (Talented Tenth) indicates increased wealth and educational attainment, traits typically associated with traditional conservatism, these factors should help foster coherent political beliefs and definitive ideological position taking, which mirror racialized conservatism, and hence contribute to higher levels of conservatism among Blacks, rather than only fiscal conservatism. Conservatism among Blacks does not require Black Americans to reject the prevailing narratives of “liberal” or “conservative” ideology, but rather their challenging the dominant (white) political narratives with their Black cultural experiences. Therefore, Blacks who have limited Black cultural experiences such as attending Historically Black churches, will tend to have lower levels of linked racial fate, feel
closer to whites, will not necessarily believe that Blacks should vote for Black candidates, and will be less likely to be found toward the upper end of the ideological dimension of conservatism among Blacks. The analysis in Table 5.9 also helps to tease out the relationship between ideological position and religious affiliation. I find that Black Christians are more likely to be found toward the lower end of the ideological dimension of conservatism among Blacks. This finding is not surprising. Surely, Christians for whom religion is of great importance may exhibit a double consciousness where their Christian identity and Black identity are both salient. The saliency of their religious identity may diminish certain aspects of their Black identity or the ways in which they negotiate their racial identity. I also suspect that while Christianity may cause Black Americans to be explicitly political (Calhoun-Brown 1996), it may also lead Blacks to express otherworldliness as a way to transcend the racism they face as a result of their racial identity.

Interestingly, lower scores for income are associated with higher levels of conservatism among Blacks. This can be explained by better understanding how income influences racialized ideology. We know that linked racial fate is not influenced by income, therefore Blacks will continue to be found on the upper end of the conservatism among Blacks dimension despite increases in income; race is generally more salient than income. Table 5.9 also illustrates that whether or not a church encourages parishioners to vote was not proven to be significant. This is important to note because the dimension of conservatism among Blacks is an ideological one that creates a political calculus rooted in Blackness. This political calculus may not result in votes cast for a specific political party. Instead, conservatism among Blacks helps us better understand why Black Americans articulate support for certain candidates or policy initiatives. In order to
understand the dimension of conservatism among Blacks, I must now turn away from the survey data and return to the narrative inquiry of focus group discussions.

**Talented Tenth Discussions about Republicans and Modern Moderates**

Aspects of the dimension conservatism among Blacks do include some traditionally conservative characteristics, but again, it is worth reiterating that conservatism among Blacks is racialized and rooted in linked racial fate. In order to illustrate this further, I chose to juxtapose Republican public officials and ideas of linked racial fate. I specifically asked focus group participants about Black Republican candidates, who represent the collision of Republican partisan identification and linked racial fate. Participants were asked, “Do you think that Black Republicans have a responsibility to the Black community, just as a Democratic candidate of any race has to the Black community?” Participant responses included:

“They have a responsibility, they all have a responsibility. Now, whether they follow through with the responsibility is another question.”

“It’s their role. To me they are role models.”

Kathy, who worked for the Ernest “Dutch” Morial administration in New Orleans, said:

Maybe at some point we share something other than just the color of our skin. I mean, we have something in our culture that’s the same, even if they were raised by a white family I think there still is something there that would make them feel some sort of responsibility to the Black community, just because of the history of African Americans.

As a result of their phenotype, many Black American candidates and elected officials are descriptively linked to other Black Americans. This means that Black Americans who do not subscribe to traditional Black American political thought must disassociate from other Black Americans in order to illustrate their individualism; often, these Blacks use language that disparages traditional Black American political thought. Some conservative Blacks, who do not
subscribe to the ideological dimension of conservatism among Blacks, have distanced
themselves from traditional Black American political thought by using various techniques such
as using less racialized language and employing more pragmatist sensibilities. Often these
techniques are used by Black Americans who are not Republican partisan identifiers, but support
substantive conservative policy or ideology. My goal here is to illustrate that the terms
conservative and moderate are often wrongly used to describe Black Americans who distance
themselves from traditional Black American political thought. Linked racial fate continues to
operate in the lives of these Black Americans, however, their pragmatism and less racialized
language causes some to question their commitment to Black American causes.

At the same time, there is a small group of Black Americans who explicitly identify as
conservatives ideologically and Republican. Black Republicans stand in contrast, however, with
other Blacks who ideologically subscribe to conservatism among Blacks. According to focus
group participants, former Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell are referred
to as “conservative Blacks” and not “Black Republicans,” despite their Republican Party
identification. Because Rice and Powell are in some way connected to and therefore accepted by
Black Americans they operate at least in part on the conservatism among Blacks dimension. This
echoes my operationalization of the term in this research. Sometimes these Black Republicans
have a racialized view of Republicanism rooted in traditional Black American philosophical
thought. This was expressed by a focus group participant, who said:

I was very surprised to learn that my father has always been a Republican. I was very surprised
like what, you’re a what…? And he’s like well you know they stand for independence. You pull
yourself up by your bootstraps and I always tell him well yes, but someone had to let you in that
shoe store and it certainly wasn’t a Republican, you should remember that.
Interestingly, there is some cross over between the traditional definition of conservatism and conservatism among Blacks. Table 5.10 illustrates that although both Talented Tenth members and non-members place themselves on the liberal side of the ideological spectrum, only 11% self-identify as very liberal, while almost 40% self-identify as somewhat liberal. Black Americans seemingly recognize the differences between the meanings of very and somewhat liberal suggesting that they position themselves as more moderately liberal and somewhat conservative in their ideological beliefs. Although this is suggested by their self-identification, I find very few respondents who self-identify as Republicans (Table 5.4). One explanation for continued Democratic partisan identification is that it is a sign of continued Black solidarity. Another explanation is that Black Americans would prefer a different type of candidate, one who recognizes and explicitly speaks to the importance of race. Generally, Blacks are not offered such a candidate, especially from the Republican Party, so they continue to support the Democratic Party. Arguably, 2006 ushered in the type of candidate that Blacks who subscribed to linked racial fate and the type of conservatism that Blacks were seeking. The election of Cory Booker as mayor in Newark, New Jersey and the election of Barack Obama as U.S. senator to Illinois produced Black leaders who actively utilized the approach of playing down and ignoring race issues while clearly self-identifying as Black (Wingfield and Feagin 2013). Only time would tell if either “leader” would speak the language of conservatism that resonated with conservatism among Blacks.
TABLE 5.10

Cross Tabulation: Talented Tenth Membership and Political Ideology (Traditional Dimension)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Liberal</th>
<th>Somewhat Liberal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Conservative</th>
<th>Very Conservative</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Talented Tenth (n= 37)</td>
<td>14% (5)</td>
<td>32% (12)</td>
<td>32% (12)</td>
<td>22% (8)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth (187)</td>
<td>10% (19)</td>
<td>39% (72)</td>
<td>30% (56)</td>
<td>16% (29)</td>
<td>2% (5)</td>
<td>3% (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>All (224)</td>
<td>11% (24)</td>
<td>38% (84)</td>
<td>30% (68)</td>
<td>17% (37)</td>
<td>1% (5)</td>
<td>3% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: 2.51  
*p value: 0.775
Kendall’s tau b: 0.011  
*p value: .859

Understanding Moderate Black Elected Officials in the Post-Civil Rights Era

The 21st century ushered in several Black Democratic office holders who stood in contrast to conservative Blacks and, traditional Black Democrats and Black Republicans; these were moderate Blacks. Moderate Blacks have defined 21st Black century politics through their deracialized language and campaign strategies. In 21st century politics moderate Blacks are sometimes referred to as “Ivy League Upstarts” (Andra Gillespie 2010). The “Ivy League Upstarts” refer to people such as Senator Cory Booker (NJ) and President Barack Obama. Moderate Blacks also includes the “Local Kids Made Good”. An example of a “local kid made good” is Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed. The “Ivy League Upstarts” and to a lesser extent the “Local Kids Made Good” are defined by their high crossover appeal, high levels of ambition, and weak ties to the Black political establishment (24). The “Local Kids Made Good,” as Gillespie describes (2010), are very similar to the “Ivy League Upstarts,” but receive far less attention. They too are extremely well educated, have crossover appeal, are committed to good government, and are generally political newcomers (i.e. they are not from political families), although they are perceived to have more modest political ambitions (25-26).
According to Gillespie, this sub-cohort tends to be highly educated, graduating with advanced degrees from prestigious PWIs. Despite having weak ties to the Black political establishment, these elected officials were socialized, at least at first, in Black communities (25). According to Gillespie (25):

Both Booker and Obama …suffered defeats early in their careers, when they challenged established longtime Black incumbents for political power. Those campaigns were marked by notability high levels of racial vitriol, where they were condemned for not being culturally Black enough and for being interlopers who at best did not know enough about the communities they aspired to lead and at worst were insincere instrumentalists who planned to exploit and gentrify their communities for political gain.

Gillespie further argues that:

In addition to the normative debate surrounding these candidates about linked fate and their ability to hold the best interests of Black communities at heart is the inherent pressure to perform. These candidates often run on good government platforms, in response to what they perceive to be failures of previous administrations to deliver goods and services effectively to their communities. When they get elected to office, they are expected to produce results immediately, and if they do not produce, then their constituents may be less forgiving at the next election (25).

Andra Gillespie’s expectation that Black elected officials who neither explicitly expressed linked racial fate nor produced immediate results would be voted out of office was proven in the case of Congressman Artur Davis (AL-7). When Quoyle Black Politics? (2010) was published, Alabama Congressman Artur Davis was included as an “Ivy League Upstart.” Davis served 8 terms in Congress before being unseated by fellow Democrat and African American Terrycina "Terri" Sewel. Upon this defeat, Davis changed his party affiliation from Democratic to Republican, despite making claims that “The Republican conservative base seems perilously close to shrinking to white southern evangelicals, senior white males, and upper income Protestants” (Davis 2012).
What links the “Ivy League Upstarts” and the “Local Kids Made Good” are their ambition and their less racialized politics. Those associated with the aforementioned groups are also sometimes identified as the “third wave” of Black politicians. This wave includes those who were born after 1960, immediately before or after the passage of all the major civil rights legislation (13). As a result, these men and women benefited from the struggle that was fought on their behalf, and were allotted the opportunity to live in integrated neighborhoods and attend PWIs. Gillespie argues that the age of the “Ivy League Upstarts” impacts how they are perceived. She writes, “However, their youth also means that some perceive this generation as being less likely to relate to the Civil Rights struggle” (13). This perceived lack of identification with “the struggle” or in possessing linked racial fate is what raises so much skepticism among Blacks when evaluating this new cadre of leadership. Focus group participants discussed their perception of 21st century Black American political candidates in depth. One focus group candidate in New Orleans said:

Here’s the thing, with Black candidates and the Black community, African Americans are profoundly disadvantaged in this country. The single biggest predictor of someone being in a crap school and parents who attended crap schools and have underpaid jobs is that they are the descendants of the enslaved and people of African descent. So not it’s not that I let other candidates off the hook, but I do expect African Americans, and I think African American candidates particularly post-Civil Rights and post-access are too quick to forget that. The example I would give you is this poor young man Akein Scott23. I would like one Black man, Black politician rather because they’re male and female in this city, to please stand up and say “We failed him.” He did a terrible thing if he did it, but all we have to say is “Be tough on crime” and ‘We’ve got to get this guy,” that’s bull shit. I’m sorry, will no Black person stand up and say “Will you look this is a poor Black man in the city of New Orleans. Have we done right by him?” I’m not letting him off of the hook, but has anyone…I do expect Black people to look at the incredible disadvantages of Black people and see how they’re different. For Democrats, yeah they owe us, we carry their behinds in office too many times for them not to owe us.

23 Akein Scott was arrested for the May 2013 Mother’s Day shooting in New Orleans in which 19 people were wounded by gunfire.
Black American politics scholar Ronald Walters expressed concern that “this generation was merely a tool of white elites who wanted to replace more acerbic, older Black leaders with less threatening, younger Black leaders” (14). In an interview with Savoy magazine, he said:

[The white power structure] would rather supplant [the old guard] with a far more accommodating leadership. They are going to pit them against the so-called old leadership because they have been threatened by the interests and power of the Black leadership who really have the influence and control of Black people (Walters quoted in Martin 2003, 56).

Ronald Walters asserts that the new generation of Black leaders is being pitted against the older established generation. Despite having different interests and motivations from the established Black leadership, the new generation of Black leaders still have a responsibility to Black American causes, especially since African Americans generally electorally support Black American candidates who support Black American issues. Although focus group participants expressed skepticism about the new generation of Black politician’s commitment to Black American issues, they made clear distinctions between the doubt held about the new generation of Black leaders and Black Republicans. Focus group participants explained that their skepticism was based upon the difference in perception between new politicians and established Black Republican leadership.

When discussing the new Black leadership, focus group attendees did not discuss President Obama specifically. Later in this chapter, I will show how participants framed President Obama’s rhetoric in comparison to Justice Clarence Thomas’s, but neither their support for nor opposition to Obama was explicit. The limited discussion on the president may reflect Black racial respectability politics, but with little discussion it is difficult to parse out the nuances. As a result, I ran a regression model (Table 5.11) to better understand Black favorability towards President Obama. Of course, there was racially motivated electoral support
at play (Block 2011), but President Obama’s favorability among college educated Blacks and his electoral achievements can be attributed to a confluence of factors including, but not limited to: his oratory skills, his well funded campaign, and his opponent’s missteps (Block 2011, 423).

Using the NAES (2008), I found that both Talented Tenth membership and moral conservatism are significant, but both decrease Black American’s favorability/thermometer score for President Obama. As the regression results illustrate members of the Talented Tenth tend to report lower evaluations of President Obama, as measured by thermometer scores.

**TABLE 5.11**

*Regression Model: Predictors of Favorability towards Obama (NAES)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth Membership</td>
<td>-1.843*</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1 (Moral Dimension)</td>
<td>-2.101**</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2 (Conservatism Among Blacks Dimension)</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.430</td>
<td>.620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3 (Fiscal Dimension)</td>
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<td>constant</td>
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</table>

** Significant at p < .005  
* Significant at p < .1

Also, a respondent who does not support abortion or gay and lesbian marriage has a less favorable view of President Obama. The latter finding is to be expected as Black Americans traditionally abandon the Democratic Party as it relates to issues that challenge their theological foundation (e.g. gay and lesbian marriage). Table 5.11 illustrates that conservatism among Blacks is insignificant as a predictor of favorability of President Obama. Perhaps, President Obama represents a high degree of conservatism among Blacks, which has been widely
misrepresented and misunderstood due to his color-blind language. The NAES survey was conducted during the 2008 Presidential election campaign, a time in which survey respondents had limited information on then presidential candidate Barack Obama. Taking the time in which the NAES survey was conducted into account, I realize that this research was unable to answer the quandary of President Obama’s degree of conservatism among Blacks. Future research on President Obama’s statements about racial discrimination “as contextualized as more a matter of significant past discrimination than a reaction to present-day white discrimination” (Wingfield and Feagin 2013, 124) may help explain, at least in part, why Blacks didn’t fully understand where President Obama fits on the conservatism among Blacks dimension, especially in relation to their own location. Since this study was conducted after President Obama’s second term I specifically considered the thoughts of Talented Tenth members and Talented Tenth focus group members’ discussion on President Obama. Interestingly, however, focus group members scarcely engaged in conversation about President Obama. I can conjecture that their lack of discussion may have resulted from both feelings of Black solidarity and an unwillingness to describe President Obama using unfavorable language.

**Black Republicans- Talented Tenth Members Discuss Justice Thomas**

In order to encourage focus group participants to flesh out the idea of conservatism among Blacks and show how it differs from the traditional dimension of conservatism, towards the end of all focus group sessions I asked participants about Black American support of Black candidates or leaders who do not articulate traditional Black American political narratives. I began by showing participants a series of photographs beginning with Associate Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. As soon as I revealed the first photograph of Clarence Thomas
participants immediately began to shout, “Oh, no!,” “Oh, hell no!” and “That’s an odd Negro right there.” I then asked participants, “If Clarence Thomas was to ever run for elected office, under what circumstances would you support him?” To this question participants again responded, “Never, never, never,” “I’d support the white guy that time,” and “After what he did to Anita Hill, never!” Figure 5.3 further illustrates that a Black candidate running for public office does not result in unequivocal support from Black Americans. Arguably, linked racial fate does not extend to those who do not support traditional Black interests, descriptively or substantively.

FIGURE 5.3
Frequency Distribution: Black Candidate Support
“Blacks Should Always Vote for Black Candidates When They Run”

Participant reaction to the photograph of Clarence Thomas was expected. When Clarence Thomas was nominated as associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1991, Black opposition arose. However, there were also some in the African American community who promoted the notion that because Thomas was a Black American, his conservative policy posture would change over time to reflect traditional Black interests, and therefore Black Americans should
“give the brother a chance” (Walters 2007, 13). Focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed with those who opposed Thomas, providing various statements of opposition and in some cases disgust.

Across all six focus groups participants referred to Thomas’s Senate Judiciary Committee Confirmation hearings more so than his record while serving on the Supreme Court. One respondent said:

I bought his book to read. It was just his biography. I bought it just to be intelligent. If I’m going to criticize somebody I’ve got to know them. So, I did read his biography after the Anita Hill incident and I gave the book away. I didn’t want the book in my personal library.

Another respondent said:

To me he doesn’t demonstrate ethnic pride. He’s sexist and I believe that he sexually harassed Anita Hill. He has consistently aligned himself with ultra orthodox conservative views and I think it’s a wasted seat on the Supreme Court…To be on trial for sexual harassment, what does that say to young Black men about their interactions and the way they relate to Black women? Whether he’s guilty or not, just to be in a position to be indicted. This man was indicted.

Other respondents spent a significant amount of time discussing the perspective or lack thereof that Thomas brings to the Court. A respondent in Rochester stated:

I think when you walk into a room and you’re the only Black person in the room, you’re the only person with the Black perspective and so that’s a responsibility that when it’s appropriate and it’s needed or there’s an opportunity you have to bring the Black perspective… No matter who you are in this country, no matter what you have you have experienced racism. If you say no, you’re lying in my opinion. If you’re the only person in that room that can give that perspective when it’s appropriate you give that perspective. White people don’t know and some say that they don’t care, but they haven’t had that experience in this country, and so to me you have to bring that perspective. You just don’t get to sit there and not bring perspective. Perspective might mean represent, but he can’t represent because he’s chosen to have different opinions and to be different, but he’s lying if he can’t bring perspective because I don’t believe that you can be an African American in this country and not get reminded daily that you’re African American. That’s how deep racism is in this country and so I think that for me the responsibility is to lend
perspective. If he doesn’t get to do anything else…well maybe Clarence Thomas wasn’t qualified for that position. He’s sitting there now and not saying much.

The respondent was interrupted by another participant who said:

The issue is that he walks in the shadow of Thurgood Marshall. Thurgood Marshall paved the way as our first Black Supreme Court Justice. I felt that when you’re talking about racial pride he needed to keep Thurgood Marshall’s words and attitudes in perspective in front of him. He just set us back. I used to say Thurgood Marshall is turning over in his grave the way he had to fight to get on the Supreme Court and then Thomas is his successor?

Across six focus group sessions, support for Clarence Thomas was never revealed. Arguably, Clarence Thomas is illustrative of Black political dreams deferred. Thomas’s unwillingness to publically support civil rights and Black issues was compared to President Obama’s universalistic and deracialized perspective on policy issues by several focus group members. Interestingly, the only time that President Obama was discussed was in comparison to Justice Thomas. President Obama characterized his own political style in an interview with Steve Inskeep (2007) of National Public Radio (NPR), when he said, “There has always been some tension between speaking in universal terms and speaking in very race-specific terms about the plight of the African American community. By virtue of my background, I am more likely to speak in universal terms.” Angela, a focus group participant in Rochester said, “I’ll tell you I do think that the president was crafty in putting his other heritage out there as he was campaigning. I believe that if he had not been crafty he would not have gotten elected.”

Other focus group participants mentioned Black Americans’ desire to be universal in their rhetoric and support of other ethnic groups, despite the practice not being reciprocated by other ethnic groups. Focus group participants were adamant that Black Americans don’t support other Black Americans in the same manner that other ethnic groups support “their own.” One
focus group participant said, “When I decide to go to an Asian restaurant to eat, I know that no one is going to serve me but Asians.” Another respondent echoed this sentiment saying, “Jewish people too. They kill together, they do everything together.” Respondents were speaking to how linked fate operates in other ethnic communities. Other respondents criticized Black Americans for not utilizing their linkedness to its fullest potential. One respondent said:

We buy into diversity more than anybody else. We buy it, while other people speak about it. They don’t ever get around to acting on it, but we immediately feel as if we have to be broader or more inclusive and it ain’t even about us. We forget how important it is to support our own.

TABLE 5.12
Regression Model: Factors Influencing Favorability of Clarence Thomas (NBES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talented Tenth Membership</td>
<td>-5.439*</td>
<td>2.468</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.490</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Dimension</td>
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<td>1.080</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.000</td>
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<td>( R^2 )</td>
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</table>

** Significant at \( p < .005 \)    \* Significant at \( p < .1 \)

While it is clear that Talented Tenth focus group members have reservations about Justice Thomas, certain variables provide scholars with information for explaining these reservations other than his being “strange” or a “sell-out.” As Table 5.12 illustrates, I find that as one’s score on the fiscal dimension increases so does their favorability/thermometer score for Justice Thomas. This means that respondents who are in favor of paying lower taxes, even if taxes fund public programs, and those who support free trade agreements have a higher favorability/thermometer score for Justice Thomas. Finally, I find that Talented Tenth
membership is significant. Being a member of the Talented Tenth decreases one’s favorability/thermometer score for Justice Thomas. Again, this illustrates that by virtue of Talented Tenth membership one must possess linked racial fate.

The lower favorability/feeling thermometer scores for both President Obama and Justice Thomas illustrate that respondents are unsure about Obama and Thomas’s level of linked racial fate. For some Black Americans, linked racial fate is explicitly expressed by leaders when they use language that positions them in the African American community. Some Black Americans desire for Blacks in positions of leadership to use communal language, which can be explicitly expressed in Afrocentric rhetoric as is expressed in the proverbs, “It takes a village to raise a child” or “I am my brother’s keeper.”

In “Afrocentricity: A Cornerstone of Pedagogy” George S. Dei (1994, 12) writes, “Afrocentric discourse illustrates that “the concept of the individual makes sense only within the concept of community.” Jerome H. Schiele (1994, 154) also wrote that “the individual cannot be understood separate from other people.” Both Dei and Schiele illustrate that “individuals realize their fullest purpose in the context of community” (Howard 2010, 388). Philip S. Howard writes that, “…to whatever extent that Obama considers himself to be rooted in the Black community, he is not alone at the center, but he takes the rest of the community there with him, even as he is simultaneously at the margins (and the locations between these poles on this continuum) with other African Americans” (386). Howard’s explanation of rootedness is applicable to all Black candidates and officials, including those who are seemingly at the margins of Black political thought. As a result, Clarence Thomas, Barack Obama, and as I will show next, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, are all representative of the diversity of Black American politics and

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24 In 2014 President Obama launched the “My Brother’s Keeper Initiative” for boys and young men of color.
political thought while remaining racially linked to other Blacks. Their racial linkedness often results from either their own actions or in the case of Obama, and to a lesser degree Thomas, their external racialized observations by others.

Black Republicans- Talented Tenth Members Discuss Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell

While it is clear that Talented Tenth members have articulated support for “Ivy League Upstarts” and “Local Kids Made Good” electorally and verbally, there has been less support for Black Republicans in general (Marable and Clarke 2009). Despite their limited affiliation with the Republican Party, Talented Tenth members and non-members have expressed support for Colin Powell, and, to a lesser degree, Condoleezza Rice. Despite being sixteen years his junior, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell are both phase II Black politicians (Gillespie 11). Although neither served in an elected office, they were arguably appointed to positions of authority and prestige by white Republican Presidents because they weren’t civil rights leaders and therefore did not have to reconcile with whites who may have been skeptical of them as members of the president’s cabinet. Second phase politicians and leaders are often characterized by their deracialized campaign strategy. Again, although Powell and Rice did not campaign for their positions as Secretary of State, they were able to diffuse the polarizing effects of race by avoiding explicit references to race-specific issues, which was in part one of the strategies of their political party. As Black Americans in positions of leadership prior to their appointments, both Powell and Rice conveyed nonthreating images to the Republican Party and its policies. Their career trajectories could be categorized as pro-American rather than pro-Black, while their personal lives were rooted in unique Black cultural experiences: Powell, the son of Jamaican
immigrant parents and Rice reared in Birmingham during the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

Focus group discussions about Condoleezza Rice can be characterized as more enthusiastic and much more favorable than discussions about Clarence Thomas. While some participants explicitly expressed some reservation and doubt when first identifying and describing Rice making statements such as, “Yeah, I think I like her” and “I’m not sure if I would trust her” others made statements such as “She’s brilliant” and “In terms of being the Secretary of State she ran circles around Hillary. She was as good as Madeleine Albright if not better.” Some of the participants’ uncertainty may result from their unfamiliarity with her substantive role as Secretary of State, especially when compared to their previously provided opinions on Clarence Thomas who has a substantive voting record. Heather, a focus group participant in Rochester stated:

I liked listening to her story where she discussed her family. It’s so touching to hear other people’s stories and you as the observer decide how you’re going to connect yourself with it. So I think that when we had an opportunity to see Condoleezza Rice, as a Black female I saw myself for the first time [in such a high position]. I could actually see me there in that position. You know, coming up through the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s… that started the whole “ah ha moment” for me even though she was on the other side [Republican], I still saw a Black female first.

Other focus group participants echoed Heather’s sentiments about the value of a Black woman in such a position of power “despite being a Republican.” In several focus groups participants explicitly rationalized Rice’s Republican Party identification by making statements such as “She wasn’t always a Republican” and “She may be a Republican, but she is a bright accomplished African American woman.” Despite participant rationalization of Rice’s party
identification, participants did express reservations about her interaction with whites. One focus group participant in New Orleans said:

Condoleezza Rice, I have a high respect for her. She’s a very intelligent woman, but she needs to have a more integrated circle. She’s around too many white men and too many white people. She has become desensitized to the Black community. That’s just my opinion of her, not that she didn’t have the capacity, she does, but she has totally absolved herself from the Black community in my opinion.

Another focus group participant expressed concerns with Rice’s circle of influence saying, “Even though Condoleezza is sharp I think Condoleezza has got some identity problems. She’s smart, she’s intelligent, she’s a beautiful woman, but she’s got some identity problems.”

The symbolism of Condoleezza Rice’s nomination to Secretary of State was very important to focus group participants. Participants made connections between the symbolism of Rice and President Obama as Black officials on the world’s stage. One participant said:

I would have no problem supporting Rice if she was being nominated for or running for a position that no one else of color had ever obtained. Just for history sake, so that history later on would say that I voted or supported her. We have an African American president in office now we all participated in the election for history’s sake. Now some of us may not like some of the things he’s doing now, and I agree. But for history’s sake a Black man is there and that counts, that really is a historical event that we all took part in. We can say that we put him in there the first time, the second time we did not put him in, not the second time.

The participant above illustrates focus group support for candidates and officials who may descriptively represent them, despite not substantively supporting the same causes or political issues. The discussion surrounding racial representation lead participants back to the earlier discussed theme of accommodation. Participants argued that symbolic racial representation was similar to accommodation in that it is a gradual means to an end for Blacks who have not typically served in these high profile positions. In Rochester Warren said:
When we talk about Booker T and his accommodation, you know I can kind of relate to what Rice and Obama go through. If Rice and I were working in the same place at the same level she could say some things that I can’t [as a woman]. Now why do I say that? Because I know that I am loud and I tend to be a little pushy sometimes, I understand that. When I’m around all of those white men in an organization and they can’t deal with the loud pushy Black men pushing against them. I understand that. So when I’m working I keep my mouth shut to an extent until I see my opening and then I take it, but I can’t go all out there because I know the resistance against me will be greater. President Obama, he’s got people resisting him and they really ain’t got any reason to resist him. But because he’s Black in America doing something more than others he gets all that resistance.

Finally, focus group participants spent a significant amount of time discussing Condoleezza Rice’s background. To focus group participants, Rice was immune from a certain amount of criticism from the Black community because she was “honest about her upbringing” and “was only a Republican because her daddy was one.” One focus group member explained why knowing Rice’s history was important by saying:

If you know her history, not only her experiences in Alabama but her college education, being an Albright Scholar, as a professor…when you look at her history and then her position there were certain things she was going to have to do if she was going to remain at that level of politics.

Another focus group participant stated:

Learning about Condoleezza kind of ties into educating ourselves because had we not known her background…because the first thing that I heard most people say was “If I know her background, then I’d support her.” So if you remove her background from her actions when she worked for George Bush, his father, then you’d support her. That’s why I think it’s important to educate ourselves. Honestly, I didn’t know much about her background until recently. I had the pleasure of working with a company and we worked on the presidential inauguration. We held an event for some of the students and she was one of the speakers. My peers, students, everyone was excited, but I didn’t want to see her. I didn’t think that I liked her. I didn’t even think that she was relevant. I wasn’t a fan of hers because she was a Republican and because I thought she’d go along to get along.

Not all focus group participants expressed their approval of Condoleezza Rice as a result of her background. One participant in New Orleans stated:
For me I think, I know what team she was with and I know her background story, but in her actions it looks like she’s trying to be a better Caucasian than anything else. She just followed the [Republican] policy and she kind of lost her Blackness, even though she can tell her story about growing up in Alabama and being friends with the girls who were killed in the bombing.

Although some respondents explicitly expressed a disdain for those affiliated with the Republican Party, their language about Republicans shifted dramatically when they began discussing former Secretary of State Colin Powell. Focus group participants were ebullient and many beamed with pride as they described Colin Powell. Participants described Powell as being “rational and understanding of the Black experience” and “He’s a leader, a real leader.” Unlike Thomas, Powell fared better in terms of reception by the African American community. This may be attributed, at least in part, to his marriage to a Black woman and his work to increase Blacks in the Foreign Service during his tenure. According to focus group participants, Colin Powell “acknowledged his Blackness” and “engaged in race conscious initiatives as Secretary of State.”

When asked why they liked Colin Powell, focus group participant responses were all similar. Participants spoke to Powell’s integrity and his ability to distance himself from presidents George H.W. and George W. Bush. Kelly, a respondent from New Orleans stated:

I would support him because I like who he is and he represents integrity. I’ve read his book “My American Journey” it speaks volumes to his character, not to mention that he’s married to a Fiskite. He is a man of integrity. I had the opportunity to hear him speak when he was Chief of Joint Staff and the title of his speech was “Return to Love” at my sister’s graduation. This was 20 years ago and I still remember that speech. What he said was, “What if just for today you stop and let that car into traffic? What if you held the door open for somebody instead of letting it drop when they’re coming behind you?” Just the return to simple basic principles and that is the life this man lives. He is somebody I’d [support].
Another focus group participant in Rochester stated:

Initially, he took the stand against Bush with the Iraq War...he came out against it, told Bush it was the wrong thing to do, but because he was part of that machine and he was loyal I think he was pressured to [back down]. Most importantly, he did come out in support of President Obama.

**TABLE 5.13**

*Regression Model: Factors Influencing Favorability of Colin Powell (NBES)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td>Talented Tenth Membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>.061</td>
<td>.077</td>
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<td>Moral Dimension</td>
<td>-3.016**</td>
<td>.948</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td>Conservatism Among Blacks Dimension</td>
<td>1.970*</td>
<td>1.038</td>
<td>.058</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal Dimension</td>
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<td>1.098</td>
<td>.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
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<td>$R^2$</td>
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<td>N</td>
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</table>

** Significant at $p < .005$  
* Significant at $p < .05$  
$ b$ Significant at $p < .1$

My attempt to explain support for Colin Powell is illustrated in Table 5.13. Using the NBES (1996) I found similarities to the factors influencing the favorability of Justice Thomas (Table 5.12). However, the major differences between the favorability of Justice Thomas and Colin Powell are that the thermometer scores were much higher for Powell than for Thomas. I find that although Talented Tenth members had low feeling thermometer scores (mean values) they were higher than those for Thomas. I also found that younger Talented Tenth members had a higher favorability towards Colin Powell, while older Talented Tenth members had a higher favorability towards Thomas. I attribute the differences in age to Powell’s visibility on social media and television shows, which has introduced him to a younger generation. Justice Thomas, on the other hand, has been rather quiet on the Supreme Court. Not surprisingly, I found the
conservatism among Blacks dimension to be statistically significant and positively correlated to the Colin Powell feeling thermometer. This reflects the focus group narrative, where participants stated that they perceived Colin Powell as feeling linked to Blacks through his words and deeds. Seemingly, such a large beta coefficient for conservatism among Blacks illustrates that Colin Powell is an appropriate representation or proxy for conservatism among Blacks; arguably, Collin Powell is a better representation for the conservatism among Blacks dimension than President Obama. Finally, the significance of the fiscal dimension supports the idea that Black Americans may be fiscally conservative as a result of not wanting to pay higher taxes or mistrust for the government, but this does not diminish their feelings of linked racial fate. This last point underscores the insufficiency of the single, traditional measure of ideology to capture the ideological dimensions underlying Black political thought.

Finally, focus group participants began to compare their perceptions of Powell, Rice, and Thomas. I then raised a question as to what responsibility to the local and global Black community did these three Black Republicans have, if any. Respondents overwhelmingly believed that these three had a responsibility to the Black community, and that despite their actions that Powell, Rice, and even Thomas would probably admit to having responsibility if asked. Respondents explicitly shared that these perceptions were based upon these leaders’ Blackness, and, more specifically, “Powell’s early community work days.” According to focus group participants, Rice’s responsibility to the Black community was based on her early friendships with “the little Black girls killed in the [Birmingham] church.” Lastly, respondents stated that Thomas “has a responsibility, but whether he follows through with the responsibility is another issue.”
Conclusion

In the 21st century Black Americans continue to be involved in the quest of the silver fleece. The silver fleece is no longer cotton, but equality: equality in income, employment, education, healthcare, housing, et cetera. Many of these issues result from systematic inequality and arguably they continue to persist as a result of color-blind racism. Arguably, color-blind racism is not something that those fighting for equality during the Civil Rights era predicted. The substantial body of literature on the continuing racial economic inequality faced by Blacks is inadequate; the literature on racial economical inequality only addresses the significant progress in several areas of Black economic life and is absent of discussion on the Black overall economic situation relative to white Americans (Meizhu et al 2006).

In order to overcome these inequalities, Black Americans may utilize their “Black Value System.” The “Black Value System,” in part, allows Black Americans of any religious denomination and any political party affiliation to come together in concert to work towards the dismantling of inequitable systems and institutions. Six of the seven tenets of the “Black Value System” are indicative of the goals and aspirations of Black Americans in the 20th and 21st centuries for solving the aforementioned issues. These tenets are rooted in the most basic value of the African American community, which was echoed time and time again by focus group respondents: Black pride and Black solidarity. Although Black pride is articulated and manifested in various ways, it allows for Black Americans to come together for the betterment of the community. Even Blacks who use less racialized or a more universal language or are Republican identifiers, can participate in this endeavor. Black pride is an effective tool, for it provides a frame for understanding Black American political thought. As a result, whether Black
Americans identify with one of the dominant American ideological frames or subscribe to one that is rooted in the Black American experience, one of their ultimate goals is to see the success of Black Americans.

The goal of this chapter has been to explain the determinants and political ramifications of the conservatism among Blacks dimension. Using items from the NBES (1996), NAES (2008), and my own focus groups, I was able to assess subscription to conservatism among Blacks and flesh out many of its nuances. After running a series of tests, there are strong indications that respondents’ placement on this dimension is influenced by religiosity, education, and linked racial fate. As expected, this measure does not shift as a result of income, because income disparity exists for Black Americans as compared to whites. Also, this measure operates within the confines of patriarchy, disallowing for adequate space for Black women; I do show, however, how Black women, such as Ella Baker, have helped to challenge this dimension. Additionally, contingency tables (cross tabulations) demonstrate that Talented Tenth members’ ideology and partisan identification are influenced by religion, linked racial fate, and certain double consciousness measures. It appears that both members and non-members of the Talented Tenth all operate along the conservatism among Blacks dimension; age, income, and other indicators of socioeconomic status do not result in diminished conservatism among Blacks. Last, factors often associated with traditional political behavior such as liberalism, conservatism, and even linked racial fate are significantly related to the dimension of conservatism among Blacks. Seemingly, all respondents who possess linked racial fate also operate along the conservatism among Blacks dimension.
CHAPTER V References


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CONCLUSION. UNDERSTANDING WHY TALENTED TENTH MEMBERS WEAR THE MASK IN THE 21ST CENTURY

As this project comes to a close, there are reminders that race and education still matter for Black Americans and African American politics. PBS premiered American Promise (2013) on February 3, 2014. Winner of the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, American Promise spans 13 years as Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson, middle-class Black American parents in Brooklyn, N.Y., turn their cameras on their son, Idris, and his best friend, Seun Oluwaseun. According to the film’s description Idris and Seun:

… make their way through Dalton, one of the most prestigious private schools in the country. Chronicling the boys’ divergent paths from kindergarten through high school graduation, this provocative, intimate documentary presents complicated truths about America’s struggle to come of age on issues of race, class and opportunity (PBS 2013).

What’s most interesting about this film is that Idris’ parents, Joe, a Harvard- and Stanford-trained psychiatrist, and Michèle, a Columbia Law School graduate and filmmaker, are members of the Talented Tenth. Arguably, they are using their status as members of the Talented Tenth to provide leadership and a better understanding of the Black American experience for both Black Americans and Americans in general through film. The parents find themselves “struggling not only with children’s typical growing pains and the kinds of racial issues one might expect, but also with surprising class, gender and generational gaps” (2013). The public’s understanding of this film, and recognizing whether a documentary like this is truly race-related-or, as I would argue, is illustrative of a 21st century race and civil rights issue-helps explain why Black Americans must continue to wear a proverbial mask or literal mask in the 21st century. Black Americans, and to a greater extent, members of the Talented Tenth, must wear the mask in the 21st century in order to challenge the hypocrisy of equality. Members of the Talented Tenth wear the mask in order to give the appearance of feeling content with achieving the “American
Dream.” In many cases, members of the Talented Tenth have not achieved the “American Dream.” Despite high levels of education, Black Americans continue to be underemployed, underpaid, racially profiled, and their lives not values. In the 21st century, a time where a Black man serves as President of the U.S., Black must wear the mask in order to hide the truth behind their pain; the pain that education is not the great equalizer that they thought.

Although this project does not speak to the issue of the Black educational achievement gap, the film’s representation of this racialized phenomenon speaks to the urgent need to revisit the political philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey in the 21st century. For as many strides as African American politics has made, Black Americans have much further to go. Hopefully, the work done here to illuminate the role of the Talented Tenth will encourage more Black Talented Tenth members to emerge as leaders in their communities and play an active role in challenging the areas where Blacks are deficient compared to whites.

This research has attempted to demonstrate the benefit of using Black American philosophy and creating a new ideological dimension to better understand African American politics and political thought in the 21st century. A key advantage to using early Black American political thought and philosophy instead of using Aristotle (Politics) or Hobbes (Leviathan) is its alignment with the Black American sociocultural experience. Although other political theories could be used to explain Black American political thought and behavior in general, they could never truly capture the significance of the Black American experience in defining how many Black Americans not only perceive, but also navigate various political institutions and industrial complexes e.g. education, employment, religious institutions, et cetera. By using members of the Talented Tenth I was able to provide the narrative with the necessary breadth needed to explain Black American political nuances. This research is unlike previous social science studies on
Black Americans for I attempted to show that the concepts and ideas of Black philosophical thought were not just theoretical. Issues such as race, education, religiosity, and partisan identification are understood and better explained by providing complementing anecdotes and narratives. I framed the focus group discussions using prescribed Black American political philosophies with systematic qualitative analysis in order to better understand nuanced Black American political thought. This research utilized various Black American political frameworks absent of “the culture of poverty” (Coates 2010) illustrating that Black American philosophical thought attempts to operate independently of the white power structure that shapes its culture.

While Chapter II and to a greater extent Chapter III provided examples of understanding Black American philosophical and political thought in action, Chapters IV and V employed techniques often used to carry out social science research. The statistical analysis revealed statically significant relationships contributing to our understanding of how college education, linked racial fate, and religion influence the political ideology of Black Americans. The dimension of conservatism among Blacks helps to answer many political nuances misunderstood by white outsiders. While these analytical models are unable to tell the Black American story in the same way that analysis of the focus group discussions could, the tendencies illustrated in the contingency tables help illustrate the potential for support of Washingtonian, Du Boisan, or Garveyist philosophical “revival” in the 21st century. First, based upon the focus group discussions surrounding the philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, and Garvey, there is support for conservative philosophical thought, public policy that benefits Blacks, and the development of an ideology that encourages Black solidarity. Although Black Americans are willing to articulate Black pride and support for traditional Black American philosophical thought, the vast majority of focus group participants, survey respondents, NBES (1996), and NAES (2008)
respondents do not subscribe fully to more separatist philosophies, nor do they completely disassociate with the Democratic Party. Actually, focus group as well as survey respondents reveal that they are more ideologically moderate than anything. Arguably, this moderate ideology- falling somewhere between somewhat liberal and somewhat conservative- is a reflection of their conservatism among Black dimension, which operates simultaneous outside of and within the traditional ideological spectrum. The NAES (2008), NBES (1996), my survey respondents, and focus group participants represent a robust narrative created by Black individuals to explain their negotiation of politics and interpretation of Black philosophical thought. Although important, these narratives do not represent the ideology of the entire Black American population. As robust as this narrative is it does not represent all Black political thought. Therefore there are other ideologies and political philosophies that can be addressed utilizing other Black American sub-groups.

Survey and focus group participant expression of self-reliance was not unexpected, however I found that focus group respondents explicitly expressed greater self-reliance and even a degree of separatism in focus group sessions; this separatism did not manifest in actual survey responses. Arguably, the variation of expressed self-reliance and separatism resulted from the nature of the focus groups. Although I did not create a measure for race of interviewer or facilitator effects, I suspect that they are strong. The impact of the race of the focus group facilitator/interviewer is particularly important given the literature on Black responses expressing closeness to whites when interviewed by whites (Anderson et al 1988; Hatchett and Schuman 1975; Cotter et al 1982; Davis 1997). In the case of my focus groups, I believe that a Black interviewer/facilitator and all Black focus groups allowed for greater participant expression without fear of being ostracized. While the focus group sessions followed the survey questions,
in part, seemingly respondents found it easier to express themselves when the facilitator’s questions allowed for open ended responses.

As my analysis shifted from the focus group data to the NBES (1996) and NAES (2008) data it became more difficult for me to juxtapose my survey responses with the NBES and NAES responses. My survey and subsequent focus groups were held in 2013 when racial tensions were arguably high and President Obama had proven himself with one full term. Perhaps the race of the focus group facilitator and research assistants had a profound effect on the respondents’ responses during the focus groups. When recruiting participants using the preliminary survey, I attempted to craft the initial recruitment letter in a way that implicitly informed potential participants of my race using racial cues such as my membership in an NBHC organization and historically Black religious congregations (see Appendix A).

The manifestation and articulation of conservatism among Blacks reflects Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness. Although double consciousness is tested in this project using public policy it is truly illustrative of the difference between Black spaces and white spaces in the United States. Even in a desegregated society Black spaces continue to be private spaces where double consciousness skills are developed, allowing Blacks to navigate both the public spaces of white society and the private spaces of the African American community. I offer entree into some of these private spaces for Black discourse by choosing respondents who are members of racially segregated churches and fraternal and sororal organizations. These churches and organizations are examples of Black American’s reconciliation of their “twoness” allowing for a understanding of double consciousness that simple public policy analysis may not permit.
The data for this project gives political scientists an alternative viewpoint for understanding conservatism among Blacks. First, the data shows that there is widespread support for some, but not all, policies and behaviors that support linked racial fate. Though Black Americans continue to overwhelmingly support the Democratic Party and candidates, the vast majority of focus group participants and even NBES and NAES survey respondents do not fully support the Democratic Party or its leadership. Black Americans are willing to cast their votes for Democrats; they are willing to describe themselves as “slightly liberal” and even moderate; and when they discuss Republican candidates, they express support for certain Republican executive appointees. This is true for even those participants in the focus groups who expressed separatist or pro-Black ideologies. When moderate support for the Democratic Party is coupled with linked racial fate and the saliency of race Talented Tenth members and non-members seem primed for increased support for conservatism among Blacks.

In fact, the killing of unarmed Black boys by police officers and vigilantes as well as the militarization of the police seemed to reopen old wounds and increase support for conservatism among Blacks in recent months. Interestingly, and expectedly, these killings also reinforced notions of linked racial fate and reiterated the need for Black Americans to coalesce around issues that adversely and uniquely impact their communities across the United States. Black congregations and fraternal and sororal organizations organized protestors, registered citizens to vote, and engaged in other efforts to ensure federal oversight. In Black American communities nationally, Blacks asked “who is going to police the police?” The initial emotional tumult in the Black community has neither resulted in the conviction of the murderers of Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, or Eric Garner nor resulted in enough political force to keep the murder of innocent Black men at the top of the national agenda despite the Justice Department’s
investigation into the murder of Michael Brown. Outside of protests in Los Angeles, Ferguson (Missouri), and New York City, there has been very little sustained organizational effort. Additionally, while African Americans previously coalesced around President Obama’s presidential campaigns, which represented a symbolic pinnacle for Black politics, the murder of Black men and women in public spaces highlights the rationale for a better understanding of Black American ideological thought and politics.

Beyond general support for conservatism among Blacks, there is also a great deal of insight to be learned from the focus group data on linked racial fate. It seems to be that Black Americans feel connected to each other not only socially, but politically and economically too. For far too long, this connection has been viewed as a fixed relationship. This research shows that there is support for the need to rethink how scholars measure and employ the idea of linked racial fate in their analysis. The focus group participants in this study see themselves as allies and members of the Black community; their alliance is more complicated than the current conception by Dawson suggests. The Talented Tenth focus group participants make distinctions about who are “their kind of people.” These distinctions are made on the basis of the saliency of Black issues, not educational, social, or economic boundaries. When Blacks show symbolically and substantively that they are members of the broader Black community through their support of the social and economic development of Blacks, they illustrate the “socially acceptable” behavioral decisions that “their kind of people” support. For many focus group participants this connection is important and positive, but it doesn’t allow for a great deal of flexibility.

Ideologically, support for the African American community and Black race reveals itself in the data. Linked racial fate, in various forms, is the constant, while aspects of the “Black Value System” become just as important. Conservatism among Blacks helps illustrate that Black
Americans see their political world primarily through the saliency of race and their connection to other Blacks. An important difference between traditional conservatism and conservatism among Blacks is that conservatism among Blacks operates on a dimension that includes aspects of moral and fiscal conservatism as well as liberalism, but also includes linked racial fate. Conservatism among Blacks allows scholars to better understand the fiscal and moral conservatism as well as liberalism often articulated by Black Americans. Their direct experiences with racism have a profound impact on all socializing factors such as religion, education, class, family, and community. In all of the focus groups, participants framed their responses to questions in a manner that highlighted their personal political ideology, while justifying said ideological viewpoint with their experiences as a Black person. These “Black experiences” counter the colorblind argument, illustrating at least in part, why despite relative social progress Blacks continue to lag behind whites as it relates to social and economic indicators, but are overrepresented in the penal system. For almost all focus group members they were able to explain this disparity without ambiguity. Even in the post-Civil Rights/Obama era, which many whites believed represented a golden opportunity for Black Americans, focus group members recognized the persistent problems they faced as a result of their race despite their educational achievements.

As the analysis moves away from the focus group data in chapters II and III to utilization of the NAES and NBES, the foundation of conservatism among Blacks had been laid. In chapters II and III focus group members echoed support for the philosophies of Washington, Du Bois, Garvey, and even Shabazz. The philosophies articulated by each of these men are socially, morally, and in Shabazz’s case fiscally, conservative in nature. Focus group participants’ support for these philosophies did not result in focus group and survey participants expressing more or less support for the Republican or Democratic parties. Instead, it resulted in the articulation of
political philosophy that is not explicitly articulated or championed by either of the two major political parties in the U.S. Ideologically, support for Washingtonian and Garveyist political philosophies may mirror economic and social conservatism, however by juxtaposing conservatism and race, conservatism among Blacks was officially established. In chapters IV and V, I began to explain the determinants of support for conservatism among Blacks and the ramifications of this dimension. To this end, first a series of contingency tables were run draw conclusions about the Talented Tenth and linked racial fate. Second, a series of OLS regression models were run where the double consciousness index, Talented Tenth membership, and the conservatism among Blacks dimension were employed as independent variables along with other variables. I also ran a model where the conservatism among Blacks dimension was employed as the dependent variable. One important finding is noteworthy here. In several models being a member of the Talented Tenth had a negative impact on Black ideology or support for “Black causes.” Talented Tenth membership decreases the likelihood that NBES and NAES respondents will support the conservatism among Blacks dimension, the strength of support for the Democratic Party, and decrease favorability towards President Obama. Interestingly, in focus group sessions Talented Tenth members did not express less support for the aforementioned items, but they did use more explicit language when describing their rationalization for their feelings. We know from literature and focus group data that a key component of the Talented Tenth’s development is their academic socialization. The result for Talented Tenth members is a clearer understanding that their education gives them the ability to articulate their political ideology and link it to the philosophical fathers of conservatism among Blacks.

The empirical findings in this project provide increased understanding of the formation of conservatism and conservatism among Blacks by investigating the underlying components of the
conservatism among Blacks dimension. Another component of understanding the dimension of conservatism among Blacks that emerges as especially important is the role of Black religion and religiosity on the development of this dimension. By reviewing the NAES and NBES data as well as focus group discussions, it is clear that the Black religious experience impacts ideology. In my models religion doesn’t result in conservative morality instead it results in a method for explaining Black ideology through the socialization of the Black religious experience. If I simply looked at survey data, this aspect would be lost. The review of the literature and focus group discussions illustrate how the Black religious experience influences more dimensions of ideology than just morality.

Undeniably, this project is not without its shortcomings. While I believe the focus group discussions demonstrate the centrality of the conservatism among Blacks dimension and further demonstrates how Talented Tenth members develop their political ideology though linked racial fate, some adjustments must be made in future research. First, in all studies about Black American politics, a linked racial fate variable must be included. Although linked racial fate can be deconstructed, the importance of linked racial fate and the elements that it contains must be further discussed when explaining the Black heuristic for political decision making. Additionally, asking survey or focus group respondents about their first experiences with linked racial fate may help researchers better understand the development of linked racial fate and the Black political heuristic.

A second area deserving further research is the Talented Tenth’s interaction with non-members. Questions that specifically speak to class or education differences could add to developing the discourse on the Talented Tenth in 21st century politics. Utilizing members of the Talented Tenth helps scholars not only understand this particular sub-group of Black Americans,
but also help explain the behavior of non-members. Understanding that both Talented Tenth members and non-members are linked by race and racial experiences explains linked racial fate, but may also explain why some of those who do not subscribe to linked racial fate continue to look for validation from the African American community; especially, in times of social trial or turmoil. Future research may also seek to explain the deficiencies and inequalities faced by Talented Tenth members and the myth of education as the key to freedom and equality in the United States. This research should be devoted wholly to understanding how the Talented Tenth responds to racial and class inequality utilizing their resources and networks.

The third area of development includes further understanding the diversity of Black political ideology by assessing pre-colonial West African and early Black American political thought. Arguably, conservatism among Blacks did not begin nor will it end in the United States. Researchers may be able to trace this dimension from West Africa to various countries throughout the Americas. Because the United States is now home to many of the African Diaspora, specifically engaging Black immigrants in such a study may illustrate that conservatism among Blacks is not unique to Blacks in the United States. I attempted to illustrate this, in part, by including English, Spanish, and French speaking Caribbean and West African immigrants in the surveys and focus groups.

What made this dissertation different from previous studies, including the NBES and NAES, is that this research paid significant attention to college educated Black Americans. This research also included focus groups facilitated by a Black interviewer. Not only was I able to gain a better understanding of the nuances of Black political thought, but my race also allowed participants to express themselves without concern of offending a white authority figure.
This study included former fortune 500 CFOs, a former mayor, some of the country’s top Black physicians, attorneys, and educators who were all recruited as a result of their membership in organizations designed for the “best and brightest” of Black American society. Where other studies have looked at the social and economic problems that Black Americans face, this study looked to Black Americans to provide the answers. The Talented Tenth may not have the answers today, but if we continue to give them a space to share their opinions, I am confident that they will not feel the need to continually wear the mask; instead, they will express their pain and desires in a manner that proclaims their pride and even their unique brand of conservatism.
Conclusion References


Appendix A - General Sorority and Links Inc Recruitment Letter

[Insert Sorority President/Baslieus Name], President

[Insert Chapter Name], [Insert Sorority Name] [Sorority] Incorporated

Dear [Insert Sorority President Name]:

I am conducting research on African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives in order to complete my doctoral degree from the University of New Orleans. A key component of this research is obtaining important input from African Americans, Latinos, and Blacks who are members of sororities and tapping into their experiences and perspectives. [Insert Sorority Name] [Sorority] Inc. has been a pillar in African American, Latino, and Black communities through your commitment to service and the value you place on education, which help inform your political perspectives. I have seen this impact first hand as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. partnering with your alumnae chapters on numerous projects. Therefore, I am distributing surveys and sponsoring a series of focus groups over the next month in order to hear from members of the community who are interested in helping me better understand African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives.

The goals of the surveys and focus groups are to:

• Allow community members to reflect on their lives and share their political experiences
• Discuss alternatives for Black, African American, or Latino political and civic engagement
• Discuss present and past political candidates and political parties
• Identify the strengths of the Black, African American, and Latino communities
• Elicit participants’ opinions about how their involvement in fraternities influences their political choices

I would like you to invite your chapter’s members to complete the attached survey, which will take approximately 5 minutes, after chapter meeting. If members are interested in attending a focus group, please instruct them to answer “yes” to question 11 and include their appropriate contact information on question 12. The focus group locations and times are attached to the information page included with each individual survey.

The focus groups will last an hour and forty-five minutes, will include 7 participants, and will be facilitated by me with the help of two research assistants. The focus groups will be audio-taped, but no participants will be publically identified in the write-up by name; a pseudonym will be used, instead.

A light meal will be provided during the focus group. If your membership has any specific needs related to their participation, please let me know so I can accommodate them. You may direct them to call me at 585.202.7202 or to request additional information email me at lminter@uno.edu. My CV and research abstract are available at www.ltamarminter.wordpress.com. I will contact individuals upon review of their surveys.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. If you are willing to disseminate this to your membership, please provide me with the name of a contact person who will be responsible for returning the completed surveys to me in the prepaid self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Lauryn Tamar Minter, PhD. Candidate
Appendix B- General Fraternity and Boulé Recruitment Letter

[Insert Fraternity President/Baslieus Name], President

[Insert Chapter Name], [Insert Fraternity Name] Fraternity Incorporated

Dear [Insert Fraternity President Name]:

I am conducting research on African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives in order to complete my doctoral degree from the University of New Orleans. A key component of this research is obtaining important input from African Americans, Latinos, and Blacks who are members of fraternities and tapping into their experiences and perspectives. [Insert Fraternity Name] Fraternity Inc. has been a pillar in African American, Latino, and Black communities through your commitment to service and the value you place on education, which help inform your political perspectives. I have seen this impact first hand as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. partnering with your alumni chapters on numerous projects. Therefore, I am distributing surveys and sponsoring a series of focus groups over the next month in order to hear from members of the community who are interested in helping me better understand African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives.

The goals of the surveys and focus groups are to:

• Allow community members to reflect on their lives and share their political experiences
• Discuss alternatives for Black, African American, or Latino political and civic engagement
• Discuss present and past political candidates and political parties
• Identify the strengths of the Black, African American, and Latino communities
• Elicit participants’ opinions about how their involvement in fraternities influences their political choices

I would like you to invite your chapter’s members to complete the attached survey, which will take approximately 5 minutes, after chapter meeting. If members are interested in attending a focus group, please instruct them to answer “yes” to question 11 and include their appropriate contact information on question 12. The focus group locations and times are attached to the information page included with each individual survey.

The focus groups will last an hour and forty-five minutes, will include 7 participants, and will be facilitated by me with the help of two research assistants. The focus groups will be audio-taped, but no participants will be publically identified in the write-up by name; a pseudonym will be used, instead.

A light meal will be provided during the focus group. If your membership has any specific needs related to their participation, please let me know so I can accommodate them. You may direct them to call me at 585.202.7202 or to request additional information email me at lminter@uno.edu. My CV and research abstract are available at www.ltamarminter.wordpress.com. I will contact individuals upon review of their surveys.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. If you are willing to disseminate this to your membership, please provide me with the name of a contact person who will be responsible for returning the completed surveys to me in the prepaid self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Laurýn Tamar Minter, PhD. Candidate
Appendix C - General Letter to Churches

[Insert Pastor/Clergy Name], Pastor

[Insert Name of Pastor/Clergy Member]

Dear [Insert Name of Pastor/Clergy Member]:

I am conducting research on African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives in order to complete my doctoral degree from the University of New Orleans. A key component of this research is obtaining important input from African Americans, Latinos, and Blacks who are members of the faith community and tapping into their experiences and perspectives. [Insert Church Name] has been a pillar in African American, Latino, and Black communities through your commitment to service and the value you place on spiritual and formal education, which help inform your political perspectives. I have seen this impact first hand as a member of Mount Olivet Baptist Church and St. Luke’s Episcopal Church as a young girl, serving as a Women’s Day Speaker, Youth Pastor Search Committee Member, and Sunday School student. Therefore, I am distributing surveys and sponsoring a series of focus groups over the next month in order to hear from members of the community who are interested in helping me better understand African American, Latino, and Black political experiences and perspectives.

The goals of the surveys and focus groups are to:

• Allow community members to reflect on their lives and share their political experiences

• Discuss alternatives for Black, African American, or Latino political and civic engagement

• Discuss present and past political candidates and political parties

• Identify the strengths of the Black, African American, and Latino communities

• Elicit participants’ opinions about how their involvement in church influences their political choices

I would like you to invite your church’s members to complete the attached survey, which will take approximately 5 minutes, after your meeting. If members are interested in attending a focus group, please instruct them to answer “yes” to question 11 and include their appropriate contact information on question 12. The focus group locations and times which are attached to the information page included with each individual survey are tentative. I will email those who are interested in participating in the focus groups with dates and times.

The focus groups will last an hour and forty-five minutes, will include 7 participants, and will be facilitated by me with the help of two research assistants. The focus groups will be audio-taped, but no participants will be publically identified in the write-up by name; a pseudonym will be used, instead.

A light meal will be provided during the focus group. If your membership has any specific needs related to their participation, please let me know so I can accommodate them. You may direct them to call me at 585.348.9375 or to request additional information email me at lminter@uno.edu. My CV and research abstract are available at www.ltamarminter.wordpress.com. I will contact individuals upon review of their surveys.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. If you are willing to disseminate this to your membership, please return the completed surveys to me in the prepaid self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Lauryn Tamar Minter, PhD. Candidate
Appendix D- Recruitment Information Letter

April 1, 2013

Dear Members of [Insert Organization Name],

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR RESEARCH ON AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS

You are invited to participate in a research study on African American politics that is part of my doctoral dissertation project. Your participation will be incorporated into my dissertation research, and your anonymity will be protected.

This research study will convene four focus groups in New Orleans, Louisiana and Rochester, New York as well as telephone interviews. Each focus group will include between five and seven invitees, while the telephone interviews will be conducted individually. All participants will be selected based upon their responses to a preliminary survey.

Interested individuals over the age of 18 are encouraged to complete the preliminary survey. Church administrative offices and sorority/fraternity chapters are invited to distribute the attached preliminary survey to potential focus group and interview participants. If you are interested in participating in the focus group in your area or being interviewed, please answer “yes” to question 11. Please note that there is no stipend for participation in a focus group and there are no reimbursements for travel costs.

Comments made by focus group members and interviewees will only appear in future research under coded names or pseudonyms. Personally identifiable information will be kept separately from the rest of the data.

To apply to be a member of a focus group or to be interviewed, please use the attached survey application form. Completed applications must be returned to the contact person and received no later than 5 p.m. on [Insert date which is three weeks prior to invited date].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 2013</td>
<td>St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (NOLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 22, 2013</td>
<td>St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (NOLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 2013</td>
<td>St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (NOLA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1, 2013</td>
<td>Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Rochester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 7, 2013</td>
<td>Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Rochester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14, 2013</td>
<td>Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Rochester)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any questions regarding the focus groups, interviews or preliminary surveys, please contact Laurýn T. Minter, PhD Candidate, University of New Orleans Department of Political Science, by phone at 585.202.7202 or by e-mail at lminter@uno.edu.

Sincerely,

Laurýn Tamar Minter, PhD Candidate
Appendix E- Participant Rights

University of New Orleans
Department of Political Science

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by a Ph.D. candidate, from the University of New Orleans. You must be 18 years or older to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please take as much time as you need to read the information sheet. You may also decide to discuss it with your family and friends. You will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to understand how African Americans think about politics and vote.

Completion and return of the questionnaire with indication of willingness to participate in future focus group constitutes consent to participate in this research project.

PROCEDURES

You may be asked to participate in a focus group as a college educated person of color in the United States. The focus group will take approximately one hour and forty-five minutes and the location will be at either a church or an educational facility. You will be asked to discuss questions regarding political philosophies, voting, and the African American community.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks to your participation. If you feel some discomfort at responding to questions, you may choose not to respond to the question asked.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will not directly benefit from your participation in this research study. The overall goal of this project is to better understand how African Americans think about politics and voting. The findings may provide a better understanding of how college educated African Americans think about these topics. The results may be of interest to political scientists, researchers, analysts, and others who aim to better understand African American voters.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research study.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The researcher conducting this research does not have any financial interest in the results of the research, other than completing dissertation research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that could potentially be used to identify you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The information
collected about you will be coded using a fake name (pseudonym) and numbers, for example abc-123, etc. Records containing personally identifiable information will be kept separately from the rest of your data.

The data will be stored in the researcher's office on a password protected computer. The data will be stored for approximately seven years after the study has been completed and then destroyed. You may decline to be taped. The researcher will transcribe the tapes and may provide you with a copy of the transcripts upon request.

When the results of the research are published in the dissertation or discussed at conferences, no information will be included that will reveal your identity. If the audio tape recordings of you are used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be part of this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you are reluctant to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may remove you from the study group if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

Your alternative to participation is to not participate.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions about your rights as a study subject or you would like to speak with someone independent of the research team to obtain answers to questions about the research, or in the event the research staff cannot be reached, please contact Dr. Ann O’Hanlon (504 280.3990) at the University of New Orleans for answers to questions about this research, your rights as a human subject, and your concerns regarding research-related injuries.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher / Ph.D. candidate or her faculty advisor/Principle Investigator:

Lauryn T. Minter
Ph.D. Candidate
University of New Orleans
Political Science
241 Milneburg Hall
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana 70148
585 202.7202
lminter@uno.edu

Matthew Jacobsmeier, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor
University of New Orleans
Political Science
228 Milneburg Hall
2000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana 70148
504 280.1363
mjacobsm@uno.edu
Appendix F- Survey

PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Thank you for your willingness to answer a few questions demographic questions. Responses to this questionnaire will not be shared with others. Responses may be used in my dissertation, however all responses will be kept confidential. Based upon your responses you may be called to participate in future discussion sessions or interviews.

1. What is your race?
   ( ) Black
   ( ) White
   ( ) Other ____________________________ (Please describe here)

2. What is your ethnicity? (Check as many answers as apply)
   ( ) African American
   ( ) Hispanic or Latino
   ( ) Asian/Pacific Islander
   ( ) Other ____________________________ (Please describe here)

3. What is the highest degree or level of school you’ve completed?
   ( ) Some High School
   ( ) High School Graduate, GED
   ( ) Some College/Associate’s Degree
   ( ) College/ Bachelor’s Degree
   ( ) Master’s Degree
   ( ) Professional Degree/MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD
   ( ) Doctorate Degree/ PhD or EdD
   ( ) Other ____________________________ (please describe)
3a. If you completed college, from what type of institution did you get your degree(s)? (Check as many answers as apply.)

( ) PWI (Predominately White Institution)

( ) HBCU (Historically Black College or University)

4. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement, “I feel strongly connected to other African Americans or Blacks.”

( ) Strongly agree

( ) Agree

( ) Neither agree or disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Strongly Disagree

( ) Don’t know

5. Do you think what happens to African Americans or Blacks in this country in general will have something to do with what happens in your life?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Don’t know

5a. How will what happens to African Americans or Blacks in this country affect what happens in your life?

( ) A lot

( ) Some

( ) Not Very Much

( ) Don’t Know
6. Below is a list of groups. Check all of the groups that you feel particularly close to, indicating which groups are made up of people who are like you in their ideas and interests and feelings about things.

(  ) Democrats
(  ) Republicans
(  ) Men
(  ) Women
(  ) Hispanics / Latinos
(  ) Blacks
(  ) African Americans
(  ) Whites
(  ) Gays and Lesbians

7. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a

(  ) Republican
(  ) Democrat
(  ) Independent
(  ) Other (please specify) ________________________________

8. In general, do you think as yourself as

(  ) Very Liberal
(  ) Somewhat Liberal
(  ) Moderate, Middle of the Road
(  ) Somewhat Conservative
(  ) Very Conservative
(  ) Other (please specify) ________________________________
(  ) Don’t know
9. With which characteristics, as listed below, do you most identify?

( ) Racial/Ethnic Identity (i.e. African American) AND American

( ) American

( ) Racial/Ethnic Identity (i.e. African American)

( ) Don’t know

10. What is your religious preference, if any?

( ) Protestant (e.g., Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.)

( ) Catholic

( ) Mormon

( ) Jewish

( ) Muslim

( ) Hindu

( ) Buddhist

( ) Eastern Orthodox

( ) Other Christian

( ) Spiritual, but not affiliated

( ) Other non-Christian; Please specify: ____________________

( ) None

11. Are you willing to participate in a focus group about politics in the African American/Black community?

( ) yes

( ) no
12. If you answered yes to the question above, what is the best way to contact you? Please print.

Name ________________________________

Telephone Number _______________________

Address ______________________________

_____________________________________

Email ________________________________
Appendix G- Focus Group Questions and Narrative

FOCUS GROUP NARRATIVE

Hello. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this discussion. My name is Laurýn Tamar Minter, and today we are going to participate in a discussion about the political opinions and voting behavior of African Americans under the guidance of Matthew Jacobsmeier, who is a professor at the University of New Orleans in the Department of Political Science. I want to remind you that this is a voluntary process, and you are welcome to withdraw from the process at any time. This will be a political discussion, so there is a strong potential for disagreement. I am trying to understand how African Americans, like yourselves think about politics and vote. Therefore, I encourage you to speak your mind and justify the processes by which you make political decisions. I’d like to hear from everyone present and provide each of you a chance to speak. To that end, I ask that we try to be respectful of each other and not to insult or discredit the beliefs of others. Of course, you can disagree as much as you like, but there are no wrong positions. Everyone and all opinions are valued, for I am trying to better understand the voting behavior of college educated African Americans. This discussion is being audio recorded and notes are being taken by research assistants for the purposes of reviewing at a later date. I will not share this information with others. We’ll start the discussion by talking about the beliefs of other African Americans.

[Participants are instructed to look at a photograph of Booker T. Washington and handed a brief biography of Washington and description of accommodationism]

Who is this person?
What kinds of things did he believe?
Do you think he was right? How are your beliefs different from or similar to his?

Let’s look at another photograph. [Participants are instructed to look at a photograph of W.E.B. Du Bois and handed a brief biography of Du Bois and description of confrontationism]

Who is this person?
What kinds of things did he believe?
Do you think he was right? How are your beliefs different from or similar to his?

Let’s look at another photograph. [Participants are instructed to look at a photograph of Marcus M. Garvey and handed a brief biography of Garvey and description of separatism]

Who is this person?
What kinds of things did he believe?
Do you think he was right? How are your beliefs different from or similar to his?

How have these men’s ideologies manifested in our present political arena of Black politics?
If alive today, how well received do you think these men’s ideals and ideologies would be?

Looking back on what you know about the status of Blacks since the Civil Rights Movement, which one of these positions/men is a better strategy for African Americans attaining political capital and social equality?
Are there any alternative methods than the ones provided by these men to ensure that Blacks are equal to Whites? What are they?

Do the beliefs of these men impact how you make political decisions today? How?

If not, what “Black Leader” or public official from the present or past impacts how you make political decisions today? How?

How important is it to interact with Whites or other ethnicities of color?

Do you think that it’s important to always vote for the Black candidate? Why?

Do you think that it’s important to always vote for the Democratic candidate? Why?

Do you think that Black candidates have a special responsibility to the Black community? Do they live up to that responsibility?

Do you think that Democratic candidates have a special responsibility to the Black community? Do they live up to that responsibility?

Under what circumstances would you cast your vote for a Black Republican candidate? [Participants are shown photos of Clarence Thomas, Condoleezza Rice, and Colin Powell]

What responsibility, if any, do you think you have to the Black community?

Do you think that it’s important to be politically active? What kinds of political activities do you engage?

How do your religious views or spirituality affect how you engage in politics?

How does your level of education and or career choices affect how you engage in politics?

Thank you for your participation in this discussion. You have all provided very important and helpful information about the nature of the political opinions and voting behavior of African Americans. Because of your willingness to participate in this effort, you will receive a token of appreciation. Once again, I want to thank you and remind you that this research is being conducted under the guidance of Matthew Jacobsmeier in the Department of Political Science at the University of New Orleans. You have provided me with your contact information, and I will send you a copy of my preliminary findings. Should you have any questions after leaving today, you can reach me at____________________. Thank you, and you are free to go.
Appendix H- IRB Application

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

Approved October 24, 2012

Project/Protocol Title: We Wear the Mask: Exploring the Talented Tenth in 21st Century Politics

Alternate Title: We Wear the Mask

Principle Investigator: Matthew Jacobsmeier

Political Science

mjacobsm@uno.edu

Graduate Researcher (Co Investigator): Lauryn Tamar Minter

lminter@uno.edu

Description: The following research explores how race, class, and political culture are situated in African American politics in general, and the African American subgroup known as the Talented Tenth in particular, in relation to both formal and informal political processes, and how this results in a heterogeneous ethnic group powerfully connected by linked racial fate. The data accumulation process is similar to the political process, in that it is “based on group interactions and discussions, complicated by interconnected (and often nonpolitical) topics and random distractions, and highly dependent on the actors who are participating at any given point.” Therefore, this project cannot exist without directly speaking to those who are actual members of the Talented Tenth whether self-identifiers or the title imposed upon them.

The questions asked and responded to within the focus group setting, will help explain as well as add depth to the results found through the 1996 National Black Election Study using contemporary language and allow for the explanation of ideological and voting anomalies and patterns. Focus group members will be recruited from National Pan Hellenic Organizations (NPHC), which stipulates that members must be college educated or matriculating at a four year institution, as well as three affluent Black churches. As a result of membership guidelines, members of NPHC organizations range in age from 18 years old to centenarians. Surveys will be disseminated at local alumni chapter meetings and church/parish ministry meetings in New Orleans, LA and Rochester, NY. Upon review of the surveys, approximately 30 participants will be chosen to participate in focus groups, having indicating a willingness to participate in their survey response and meeting the criterion set.

Sample Size: 300 African American members of various NPHC organizations and three identified Black churches to receive surveys

30 African Americans with at least a Bachelor’s Degree (6 focus group sessions with 5-6 people per session)

Male and Female

Ages 21 and older

Type of Data: Audio tape focus group sessions. Participant’s identity will be protected by using pseudonyms in the write up. Each respondent will be assigned a number and the number will be converted into a pseudonym. After transcribing data, audio tapes will be destroyed.
**Recruitment Procedures:** Surveys will be given to men and women at the end of their fraternity/sorority meeting and at the end of church ministry meetings. Those who check the appropriate boxes, indicating that they meet the “Talented Tenth Criterion” and indicate willingness to participate in future study will be contacted to participate in focus groups.

**Sample of Survey:** See document.

**Sample of Focus group Questions:** See document.
### Appendix I- Frequencies of Talented Tenth Focus Group Participant’s Surveys

Focus Group Participants- 31 (n)

- New Orleans, LA: 13
- Rochester, NY: 18

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black- 31</td>
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<td>Other- 0</td>
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<td>PWI- 24</td>
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<td>Strongly Disagree- 0</td>
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<td>Don’t Know- 0</td>
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<td>Don’t Know- 0</td>
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<td>A lot- 18</td>
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<td>Not Very Much- 0</td>
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<td>Don’t Know- 0</td>
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<td>Afro Americans- 28</td>
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<td>Men- 10</td>
<td>Whites- 3</td>
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<td>Gays/Lesbians- 5</td>
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<td>Protestant- 21</td>
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<td>Mormon- 0</td>
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<td>Muslim- 0</td>
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<td>None- 2</td>
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<td>Other non-Christian- 0</td>
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<td>No- 0</td>
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*Survey respondents were advised to mark all applicable responses
Appendix J- Frequency of Responses for Entire Data Set

Total Participants- 234
Rochester, NY- 126
New Orleans, LA- 69
Detroit, MI- 30

Discrepancy in total participants as a result of system missing

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<td>White- 5</td>
<td>Republican- 21</td>
<td>Afro Americans- 167</td>
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<td>Other- 4 (Moor, Mixed Black)</td>
<td>Men- 88</td>
<td>Whites- 28</td>
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<td>Women- 138</td>
<td>Gays/Lesbians- 22</td>
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<td>Asian- 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other- 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>(African, Italian-Jewish, Jamaican, Black American, Caucasian, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-English, Moor)</td>
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| 3. Some High School- 4 | Somewhat Liberal- 77 |
| High School Graduate- 8 | Moderate- 69 |
| Some College/Associate’s Degree- 18 | Somewhat Conservative- 34 |
| College/Bachelor’s Degree- 71 | Very Conservative- 4 |
| Master’s Degree- 92 | Other- 2 (Passive Aggressive Conservative, Don’t Know- 5 |
| Depends)               | No Answer- 11 |
| Professional Degree- 18 |               |
| Doctorate- 13           |               |
| Other- 1 (Honorary Doctorate in Humanities) |               |

| HBCU- 76      | American- 23               |
|               | Racial/Ethnicity Only- 34  |

| 4. Strongly Agree- 144 | 10. Protestant- 147         |
| Agree- 56             | Mormon- 0                  |
| Neither Agree/Disagree- 9 | Jewish- 0               |
| Disagree- 1           | Hindu- 0                   |
| Strongly Disagree- 0  | Eastern Orthodox- 0       |
| Don’t Know- 0         | Other Christian- 26       |
| No Answer- 15         | Spiritual- 10             |
|                       | None- 3                   |

| 5. Yes- 177 | 11. Yes- 100 |
| No- 23      | No- 96      |
| Don’t Know- 0 | No answer- 29 |
| No Answer- 25 |          |

| 5a. A lot- 91 |                |
| Some- 105     |                |
| Not Very Much- 12 |            |
| Don’t Know- 8 |                |
| No Answer- 9 |                |
*Survey respondents were advised to mark all applicable responses
Appendix K - IRB Approval Letter

University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Matthew Jacobsmeier
Co-Investigator: Lauryn Tamar Minter
Date: October 24, 2012
Protocol Title: “We Wear the Mask: Exploring the Talented Tenth in 21st Century Politics”
IRB#: 06Oct12

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101 category 2, due to the fact that any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project.
Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
Vita

The author was born in Rochester, New York. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Spanish from Fisk University in 2007 graduating with Phi Beta Kappa honors. In 2007 she relocated to New Orleans to attend Tulane University, where she earned a Master’s degree in Latin American Studies in 2009. Laurýn joined the University of New Orleans’ political science graduate program to pursue a PhD in 2009, where she has taught as an instructor of record since 2011.