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LAWRENCE BOBO
University of Wisconsin
FRANKLIN D. GILLIAM, JR.
University of California
Los Angeles

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Using 1987 national sample survey data that included a large black oversample, we reexamine black-white differences in sociopolitical participation. We hypothesized that increases in black empowerment would affect the level of black sociopolitical participation and change the nature of black-white differences in political behavior. The results show that blacks in high-black-empowerment areas—as indicated by control of the mayor's office—are more active than either blacks living in low-empowerment areas or their white counterparts of comparable socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the results show that empowerment influences black participation by contributing to a more trusting and efficacious orientation to politics and by greatly increasing black attentiveness to political affairs. We discuss the results' implications for theoretical interpretations of when and why black sociopolitical behavior differs from that of whites.

In the early 1970s students of black political behavior reached consensus on two points: (1) that blacks tended to participate more than whites when differences in socioeconomic status were taken into account (Milbrath and Goel 1977; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972) and (2) that a strong sense of "ethnic community," or group consciousness, was the stimulus to heightened black participation (Guterbock and London 1983; Shingles 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). Much of the data supporting this view of black political behavior comes from the late 1950s and 1960s. Over the ensuing 20 to 30 years, however, blacks made enormous strides in socioeconomic status and political influence. For example, Williams and Morris (1987, 137) recently reported that the number of black elected officials rose from "fewer than 103 in 1964 to 6,384 in 1986." As a result of such changes it is appropriate to reexamine theoretical and empirical notions about black-white differences in sociopolitical behavior.

It is plausible to speak of substantial—though far from ideal (Jennings 1984)—"black political empowerment." Increases in the control of institutionalized power by blacks is likely to have considerable impact on the level and nature of black sociopolitical behavior. Our purpose is to develop and test theoretical ideas about the effects of empowerment on racial differences in participation. The research is based on data from the 1987 General Social Survey, which involved a national probability sample of adults, a large black oversample (total black N = 544), and a replication of the battery of sociopolitical

behavior measures from Verba and Nie's (1972) classic study.

Background

Patterns and Theories of Black Participation

Previous attempts to explain black-white differences in participation have focused on sociodemographic, psychological, and structural factors. Some of the earliest research explained racial differences in political behavior on the basis of blacks' lower average levels of education, occupational status, and income (Matthews and Prothro 1966; Orum 1966). This approach is commonly known as the "standard socioeconomic model" (Verba and Nie 1972) and is a baseline model for most research on participation. This model, however, was confounded by the frequent empirical finding that once controls for socioeconomic status were introduced, blacks actually participated at higher rates than whites.

Two psychological theories have been advanced to explain this pattern. The first, compensatory theory, grows out of a more sociological tradition concerned with both political and social participation. This view posits that blacks join organizations and become politically active to an exaggerated degree in order to overcome the exclusion and feelings of inferiority forced on them by a hostile white society (Babchuk and Thompson 1962; Myrdal 1944; Orum 1966).

The second theory, the ethnic community approach, holds that membership in disadvantaged minority communities leads people to develop strong feelings of group attachment and group consciousness. One product of these feelings is the emergence of group norms that call for political action to improve the status of the group (Antunes and Gaitz 1975; Miller et al 1981; Olsen 1970; Verba and Nie 1972). In particular, very high levels of participation were found for blacks who exhibited a political orientation characterized by low levels of trust in government and high levels of personal efficacy (Guterbock and London 1983; Shingles 1981). The extraordinary levels of participation among blacks, then, reflected mainly the actions of the "politically discontented" among them who were acting on community norms.

Tests of these theories have suffered from several methodological limitations (Walton 1985, 78–82). These shortcomings include small numbers of black respondents (e.g., McPherson 1977; Olsen 1970; Orum 1966) and indirect measures of central concepts (e.g., Verba and Nie's group consciousness measure). Even the most recent tests of these ideas are based on data gathered in the 1960s (Guterbock and London 1983; Shingles 1981). More troubling at a conceptual level is the fact that these theories were designed to explain black sociopolitical behavior at a time when blacks were struggling for basic inclusion in U.S. society and politics. Profound changes in the social and political status of blacks, however, call into question the applicability of such theories. Specifically, what should we expect about contemporary racial differences in political behavior? Should we expect, for example, that the politically discontented continue as the most active group of blacks?

Black Political Empowerment

Understanding black participation in the contemporary period, we believe, requires taking into account the likely effects of black political empowerment. By political empowerment—or political incorporation, as some have called it (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984)—we mean the extent to which a group has achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making.

The business of U.S. politics is transacted on several levels. Black gains in public officeholding, however, have primarily been at the state and local levels (Joint Center for Political Studies 1988, 8). Blacks have made tremendous strides in obtaining seats in state legislatures and on city councils and school boards (p. 13). The most notable black gains, we believe, have been at the mayoral level (see Persons 1987). In major cities such as Atlanta, Detroit, Gary, Los Angeles, and others, black mayors have controlled city hall for more than a decade. Conceptually, we focus on whether blacks have captured the mayor's office because it involves the highest degree of local empowerment, usually signaling both a high level of organization among elites in the African-American community and a relatively high degree of control over local decision making (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Nelson and Meranto 1977).

There are two interrelated reasons why such empowerment should influence mass sociopolitical participation. First, empowerment should influence participation because sociopolitical behavior has a heavily instrumental basis. Like Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), we believe that people participate because the perceived benefits of doing so outweigh the perceived costs. Second, empowerment should influence participation because macro level aspects of a person's sociopolitical environment affect cost-benefit calculations. There is a large literature on the effects of political contexts on cost-benefit calculations relevant to participation. Studies have emphasized legal factors (Ashenfelter and Kelley 1975; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), electoral factors (Gilliam 1985; Patterson and Caldeira 1983), organizational factors such as mobilization efforts by political parties (Flanigan and Zingale 1979; Key 1949), and cues from political figures indicating likely policy responsiveness (Bullock 1981; Whitby 1987). Our primary interest is in this latter type of contextual influence. We hypothesize that where blacks hold more positions of authority, wield political power, and have done so for longer periods of time, greater numbers of blacks should see value in sociopolitical involvement.

We expect, then, that the greater the level of empowerment, the more likely it is that blacks will become politically involved (Hamilton 1986). Empowerment should increase participation because of its effects on several social psychological factors, in particular, its impact on levels of political trust, efficacy, and knowledge about politics. Blacks in high empowerment areas should feel more trusting of government, express higher levels of efficacy, and become more knowledgeable about politics than blacks in low-empowerment areas. All of which should, in turn, contribute to higher levels of participation.

The impact of empowerment on levels of trust and efficacy among blacks should also change the nature of *black-white differences* in the extent and correlates of participation. In areas of high black empowerment, blacks should participate at rates equal to, or greater than, whites (all other things being equal). In areas of relatively low black empowerment, blacks should participate at rates lower than whites. Furthermore, black empowerment should bring greater similarity between blacks and whites in the relationship of political orientations to sociopolitical participation. Earlier research found that the most active blacks were politically discontented; that is, they exhibited a combination of low levels of trust in government and high levels of personal political efficacy. In contrast, the most active whites were found among those aptly labeled "politically engaged"—those individuals with high levels of trust and high levels of efficacy. Growing black empowerment suggests a shift of the most ac-

tive blacks to the same type of "engaged" orientation of the most active whites.

Data and Measures

The data come from the National Opinion Research Center's 1987 General Social Survey (GSS; Davis and Smith 1987). This is a nationally representative multistage probability sample of English-speaking adults living in the continental United States. The main GSS sample included a total of 1,466 respondents, with 191 blacks, 1,222 whites, and 53 nonblack nonwhites (excluded from all analyses), with an overall response rate of 75.4%. The 1987 GSS also includes a large black oversample (N = 353). The oversample had a response rate of 79.9% and brings the total black sample size to 544. There were no statistically discernable differences in age, sex, education, family income, occupational prestige, or regional distribution between blacks in the oversample and blacks in the main GSS.

Level of Empowerment. Respondents from primary sampling units (PSUs) where the largest city had a black mayor at the time of the survey are scored as living in high-black-empowerment areas. Individuals living in PSUs without a black mayor or in PSUs with black mayors only in a smaller city, were scored as low-black-empowerment areas.[1]

Sociopolitical Participation. Since individuals may act to influence political decision making significantly through means other than voting, our research focuses on broad measures of sociopolitical involvement; that is, our goal is to understand general patterns of participation, not merely electoral turnout. Fortunately, the 1987 GSS replicated the large battery of sociopolitical behavior measures developed by Verba and Nie (1972). Full wording for the 15 individual participation measures is shown in the Appendix. Verba and Nie found that these 15 indicators reflected four major modes of sociopolitical involvement: voting, campaigning, communal activity (membership in groups and organizations that work to solve problems of broad social importance), and particularized contacting (direct contact concerning a personal matter with an elected official). We find a similar factor structure for the 1987 data and thus employ scales for these four major modes of participation, as well as a summary participation index, as our main dependent variables. For most analyses we rely on the summary participation index (we note differences across the modes when relevant). Details on scale reliability and index construction are reported in the Appendix.

Analysis and Results

Previous research suggests that blacks should participate at lower rates than whites but that this pattern is reversed after introducing controls for socioeconomic status. The results presented in Tables 1 and 2 confirm the first of these expectations and disconfirm the latter. Whether examining the individual indicators of participation (Table 1) or the scaled measures of voting, campaigning, communal involvement, and particularized contacting (Table 2), blacks generally participate at lower rates than do whites. Of the 15 individual measures 14 show that whites are more active than blacks, with eight of these differences reaching statistical significance. Blacks are consistently less active than whites on the measures of voting. The black-white differences tend to be smaller for campaign involvement, which is usually regarded as a high-initiative political behavior.

Blacks have lower participation scores than whites on all of the major modes of participation scales—voting, campaigning, communal activity, and particular-

Table 1. Race Differences in Sociopolitical Participation: Participation Items by Race

Participation Items	Blacks (%)	Whites (%)	Difference (%)
Voting			
Local voting	76 (534)	82 (1,208)	-6%**
1980 national election	65 (512)	70 (1,187)	-5%*
1984 national election	61 (513)	71 (1,187)	-10%**
Campaigning			
Persuade others	42 (539)	48 (1,215)	-6%
Donate money	16 (539)	24 (1,215)	-8%**
Attend meeting	22 (540)	19 (1,214)	3%
Work	21 (540)	28 (1,217)	-7%*
Member political club	3 (544)	4 (1,222)	-1%
Communal activity			
Local problem solving	32 (538)	34 (1,219)	-2%
Start local group	16 (536)	18 (1,218)	-2%
Contact local officials	17 (539)	26 (1,215)	-9%**
Contact nonlocal officials	10 (539)	25 (1,222)	-15%**
Community group activity	39 (544)	42 (1,222)	-3%
Particularized contacting			
Contact local officials	8 (539)	10 (1,214)	-2%
Contact nonlocal officials	5 (539)	8 (1,215)	-3*

Note: Base numbers of cases in parentheses.

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .001$.

Table 2. Race Differences in Sociopolitical Participation: Participation Scales by Race

Modes of Participation Scales	Unadjusted Means		Adjusted Means	
	Blacks	Whites	Blacks	Whites
Voting	-16.59	3.64**	2.69	-.39
Campaigning	-8.71	1.35	5.37	-.79
Communal activity	-16.38	2.56**	4.58	-.67
Particularized contacting	-10.75	1.67*	-3.70	.70
Summary index	-18.40	2.86**	4.86	-.71

Note: Adjusted means are corrected for socioeconomic status (education, occupational prestige, and family income) and demographic factors (age and sex).

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .001$.

ized contacting—as well as on the summary participation index. (The scales are scored to have a mean of approximately zero, hence negative scores indicate below-average rates of participation). Four of these five comparisons show a significant difference favoring whites, with the campaigning scale providing the only exception. The last two columns of Table 2 report mean participation scores after adjusting the scales for the respondents' education, occupation, family income, age, and sex.[2] None of the adjusted scale comparisons show a significant black-white difference, indicating that the compositional differences in socioeconomic status—especially education—accounts for lower average black participation.[3]

Similar black-white rates of participation, net of socioeconomic and demographic factors, still leave open the possibility of empowerment effects on participation. We hypothesized that the level of black sociopolitical involvement would be higher in areas where blacks were politically empowered and that racial differences would favor blacks over whites in high-black-empowerment areas. The results reported in Table 3 strongly support these hypotheses. The top half of the table shows that blacks in high-empowerment areas are significantly more active (32.65) than blacks in low-empowerment areas. In addition, blacks in low-empowerment areas are significantly less active than comparable whites (−33.96). The black-white difference in high-empowerment areas favors blacks but does not reach statistical significance. Most important, as the bottom half shows, after we adjust the summary participation index for socioeconomic status, age, and sex, blacks in high-empowerment areas are indeed more active than comparable whites.[4] There is no racial difference in participation, net of socioeconomic status, age, and sex, in low-empowerment areas.

We have argued that 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 increases attentiveness to politics among blacks as well as increasing their levels of political trust and efficacy. The results shown in Table 4, which presents mean item and scale scores for the measures of political knowledge, trust, and efficacy, unequivocally support the first of these hypotheses but speak equivocally regarding the impact of empowerment on levels of trust and ef-

Table 3. Black Political Empowerment, Race, and Participation

Race	Mean Participation Score, Level of Black Empowerment		
	Low	High	Difference
Summary Participation Index			
Blacks	-29.26 (358)	3.39 (182)	-32.65***
Whites	4.70 (1,047)	-8.64 (170)	13.34
Difference	-33.96***	12.03	
Adjusted Summary Participation Index			
Blacks	-2.05 (294)	17.90 (159)	-19.95*
Whites	1.19 (930)	-12.45 (152)	13.64
Difference	-3.34	30.35**	

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

ficacy. In percentage terms, blacks living in high-empowerment areas are significantly more likely to name the local school board president correctly (38% vs. 25%), their representative (31% vs. 22%), and the state governor (75% vs. 61%) than blacks living in low-empowerment areas.[5] The impact of empowerment on trust and efficacy appears to be localized in nature. Blacks in high-empowerment areas trust local officials more and expect to have greater influence with them than do blacks in low-empowerment areas. However (not too surprisingly), the sort of "local" empowerment we tap here does not change trust in the federal government or improve blacks' views of the motivations of politicians in general.

These results also illuminate black-white differences in participation. Whites in high-black-empowerment areas are often less politically knowledgeable than whites in low-black-empowerment areas. Specifically, among whites, those living in high-black-empowerment areas were significantly less able to name the local school board president (14% vs. 34%) or their representative (29% vs. 41%) but were just as able to name the state governor (80% vs. 82%). The level of black-empowerment does not, however, consistently influence whites' feelings of trust and efficacy. In sum, whites tend to pay less attention to local politics when blacks control local offices but do not become generally less trusting or efficacious as a result.

We can gain greater leverage on how empowerment affects behavior by considering whether it also helps shape basic political orientations involving the intersection of political trust and efficacy (Gilliam and Bobo 1988). Previous research found that the most active blacks were politically discontented—those who combined high feelings of efficacy with low feelings of trust—but that the most active whites were highly efficacious and highly trusting. We hypothesized that in the modern period the most active blacks should maintain the same sort of "engaged"—high efficacy and high trust—

Table 4. Mean Political Knowledge, Trust, and Efficacy by Black Political Empowerment and Race

	Empowerment Level			
	Blacks		Whites	
Knowledge, Trust, and Efficacy	Low	High	Low	High
Correctly name school board head	1.25[a]	1.38	1.35[b]	1.14
Correctly name congressman	1.22[a]	1.31	1.41[b]	1.29[c]
Correctly name governor	1.61[a]	1.75	1.81	1.79[c]
Political knowledge scale	4.07[a]	4.44	4.57[b]	4.22[c]
Local trust[d]	2.33[a]	2.50	2.68	2.74[c]
Federal trust[d]	2.10	2.10	2.36[b]	2.49[c]
Political trust scale	2.22	2.30	2.52	2.62[c]
Local influence[e]	2.26[a]	2.48	2.51	2.55[c]
Local officials care[e]	2.88	2.83	3.03[b]	2.90[c]
Political efficacy scale	2.57	2.65	2.77	2.72[c]

[a]Significant difference by empowerment among blacks.

[b]Significant difference by empowerment among whites.

[c]Significant difference between blacks and whites on item or scale.

[d]The two political trust items are modestly correlated ($r = .36$, $p < .001$) and are worded as follows. Local trust: "How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government here in [respondent's local government unit] to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?" Federal trust: "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?"

[e]The two political efficacy items are modestly correlated ($r = .39$, $p < .001$) and are worded as follows. Local influence: "How much influence do you think people like you can have over local government decisions—a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or none at all?" Local officials care: "If you had a complaint about a local government activity and took that complaint to a member of the local government council, would you expect him or her to pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, very little attention, or none at all?" Scoring of all items has been reversed for these analyses.

orientation characteristic of politically active whites and do so, in part, because of improved levels of black political empowerment. In the main, the results of Table 5 support these hypotheses.[6] To be sure, blacks are less likely than whites (25% vs. 42%) to fall into the politically engaged group (rows 1–2) and are more likely than whites to appear among the alienated who lack in both trust and efficacy (32% vs. 19%). However, rows 3–6 show that blacks in high-empowerment areas are more likely to be among the politically engaged than blacks in low-empowerment areas. Moreover, rows 7–10 show that politically engaged blacks are the most active segment of the black community. Indeed, after we have controlled for socioeconomic status, age, and sex, politically engaged blacks score as more active than politically engaged whites. This is a sharp reversal of the patterns for blacks found in earlier research.[7]

Empowerment increases black participation. It appears to do so because it increases attentiveness to politics and because it contributes to a more engaged orientation to politics. Still unclear is whether empowerment exerts direct effects on participation, or works largely through its impact on knowledge and political orientation. Table 6 reports the results of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses of participation, which indicate that among blacks the effect of empowerment on participation is mediated modestly by its influence on political orientations and powerfully by

Table 5. Political Orientation, Empowerment, and Participation among U.S. Blacks and Whites, 1987

Variables by Race	Politically Engaged	Politically Discontented	Politically Obedient	Politically Alienated	Total	Number of Cases	f-ratio	d.f.
Political orientation (%) ($\chi^2 = 70.87$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$)								
Blacks	25	20	22	32	100	531	—	—
Whites	42	12	26	19	99	1,208	—	—
Black empowerment (%)								
Blacks ($\chi^2 = 9.71$, d.f. = 3, $p < .05$)								
Low	22	21	21	36	100	350	—	—
High	32	18	24	26	100	181	—	—
Whites ($\chi^2 = 3.41$, d.f. = 3, n.s.)								
Low	41	13	26	20	100	1,038	—	—
High	44	9	29	18	100	170	—	—
Participation[a]								
Unadjusted								
Blacks	17.40	-13.35	-37.33	-33.21	—	530	10.29	3/526
Whites	33.51	32.19	-34.12	-27.48	—	1,206	45.69	3/1,202
Adjusted								
Blacks	39.37	3.03	-5.55	-12.87	—	444	9.42	3/443
Whites	20.44	25.90	-26.58	-26.24	—	1,074	27.04	3/1,070

[a]Summary participation index means.

its influence on political knowledge. Model 1 shows that among blacks empowerment has a significant positive effect on participation, net of education, family income, occupation, age, sex, region of residence, and "urbanicity." (We added region and "urbanicity" to ensure that the empowerment effect was not merely capturing north-vs.-south or size-of-place effects.) However, model 2 shows that by adding a series of dummy variables representing political orientations, the coefficient for empowerment remains significant even though it decreases by about 18%, from 23.31 to 19.02. On adding political knowledge to the model (model 3), the coefficient for empowerment is cut by more than half and becomes insignificant. Hence, all of the impact of empowerment on participation is indirect via its tendency to encourage more engaged political orientations and greater attentiveness to politics among blacks.[8] We should note that political orientations bring a significant increase in variance explained (3%), with the politically engaged blacks scoring as significantly more active than the politically discontented. Furthermore, the political knowledge scale brings a substantial increase in variance explained (12%) and has the single strongest direct effect (partial beta = .38, $p < .001$) on summary participation scores among blacks.

The final column of Table 6 shows that empowerment has no effect on white participation; but, as with blacks, political orientations and political knowledge strongly influence levels of participation. We should note that political knowledge has a stronger effect on participation among blacks than it does among whites. Viewed in this light, the effect of empowerment on black levels of political knowledge is of signal importance.

A more concrete view of rates of participation can be seen in Table 7, which shows predicted participation scores for

blacks and whites under the OLS models in columns 3 and 4, respectively. First, blacks in high-empowerment areas are more active than those in low-empowerment areas regardless of political orientation. Second, blacks in high-empowerment areas are more active than their white counterparts among the engaged, among the obedient, and among the alienated. Only among the politically discontented, once regarded as the most politically active segment of the black community, do blacks in high-empowerment areas participate at lower rates than comparable whites. This suggests that otherwise efficacious blacks who do not trust black politicians in their communities are especially likely, relative to similar whites, to withdraw from politics. Third, blacks in low-black-empowerment areas,

Table 6. Regression Models of Summary Participation Index

	Blacks			
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Whites
Constant	-265.63***	-250.89***	-331.83***	-283.02***
Variables				
Empowerment	23.31** (.12)	19.02* (.10)	9.14 (.05)	-4.66 (-.01)
Political orientations				
Engaged	—	31.63** (.15)	31.89** (.15)	-.53 (-.00)
Obedient	—	-10.36 (-.05)	-7.96 (-.03)	-45.81*** (-.19)
Alienated	—	-16.88 (-.08)	-18.19 (-.09)	-45.49*** (-.18)
Political knowledge	—	—	36.49 (.38)	25.26*** (.24)
Social background				
Age	1.84*** (.33)	1.78*** (.32)	1.24*** (.22)	1.26*** (.21)
Education	10.89*** (.39)	10.17*** (.36)	7.13*** (.25)	8.04*** (.24)
Occupation	.78* (.11)	.68* (.09)	.38 (.05)	.65** (.09)
Family Income	.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)	-.08 (-.01)	.30 (.05)
Region (South = 1)	15.54 (.08)	16.82* (.09)	9.25 (.05)	-4.52 (-.02)
Sex (female = 1)	1.60 (.01)	-.04 (-.00)	-5.35 (-.03)	5.04 (.02)
"Urbanicity"	-.07 (-.00)	.10 (.00)	.92 (.02)	-.08 (.00)
Adjusted R^2	.22	.25	.37	.30
Number of Cases	437	437	437	1,040

*$p < .05$, two-tailed test.
**$p < .01$, two-tailed test.
***$p < .001$, two-tailed test.

Table 7. Predicted Mean Participation Scores by Race, Empowerment, and Political Orientation

	Empowerment Levels			
	Blacks		Whites	
Political Orientation	Low	High	Low	High
Politically engaged	18.11	36.59	38.25	20.03
Politically discontented	-21.29	24.50	33.77	35.91
Politically obedient	-43.99	-21.02	-27.50	-46.22
Politically alienated	-49.50	-3.10	-31.96	-37.75

regardless of orientation, tend to be less active than whites in the same areas.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our results show, first, that where blacks hold positions of political power, they are more active and participate at higher rates than whites of comparable socioeconomic status. Second, black empowerment is a contextual cue of likely policy responsiveness that encourages blacks to feel that participation has intrinsic value. This conclusion is based on the finding that empowerment leads to higher levels of political knowledge and that it leads to a more engaged (i.e., trusting and efficacious) orientation to politics.

An alternative interpretation of these results holds that black empowerment is the outcome of higher participation brought about by registration and turnout drives when a viable black candidate emerges. This explanation of our results is unconvincing on logical and empirical grounds even though we agree that the mobilization of black voters is a necessary component of the accomplishment of empowerment (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984). First, blacks are not newcomers to elective office in most of the "empowered" areas in our sample, and our dependent variables are general patterns of individual behavior. Hence, it is unlikely that we have found merely the short-term effects of black voter mobilization efforts. What is more, the effects of empowerment are not restricted to electoral turnout. Second, if the association between empowerment and participation were merely the result of voter mobilization drives by black candidates, we should have found strong direct effects of empowerment on participation among blacks. Instead, the data show that empowerment works through the psychological factors of political orientation and (especially) level of actual political knowledge. We suggest that black empowerment, whatever heightened mobilization this feat initially requires, has broad and lasting consequences on how often, and why, blacks become active participants in the political process. One sign of the potential for such effects is that whites, too, are affected. Recall the finding that whites in high-black-empowerment areas are less politically knowledgeable than whites in low-black-empowerment areas.

These results call for changes in our empirical and theoretical ideas about black sociopolitical behavior. Studies of sociopolitical participation based on data from the late 1950s and into the 1960s found that blacks participated less than whites, that blacks were more active than whites at any given level of socioeconomic status, and that greater black involvement was rooted in group consciousness and a sense of political discontent. Substantively, these patterns were correctly read as showing that (1) blacks were fighting for

basic civic inclusion and to obtain the larger goal of improving the material status of the group and (2) that full understanding of patterns of sociopolitical participation in the United States required one to take race into account.

The significance of race for sociopolitical behavior has evidently changed. On the one hand, we find that blacks generally participate at the same rate as whites of comparable socioeconomic status and that the politically engaged are the most active segment of both groups. It is tempting to conclude, therefore, that the importance of race for patterns of sociopolitical participation has greatly declined. On the other hand, blacks are more active than comparable whites in areas of high black political empowerment. In addition, level of empowerment shapes both blacks' likelihood of adopting an "engaged" orientation to politics and their basic levels of knowledge about political affairs. These psychological orientations to politics, in turn, powerfully affect a person's level of sociopolitical involvement. It is more accurate, then, to conclude that race now shapes sociopolitical behavior in different ways and for somewhat different reasons than held in the past.

In our judgment, these differences reflect broad legal-political-economic changes that improved the general social standing of many blacks and, most directly, brought a tremendous increase in the number and influence of black elected officials. To be sure, the core political goals of blacks have steadily been full and fair inclusion in all domains of U.S. society (Hamilton 1984; Jones 1972; Walton 1985). When the pathways to these objectives were fundamentally blocked, different strategies and orientations were necessary than now seem appropriate in a context of significant wielding of institutional power by blacks. With the goal of basic civic inclusion largely accomplished, the black political agenda has shifted to the goal of maintaining, exploiting, and expanding the political and economic resources available to the black community (Hamilton 1986).

Nonetheless, the degree of black political empowerment and general social progress must be kept in perspective. Blacks gained control of mayoral offices at a time when the power of urban political machines continued to decline, when population and commerce were shifting to suburban areas (Wilson 1980), and when federal programs became less generous (Moore 1988). Hindrances to black empowerment in the form of cumbersome voter registration procedures, district boundaries that dilute the black vote, gerrymandering, hostility to black candidates among a significant number of whites (Williams and Morris 1987), and the cooptation of some black leaders (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Jennings 1984) are still problematic. In addition, the persisting social segregation and economic disadvantages of blacks (Farley and Allen 1987; Wilson 1987) constitute structural bases for black racial identity formation (Allen, Dawson, and Brown 1989) as well as for sharp black-white political polarization over race relations issues (Bobo 1988), social welfare policy attitudes (Bobo n.d.; Gilliam and Whitby 1989), and basic life satisfaction (Thomas and Hughes 1986). Black progress and political empowerment are still partial and incomplete even though they have advanced far enough to affect how often, and why, blacks become politically active.

Further investigations of changing black sociopolitical behavior and the influence of black empowerment will require studies with larger samples of blacks. Future research should develop direct indicators of whether black respondents think black officials are more responsive to their needs than white officials (Jackson and Oliver 1988). Full exploration of these ideas will require data on whether black officials have the inclin-

ation and resources to produce desired outcomes for their constituents (Eisinger 1982). Tapping the reactions of whites to black elected officials is a necessary component of this research. In addition, the empowerment model may be extended to other U.S. minority groups. The growing electoral power of Latinos, for example, might be fruitfully studied within the empowerment framework we developed here.

Appendix

Wording of Participation Items

Voting. (1) "Now in 1980, you remember that Carter ran for President on the Democratic ticket against Reagan for the Republicans, and Anderson as an independent. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?" (2) "In 1984, you remember that Mondale ran for President on the Democratic ticket against Reagan for the Republicans. Do you remember for sure whether or not you voted in that election?" (3) "What about local elections—do you always vote in those, do you sometimes miss one, or do you rarely vote, or do you never vote?"

Campaigning. (1) "During elections do you ever try to show people why they should vote for one of the parties or candidates? Do you do that often, sometimes, rarely or never?" (2) "In the past three or four years, have you contributed money to a political party or candidate or to any other political cause?" (3) "In the past three or four years have you attended any political meetings or rallies?" (4) "Have you done work for one of the parties or candidates in most elections, some elections, only a few, or have you never done such work?" (5) "Would you tell me whether or not you are a member of political clubs? [If yes,] Do political clubs to which you belong do anything to try to solve individual or community problems? [If yes,] Have you ever done any active work for political clubs? I mean, been a leader, helped organize meetings, or given time or money?"

Communal Activity. (1) "Have you ever worked with others in this community to try to solve some community problem?" (2) "Have you ever taken part in forming a new group or a new organization to try to solve some community problem?" (3) "Have you ever personally gone to see, or spoken to, or written to—some member of the local government or some other person of influence in the community about some need or problem? [If yes,] Was this need or problem primarily of concern to you, your friends and family, or was it an issue of wider concern?" (4) "What about some representative or governmental official outside of the local community—on the county, state, or national level? Have you ever contacted or written to such a person on some need or problem? [If yes,] Was this need or problem primarily of concern to you, your friends and family, or was it an issue of wider concern?" The final component of the communal activity item is a composite measure based on responses to questions concerned with *membership* in any of 15 possible voluntary associations (fraternal groups; service clubs; veterans groups; labor unions; sports groups; youth groups; school service groups; hobby and garden clubs; school fraternities and sororities; nationality groups; farm organizations; literary, art, discussion, or study groups; professional or academic societies; church affiliated groups; and any other groups), whether those groups worked to solve individual or community problems, and whether the respondent had been actively involved in the organization.

Particularized Contacting. See items 3 and 4 in the Communal Activity section

for question wording. Those who had contacted a local official or a nonlocal official on a personal matter are given high scores.

Creation of Participation Scales and Index

The participation measures were factor-analyzed using a principal components extraction and an oblique rotation, resulting in a four-factor solution. The factors identified correspond to Verba and Nie's (1972) voting, campaigning, communal involvement, and particularized contacting modes. We created scales for the items loading on each major mode by weighing each item by its factor loading, summing and standardizing the measure and then multiplying it by 100. For each major mode this yields a scale with a mean of approximately 0 and a standard deviation of approximately 100. The summary participation index is based on a higher-order factor analysis using the four major mode scales, and the major mode scales are all positively intercorrelated. Each scale was weighed by its respective factor score and the sum of these was then standardized and multiplied by 100. Descriptive statistics for each measure are shown in Table 8, along with average interitem correlations and alpha coefficients. More complete details on scale and index creation can be obtained by writing to us.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Participation Dependent Measures

Participation Measures	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Average Correlation	Alpha
Voting (N = 1,699)	-181.40	89.71	.986	100.02	.64	.85
Campaigning (N = 1,746)	-75.42	435.85	-.005	102.10	.35	.73
Communal activity (N = 1,748)	-89.31	414.37	.016	105.69	.35	.72
Particularized contacting (N = 1,744)	-40.88	426.78	.000	105.38	.28	.46
Summary index (N = 1,745)	-145.45	380.91	.000	100.00	.24	.56

Notes

The data come from the 1987 General Social Survey, James A. Davis and Tom W. Smith, principal investigators. A module of new items was designed by a subcommittee of David Knoke (chair), Lawrence Bobo, and Thomas Guterbock, with the assistance of Duane F. Alwin. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1988 annual conference of the Association of Black Sociologists, Atlanta. This research was supported by NSF Grants SES-8615409 and BNS87-00864, by the Graduate School Research Committee of the University of Wisconsin, and was carried out while the first author was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. We thank Emily E. Read for her helpful research assistance and Cedric Herring, Shanto Iyengar, Cora B. Marrett, John Petrocik, Stanley Presser, and David O. Sears for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. The PSUs scored as high-empowerment areas include Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Chicago, Dayton, Detroit, Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Washington. All other PSUs were scored as low-black-empowerment areas. We identified areas with black mayors using Joint Center for Political Studies (1986). Ideally, we would like to employ a more refined empowerment measure that could, for example, distinguish areas where blacks have held the mayor's office for several consecutive terms (e.g., Atlanta, Los Angeles, Detroit) from areas where this is a more recent, contested, and still-vulnerable accomplishment (e.g., Philadelphia, Chicago). We decided against such an approach because even with our relatively large black sample, we have too few black respondents in many PSUs to test for such differences efficiently and reliably.

2. Age and sex were included because our sample of blacks tends to be younger and include more women than the white sample. The adjustments

were made by estimating an Ordinary Least Squares regression equation, pooled across race and weighted for the black oversample, of the form

$$y^* = b_0 - b_1^*(\text{educ}) - b_2^*(\text{occu}) - b_3^*(\text{faminc}) - b_4^*(\text{age}) - b_5^*(\text{sex}),$$

where y^* = adjusted participation score, b_0 = intercept, $b_1 - b_5$ = OLS regression coefficients, educ = respondent's level of education, occu = respondent's (spouse's if respondent is not employed) occupational prestige (NORC) Hodge-Siegel-Rossi scale), faminc = family income, age = respondent's age, and sex = dummy variable for sex (male = 0, female = 1).

3. Two possible complexities should be noted. First, we also found no pattern of significantly higher black participation at specific status levels; that is, we created socioeconomic status group quartiles based on a combination of education, occupational prestige, and family income. Black-white comparisons within the quartile groups using the adjusted participation scales revealed only one significant difference out of 16 possible comparisons (4 quartile groups by 4 participation scales), and this one favored whites over blacks. Second, political behaviors tend to be overreported (Abramson and Claggett 1986; Presser 1984), a tendency that may be exaggerated by our reliance on retrospective reports. But recent analyses suggest no substantial racial differential (Anderson and Silver 1986) and also suggest that validation data do not paint a substantially different picture of the determinants of participation than do self-reports in surveys (Katosh and Traugott 1981). Hence, we believe these data accurately gauge black-white differences in patterns of sociopolitical involvement and the relationship of participation to other factors.

4. In general, analyses of the major mode of participation scales support the summary index results shown in Table 3. Blacks in high-empowerment areas score as more active than comparable whites, net of socioeconomic status, age, and sex, for the voting, campaigning, communal activity, and particularized contacting scales. This difference is significant in the cases of voting (29.10, $p < .01$) and communal activity (24.92, $p < .05$), of borderline significance for campaign activity (22.68, $p < .08$), and in the right direction but insignificant for particularized contacting of officials (4.16). Among whites, those living in high-black-empowerment areas are significantly less likely than those in low-black-empowerment areas to report voting (−18.79, $p < .05$) and communal activity (−17.61, $p < .05$). Blacks in high-empowerment areas score as more active than blacks in low-empowerment areas for each major mode of participation scale, with this difference reaching significance for campaigning (28.50, $p < .01$) and voting (15.37, $p = .09$).

5. Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses show that level of empowerment significantly increases scores on the political knowledge scale net of education, family income, occupation, age, sex, region (north vs. south), and size of place. (We included the two latter variables in order to assure that the empowerment variable was not simply capturing north-vs.-south or size-of-place differences.) Specifically, empowerment adds 1.6% to the total variance explained in political knowledge among blacks ($F = 8.33$, d.f. = 1/434, $p < .01$) and has the third largest effect in the equation (partial beta = .13, $p < .01$), following those for level of education (partial beta = .30, $p < .001$) and age (.25, $p < .001$).

6. The sort of political orientation typology we employ here, which distinguishes the politically engaged (high-trust, high-efficacy), the politically discontented (low-trust, high-efficacy), politically obedient (high-trust, low-efficacy), and politically alienated (low-trust, low-efficacy) is well established (Guterbock and London 1983; Shingles 1981). Cells of the political orientation typology were created by dichotomizing the political trust and political efficacy scales at the black median (in order to assure adequate numbers of black respondents in each category) and then cross-classifying the trust and efficacy variables.

7. Analyses of the separate major mode of participation scales support the results reported in Table 5. Among blacks, there are significant differences by the orientation typology on the adjusted voting ($F = 4.09$, d.f. = 3/429, $p < .01$), campaigning ($F = 8.65$, d.f. = 3/443, $p < .001$), and communal activity scales ($F = 5.53$, d.f. = 3/443, $p < .01$), but not on the adjusted particularized contacting scale ($F = .16$, d.f. = 3/443, n.s.). Politically engaged blacks, net of socioeconomic status, age, and sex, are the most active orientation type among blacks in terms of voting, campaigning, and communal activity. Thus, even for very-high-initiative behaviors such as campaigning and communal activity, politically engaged blacks are more active than the politically discontented.

8. The effect of empowerment on black participation is most consistent in the electoral arena, that is, for voting and especially for campaigning activity. The empowerment variable has a small but significant zero-order correlation with black voting (r = .12) and campaigning (r = .16), a borderline correlation with communal activity (r = .09), and no relation to particularized contacting. Multiple regression analyses show that empowerment has a borderline effect on voting (partial beta = .07, $p = .10$), net of socioeconomic status, age, sex, region, and size of place. This borderline effect is eliminated on introducing the political orientation and knowledge variables. Empowerment has a highly significant effect on campaigning (partial beta = .17, $p < .001$), net of socioeconomic status, age, sex, region, and size of place. Furthermore, empowerment has a significant direct effect on campaigning (partial beta = .11, $p < .05$) even after controlling for political orientations and political knowledge. The multiple

regression analyses showed no net effect of empowerment on black levels of communal activity or particularized contacting of officials.

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Lawrence Bobo is Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., is Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024.