Unreconciled strivings and warring ideals: the complexities of competing African-American political identities

-Fredrick C. Harris & Brian D. McKenzie

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Osvaldo Barragan
Ryan Fonseca
Ramiro Gonzalez
Patty Mondragon
Ryan Nipstad
Ernie Pruneda
Rocio Robledo
Trevor Stime
Alejandra Villagomez

Title

-The title depicts only a bit of what the whole article is about because it just states how complex the African political identities are but not how Black have different social and political identities that are affected by their own personal experiences.

-It just portrays a fraction of the main point of the article which is how within the Black community there are differences in political identities because everyone has different experiences and social statuses.

- There isn't an exact location, period of time, or institution that this article primarily focuses on since it touches upon the Black communities all throughout the nation

Main Point and Question

<u>Main Point</u>:

- Blacks have multiple group memberships that they use to view the political world.
- Their political identification is important as this process has consequences for defining the "political agenda" in the future.
- Evidence shows that blacks' beliefs are shaped by their personal experiences with:
  racial discrimination,
  - social class standing
  - attitudes towards racial identity
  - the racial makeup of neighborhoods blacks inhabit
  - their feelings about financial security.
- We find that racial discrimination consistently hinders blacks from supporting the value of individualism and the primacy of American identity over racial group identity.

<u>Question</u>: Which identities (racial or race-neutral categories) do blacks feel is most important and what factors account for blacks preferences for one social identity over others?

Puzzle

-Old Dependent Variable (black voting inclusion) >> New Independent Variable (various identities ie national vs racial group identities, individualism vs communal, social class vs racial group attachments) >> affected by controls like personal experiences with discrimination, racial identity, social class, racial make-up of neighborhoods, and financial security

The existing gap in surveyed African Americans is roughly 20-30 years as the previously researched data was collected in the 1980s and 1990s.

Social groups shape one's self identification and public opinion however we do not know to what extent african Americans are affected by multiple groups and identities at the same time.

Perspective on black political identities are affected by multiple factors including group affiliations and personal experiences, however we do not know which of these experiences or affiliations leads some individuals to stay or fall in economic status while others rise in social and economic status

Debate

➔ Political identities are complex for Blacks, but how are they affected?
  ◆ Broader topic: how identities form the public opinion of Black community
➔ Theories
  ◆ Social identity complexity theory: race vs nationality
  ◆ Social/political climate, personal values, discrimination, social class status, residency affect which identity Blacks identify with
  ◆ Race or class
➔ Individualism vs collectivism

Theory

Harris and Mckenzie theorize that African-Americans' social identity is fractured, leading them to identify and prioritize certain aspects of their self over others, namely nationality and social class. This is far more indicative of their allegiances and ideological leanings than their racial identity.

Hypothesis

Conceptual Hypothesis:
❖ African-American have different political identities that are influenced by experiences and difference in social class

Operational Hypothesis:
❖ Experience with discrimination, social class differences, sense of financial security, socioeconomics and demographics influence African-Americans political identities.

Operational Independent Variable:
❖ Discrimination
❖ Socioeconomic and Demographic
❖ Personal Financial Security
❖ Subjective Social Class Measure

Operational Dependent Variable:
❖ African-American Political Identities

Table 1. Probit models-influences on African-American political identities.

Variable	American first	Individualism	Own class commonality
Discrimination	−0.13 ***	−0.18***	−0.08**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
No black experience	0.22**	0.46***	0.19
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Upper class	−0.25	0.32**	−0.34**
	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Working class	−0.18**	0.12	0.33***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Community mostly black	−0.20**	−0.13	−0.12
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Financial security	0.12**	−0.01	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education	−0.03	−0.16***	0.09**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
South	0.11	0.24***	0.11
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Age	0.01**	0.01**	−0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	−0.31***	0.04	0.04
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Perceive black interviewer	−0.21**	−0.07	−0.15
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Constant	−0.26	0.31	−0.20
N=	1002	1002	1002
Wald χ^2(11)	83.92	92.44	38.79
Prob>χ^2	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: 2008 CAAPS/ABC News Black Politics Survey.
Note: Entries are probit coefficients and robust standard errors.
**p < .05.
***p < .01.

Research Design

Research Design: The 2008 CAAPS/ABC is a research that was conducted over the phone. It mainly focused on the political implications of African American adults. ICR conducted a survey that lasted from September 11-14. The survey was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1941 adults (18 or older). This included an oversample of **African Americans** (1032 out of 1941). They were asked a series of questions such as what identity they mos identify with, etc.

Units of Observation: African Americans

Units of Analysis: Primacy of African Americans' political Identities

How are the units assigned into groups: Random. The study subjects were picked nationally. Although there were mostly African Americans they were picked at random.

Independent Variable: Experienced discrimination, no black experience, working class and Community mostly black

How is the treatment administered: By nature. African Americans experience discrimination, etc. not by the researchers hands but by their own social interactions.

Dependent Variable: African American Political Identities (questions that were being asked)

Change in the DV within groups: No, some changes are wanted but the presence of competing identities among African-Americans is not necessarily a bad thing.

Change in the DV between groups: Yes, some changes are wanted. They want to merge their "double self" into a "truer" self.

Empirical Analysis

The article finds that AA's that blacks overwhelming support race neutral groups, "extensively" accept national identities, and espouse individualistic principles when acting politically. They often find membership among race-neutral groups. Experiencing racial discrimination regularly, living amongst other AA's, and financial /economic success influence their identity primacy heavily/. `

Policy Implications

-The article focuses on the existence and influences on competing African-American political identities in the present era.

-The knowledge from the article, was able to focus on blacks support for affirmative action programs and their views about the unfair treatment of African-Americans in the criminal justice system.

-The article continued to highlight the negative impact of embracing Americans nationalism or an individualistic orientation over one's racial identity. African-Americans who think of themselves in this manner are less likely to say they support race-based affirmative action in which ends up hurting the community.

Contribution to the Discipline and Future Research

New Knowledge, Theory, Method

- **Method: Determine socioeconomic status of blacks, and analyze the factors such as discrimination, political issues and location. Using qualitative interviews.**
- **Contribution to Identity Complexity Theory**
- Social identities of African Americans influence their political ideology.
  - African americans have multiple social identities.
- Racial Identity Politics.
- Primary Group Identity is the idea that when there is conflicting identities the dominant identity is adopted.

Questions for Future Research

- How will political identities change when the minority becomes the majority, as political power shifts from one group to another?
- If a financial crisis happens will blacks have a sense of communalism or individualism?