While Marching to Zion: Otherworldliness and Racial Empowerment in the Black Community

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Whether religion is the opiate of or the inspiration for political activity is one of the classic questions in the study of religion and politics. No place is this more clearly demonstrated than in the study of African Americans and racial empowerment. Despite the close relationship between religion and the Civil Rights Movement, many suggest that the nature of black Protestantism, especially its otherworldly orientation, depresses efforts to maximize African American political and social influence. Examining different components of religiosity among African Americans, this study finds that no form of religiosity depresses racial empowerment, but that varying aspects do have different effects. Organizational religiosity strongly predicts support for integrationist-oriented means to empowerment. Otherworldliness strongly predicts support for separatist-oriented means to empowerment. Religious guidance does not predict support for any aspect of empowerment. The study illustrates the multidimensional nature of religiosity and highlights the complexity of the relationship between religion and politics among blacks.

INTRODUCTION

The role of black churches in African-American life has been substantial and enduring since their inception as the invisible institutions of slaves hundreds of years ago. Even without material trappings, the Christian religion provided a new basis of social cohesion for people denied even the most rudimentary associations of home and family. Long after slavery ended, black churches continued to be the dominant institutions within the African-American community. In large part because racism and segregation prohibited blacks from developing or participating in American mainstream institutions outside the church, the church became the medium for all of civil society (Frazier 1964). The church not only gave spiritual edification but acted as an agency of social control, a center for the arts, the coordinating body for economic cooperation and business enterprise, an educational institution and a political forum. As DuBois noted, “This institution peculiarly is the expression of the inner life of a people in a sense seldom true elsewhere” ([1093]1965: 343). Lincoln and Mamiya observe that even today completely differentiating black churches from the spheres of polity and economy leads to a misinterpretation of both black churches and black culture (1990: 9–10). From the beginning, race and religion have ordered the lives of African American people, and there has always been a unique relationship between them (Taylor, Thornton, and Chatters 1987).

Still, despite the centrality of black churches to the black community, a perennial debate exists as to whether religion positively or negatively influences the political behavior and attitudinal positions of black Americans. The particular criticism is that the otherworldly orientation and concern with personal salvation that many black churches and parishioners portray depresses black racial orientations and efforts to improve the black community. (Reed 1986; Marx 1967, 1969; Frazier 1964; Powdermaker 1939). Ellison

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explains that the reasons for this are that otherworldliness leads to: (1) a focus on the afterlife as a source of justice and solace; (2) individual rather than structural explanations of deprivation; and (3) the amelioration of suffering through personal piety and emotional worship style rather than collective action (1991: 478). From this perspective a concern with the "sweet ole' by and by" leads to the neglect of the here and now. The sentiment is well expressed in the following quotation: "No one will ever be able to organize the black community for united action as long as black preachers stand up on Sunday morning and take people to heaven one by one" (Cleague: 1971: 11–12).

However, if one considers the role of black churches as the institutional anchors of the African American community and their historical involvement in not only the spiritual but physical well-being of their members, this otherworldliness perspective may overstate the tension between personal salvation and racial empowerment. By racial empowerment, I mean the maximization of African-American political and social influence. Frequently religious scholarship characterizes black churches and churchgoers as either preoccupied with social justice or obsessed with eternal judgement. Both dimensions are important to understanding the relationship between religion and politics for African Americans. As Paris cautions, "Black churches have always had a profound concern for the bitter and painful realities of black existence in America as well as an abiding hope in a bright and radiant future (eschaton) free from any form of racial injustice." Paris continues, "The convergence of sacred principles with efforts for improved temporal conditions reveals the integral relationship of religion and politics in black churches" (1985: 2). Given the convergence, I examine whether or not an otherworldly orientation precludes support for racial empowerment and community development among African Americans. A better understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in the African American community can be gained by analyzing this component of religiosity.

**RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY**

The first challenge in assessing the relationship between religion and politics in the black community is separating the dimensions of religious commitment. What forms of religiosity impact behavior and attitudes in the political realm? As Talcott Parsons notes, "It is an elementary mistake to assume that everything bearing the semantic label of 'religion' can be dealt with as one phenomenon" (1961: 9). Levin, Taylor, and Chatters observe that this is especially problematic in the African American community where "a unidimensional model of religious involvement . . . has promoted a view of African-Americans as a homogeneous group, routinely religiously oriented with little if any variation in the form, intensity or pattern of religious involvement" (1995: 167–68). Failure to properly conceptualize, measure, and control for different types of religiosity can lead to the underestimation and misinterpretation of the political potency of religion (Wald and Smidt 1993).

In proposing a multidimensional measure of religious involvement for African Americans, Levin, Taylor, and Chatters (1995) differentiate between organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religion. The organizational and nonorganizational categories correspond nicely to the more familiar distinctions of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity (Allport 1950). The subjective religion classification is similar to the concept "religious salience" (Guth and Green 1993; Roof and Perkins 1975, Hoge and Zulueta 1985). Organizational religiosity reveals public institutional forms of religious involvement such as church membership, denomination, and attendance; participation in church activities, and group affiliation. Nonorganizational religiosity refers to private informal types of religious involvement. Common measures include: frequency of prayer and Bible reading, and level of exposure to religious media. Subjective religiosity captures the attitudinal component of nonorganizational religion. It is often operationalized as the importance of religion to indivi-
duals or the level of guidance they state that it provides in their lives. I have adopted the Levin, Taylor, and Chatters’ classification because otherworldliness seems to have more meaning under subjective religiosity than under salience. Salience usually refers to the strength of one’s religious commitment or to the relevance it has to an individual’s specific decisions. Otherworldliness is conceptually separate from either religious commitment or religious relevance. As a category, subjective religiosity is more broad and thus can better incorporate otherworldliness as a distinct attitudinal factor.

Studies evaluating the relationship between religion and politics in the African American community have primarily utilized organizational or nonorganizational measures of religiosity. Those most interested in the impact and influence of black churches have used organizational operationalizations. Ellison and Sherkat (1990) and Sherkat and Ellison (1991) examined whether or not economic ambition and political militancy led to dissatisfaction with mainline denominations. In evaluating sources of political mobilization, Wilcox (1990) found a positive relationship between attending a church that encouraged political participation, and political activity. Calhoun-Brown (1996) observed that blacks who attended political churches had higher levels of group consciousness and political efficacy, and that these psychological resources contributed to higher levels of political participation. Researchers more interested in the effect of devotionalism have utilized nonorganizational measures. For example, Leege, Wald, and Kellstedt (1993) showed that highly devotional blacks show strong political commitments. Harris (1994) used both organizational and nonorganizational measures to establish that religion serves as both an organizational and psychological resource for individual and collective political action in the African-American community. Cook and Wilcox (1990) describe how both internal and external religiosity are significant to the positions that blacks adopt on social issues; however, neither influences black attitudes in the areas of economics or foreign policy.

Overall, research has shown that both organizational and nonorganizational religiosity can significantly impact the political behavior and political attitudes of African Americans. However, the perception still persists that religion is especially detrimental to racial empowerment. Instead of encouraging institutional autonomy Reed contends, “The domain of the black church has been the spiritual and institutional adaption of Afro-Americans to an apparently inexorable context of subordination and dispossession” (1986: 59). There have been several empirical studies of religion and racial empowerment specifically. Using measures of private religious devotion and public religious participation, Ellison (1991) explains that both forms of religiosity are associated with racial identification, but neither are directly related to a desire for institutional autonomy. Wilcox and Gomez (1990) report similar findings that religion is a significant source of black identification and that organizational religiosity increases political participation. However, as in the previous study, their analysis suggests that religiosity had no relationship with collective action. Allen, Dawson, and Brown (1989) also relate that while devotionalism strengthens feelings of closeness to both elite and mass blacks, it is unrelated to a desire for institutional autonomy or community empowerment.

However, none of these studies included a separate measure of subjective religiosity. Moreover, the measure of subjective religiosity was not otherworldly orientation because no measures of this type were contained in the surveys utilized. Still, it is particularly important for otherworldly orientations to be examined independently for two reasons. First, several measures of racial empowerment are attitudinal rather than behavioral. Subjective religiosity is an attitudinal measure of religion. Considering the socialization role of black churches (Walton 1985), it might be reasonable to expect a closer linkage between sets of ideas than between ideas and actions. After all, concerns with both spiritual and temporal well being have historically been the principle foci of black churches. Second, theoretically, it is otherworldliness not devotionalism that has consistently been cited as the
primary reason religion depresses black racial orientations. Its "intrinsically anti-temporal eschatological orientation mandates quietism, political and otherwise" (Reed 1986: 57). Primarily due to data limitations this issue has previously not been empirically examined.

**DATA AND METHODS**

*Data*

To examine the relationship between aspects of religiosity and black political empowerment this study uses data from the National Black Politics Study (NBPS), conducted by the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at the University of Chicago in 1993. The NBPS is a national cross-sectional survey that yields a sample of 1,206 African-American adult respondents.

*Dependent Variables: Racial Empowerment*

Racial empowerment is based on a belief that blacks should build political, social, and economic institutions based on the cultural values and interests of the group (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Allen, Dawson, and Brown 1989). Racial empowerment is focused on developing black autonomy. A debate exists as to the most effective means to develop that autonomy (McCartney 1992). Mainstream integrationist-oriented strategies center on utilizing the electoral process and working within the political system to increase the influence of African Americans. Conversely, separatist-oriented strategies find their roots in black nationalist ideologies (Gurin and Epps 1975). Finding the integrationist approach ineffectual and insufficient, separatist strategies focus instead on enhancing the closeness of the black community and strengthening its institutions in order to augment African-American political and social control. Measures of both approaches to racial empowerment are included in the NBPS.

The first two measures of racial empowerment concern political participation. Political participation is an appropriate measure of racial empowerment because for blacks in the United States voting has been a type of collective action aimed at increasing the power of the group (Preston, Henderson, and Puryear 1982). As Nelson (1982) observed:

> The new black politics represents an effort by black political leaders to capitalize on the increasing size of the black electorate; the strategic position of black voters in many cities, counties and congressional districts, and the growing political consciousness in the black community. It constitutes an immensely serious effort to build bases of electoral strength in the black community and organize black political interest around the power to vote.

Respondents were asked whether or not they voted in the 1992 presidential election as well as whether they engaged in nonelectoral activities, such as helping with voter registration, giving money to political candidates, giving people rides to the polls on election day, attending fundraisers, passing out campaign materials, and signing petitions. An additive index of these activities was constructed with a reliability coefficient of .71.

The third measure of racial empowerment is an additive index of eight questions that all address the separatist strategy of enhancing black institutional autonomy. Respondents were asked their degree of agreement with the following statements: (a) blacks should participate in black-only organizations; (b) blacks should always vote for black candidates when they run; (c) black people should shop in black stores whenever possible; (d) blacks should support the creation of all-male public schools for black youth; (e) black children should study an African language; (f) blacks should have control over the government in
mostly black communities; (g) blacks should have control over the economy in mostly black communities; (h) blacks should have their own separate nation. This index ranging from 0–32 was highly reliable with an alpha coefficient of .76.

The fourth measure of racial empowerment assesses the degree of racial solidarity expressed by respondents. Much of the research on racial empowerment suggests that a strong commitment to racial solidarity makes racial empowerment possible. Racial solidarity is considered a separatist-oriented measure of racial empowerment because a cohesive independent community is a foundational premise of nationalist-oriented ideologies. To examine the extent of a respondent’s racial solidarity a scale was constructed of their reported affect toward poor blacks, middle class blacks, and blacks in general.5

Finally, to strengthen the electoral and political influence of blacks, many have attempted to use churches as a means to mobilize the African-American community (McAdam 1982). As a fifth measure of racial empowerment, respondents revealed how appropriate they thought this activity was in their degree of agreement with the statement black churches or places of worship should be involved in politics. As the strongest institution within the African-American community, and the only institution historically controlled independently of whites, churches are one of the few institutions among blacks that have always operated with a relative degree of autonomy. If religiosity in general or otherworldliness in particular depresses a desire for racial empowerment, it is reasonable to expect that respondents would not express that politics was part of the proper mission of churches.

Factor analysis confirms that these five measures do indeed load on just two factors.6 These factors reflect the two distinct strategies that African Americans have utilized to achieve racial empowerment in the United States. The political-participation measures reveal the integrationist-oriented dimension. The measures of institutional autonomy, including the churches role in politics and the measure of racial solidarity reveal more separatist-oriented strategies.

**Independent Variables: Subjective Religiosity**

One of the principal benefits of using the NBPS is that it contains a measure of otherworldliness. More than any other aspect of religiosity, the otherworldly orientation of black churches and black churchgoers is consistently cited as the reason some believe religion and racial empowerment are not more closely linked. Respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Black churches should spend more on personal salvation.” Personal salvation has a very specific meaning in African-American Protestantism. Accepting the Lord as personal savior is an act of faith that prevents one from being eternally condemned to hell. It is precisely the belief that black churches and black churchgoers already spend too much time focusing on the world to come that critics give as the reason religiosity is contrary to racial empowerment. The “blessed hope” that salvation gives from this perspective serves only to “provide emotional relief for the fixed problems of a hard life” (Johnson 1941: 69). As Powdermaker (1967: 285) contends it “serves as an antidote, a palliative, an escape” which “counteracts the discontents that make for rebellion.” For a respondent to assert that churches should spend even more on personal salvation clearly indicates otherworldly concern.

The second measure of subjective religiosity included in this study is religious guidance. Respondents were asked to give the amount of guidance they felt religion provided in their daily lives. This measure was very weakly correlated with the indicator of otherworldliness suggesting that the two concepts are distinct.7 Although perhaps not as appropriate a test of the impact of subjective religiosity on racial empowerment as otherworldliness, it is reasonable to expect that if religiosity directs people away from
empowerment, a negative relationship would emerge between it and those who derive the most guidance from religion.

**Independent Variables: Organizational Religiosity**

This study also analyzes the impact of organizational religiosity on the desire for black autonomy. Organizational religiosity expresses public institutional forms of religiosity. This dimension was constructed from a measure of frequency of church attendance and a measure of participation by the respondent on committees, projects, and meetings at the church but apart from worship services. Group-oriented activity may stimulate the desire for political empowerment. In fact, because this is true, denominational affiliation is also included as a measure of organizational religiosity. As Ellison (1991: 479) notes "any investigation of the relationship between religious involvement and the racial orientations of black Americans must consider variations in the historical origins and social bases of black religious institutions." Both mainline Baptist and Methodist denominations have a developed in large part as a response to racism and discrimination by white churches. Research has shown that members of these denominations tend to have higher levels of racial solidarity and support for militancy on racial issues (Hunt and Hunt 1977a, 1997b). Holiness denominations such as the Church of God and the Church of God in Christ have traditionally been concerned with personal morality and right living. Of all the major black denominations this category is seen as most otherworldly. Therefore it is important to take holiness denominations into account when examining the relationship between subjective religiosity and empowerment. Respondents who attend white denominations might be expected to have weaker desires for racial empowerment and racial autonomy because they are willing to affiliate with institutions (churches) that are controlled (at least organizationally) by nonblacks. As Ellison and Sherkat (1990) observe, nontraditional groups are likely to view social activism on the behalf of black people as very important. The theology of Black Muslims, for instance, teaches social distance from whites and the necessity of building the black community. Dummy variables were created for each of preceding groups with white denominations being the comparison category. Unfortunately the NPBS contains no measures of nonorganizational religiosity, so the impact of devotionalism cannot be assessed using this data.

**Control Variables**

In analyzing the relationship between religiosity and racial empowerment it is important to consider the potentially confounding effects of several sociodemographic variables. Thus, this study controls for age, education, gender, income, and rural location because rural churches have been predominantly located in the South and predominantly otherworldly in their orientation (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

**Findings**

Table 1 presents the zero-order correlations between religiosity and each of the aspects of racial empowerment. In assessing the bivariate relationships, it is clear that religiosity and racial empowerment are associated. However, interesting patterns emerge. Contrary to expectations that otherworldliness would be negatively related to racial empowerment, the data show a positive relationship between an otherworldly orientation and several facets of racial empowerment. A desire for institutional autonomy, a belief that churches should be involved in politics, and racial solidarity, are all significantly associated with otherworldliness. The other measure of subjective religiosity, religious guidance, was
only related to nonelectoral political participation. Organizational religiosity in the form of church involvement was positively associated with both measures of political participation. It is intriguing that otherworldliness is associated with only separatist-oriented measures of racial empowerment, and church involvement is associated with only integrationist-oriented measures of racial empowerment. The literature has consistently demonstrated that church involvement and political participation are associated (Wilcox and Gomez 1990; Wilcox 1990; Harris, 1994). Previously, no support for a relationship between religiosity and institutional autonomy has been reported (Ellison 1991; Allen, Dawson, and Brown 1989). However, by examining otherworldliness as an aspect of religiosity a more complex picture begins to evolve.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Religiosity</th>
<th>Nonelectoral Activity</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Institutional Autonomy</th>
<th>Political Churches</th>
<th>Racial Solidarity</th>
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<th>Organizational Religiosity</th>
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<td></td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.12**</td>
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| Racial Solidarity         | .04                | -.02  | .00              |

NOTE: * p < .05; ** p < .005; *** p < .0005. All correlations are Pearson's R except for the dichotomous variable vote. Tau-c used as the measure of association for the vote variable.

Table 2 presents the estimated net effects of religiosity on each of the facets of racial empowerment controlling for sociodemographic variables. The religiosity pattern observed in the bivariate relationships also emerges in the multivariate relationships. Otherworldliness was an important positive predictor of racial empowerment through separatist oriented strategies. It had a significant effect on a desire for institutional autonomy, a belief that churches should be involved in politics and of racial affect. These findings are contrary to expectations because otherworldly orientations have traditionally been understood as directing people away from this worldly concerns. However, in the NBPS respondents who believed that the church should spend more on personal salvation also believed that blacks should do things to empower their community culturally, economically, and politically, that it is inappropriate for churches to be involved in politics, and felt warmer toward blacks overall. It is particularly interesting that this variable was a positive indicator of a desire for churches to be involved in politics because a desire for churches to spend more on personal salvation and a desire for churches to be involved in politics have been viewed as incompatible. Empirically, however, this is without foundation. Otherworldly orientations did not preclude this-worldly concerns.

Moreover, otherworldly orientations were not a major hindrance to integrationist forms of political participation. It is noteworthy that the effect of otherworldliness on voting and other forms of political participation was not statistically significant. This is interesting because an otherworldly orientation has traditionally been seen as one of the major obstacles to racial empowerment. However, controlling for different forms of religiosity and sociodemographic variables, otherworldliness had no substantial effect. Taken together, these findings contradict the expectation that otherworldly orientations direct people away from this-worldly concerns. These data reveal that otherworldly orientations may actually facilitate separatist-oriented approaches to racial empowerment. Yet, the same cannot be said for religious guidance, the other measure of subjective religiosity included in this study.
The amount of direction religion provides in a respondent's life had no relationship to any aspect of racial empowerment in the multivariate analysis.

### TABLE 2

DETERMINANTS OF RACIAL EMPOWERMENT

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<th>Institutional Autonomy B</th>
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NOTE: Vote and Political Church coefficients are from logistic regression procedure. Coefficients for other models are from ordinary least squares procedure. In all models, age, education, and income coded from low to high. White Denominations are the comparison category for the dummy denominational variables.

However, religiosity operationalized as organizational activity did have an effect on racial empowerment, although its effect was very different from otherworldliness. Organizational religious activity was a strong positive predictor of integrationist oriented strategies for empowerment. Those who were most involved in the church were more likely
to participate in the political system through voting and nonelectoral forms of behavior. It appears that the organizational aspect of religiosity is the basis of the perception that religion is meaningful to the political mobilization of African-American people. Still, church involvement had no significant impact on separatist-oriented strategies such as institutional autonomy and racial affect.

The Christian denominational measures of organizational religiosity had minimal effects on the aspects of racial empowerment. Despite the different sociohistorical contexts out of which denominational groupings emerge, when one takes into account demographic factors, few significant differences are manifest. Only on the aspect of nonelectoral participation did Christian denominational affiliation matter. On this indicator, being a Baptist or Catholic had a positive impact. The data also revealed that Muslim identification was a strong influence on two of the measures of racial empowerment. Being a Muslim increased the desire for institutional autonomy by more than 4 points, but decreased the likelihood of voting. This is not surprising in light of race-conscious Black Muslim theology that stresses the importance of blacks being separate from whites, and until recently has frowned on electoral participation.  

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Normally, in analyzing the relationship between religion and politics no measures of otherworldliness are included. However, by including this conceptualization several things are learned about the nature of their interaction with regard to the African-American community. First, the relationship between religion and politics is complex. It is inappropriate to dichotomize it — to characterize religion as either the opiate or the inspiration of political activity in the African-American community. Varying aspects of religiosity have different effects. Although religious guidance had no effect on racial empowerment, both organizational activity and otherworldliness facilitated it. However, they facilitated it differently. Organizational activity facilitated political mobilization. An otherworldly orientation did not. Otherworldly orientations facilitated a desire for institutional autonomy and racial affect. Organizational activity did not. Thus, even though in many cases the black community displays high levels of religiosity, religiosity among blacks should not be taken for granted. The pertinent question for politics is the type of religiosity because various types have distinctive impacts. Failure to understand this can lead to an oversimplification of the relationship between religion and politics among African Americans.

Second, these data reinforce religiosity as a multidimensional concept. This point has been well made by others (Levin, Taylor, and Chatters 1995; Lege and Kellstedt 1993). The literature shows a clear understanding of the difference between organizational and nonorganizational religiosity. However, the subjective religiosity classification is less precisely defined and utilized. Guth and Green (1993) caution that subjective religiosity or salience has been conceptually confused because it has been used to mean both the relevance of religion and its importance. This analysis suggests that subjective religiosity as a concept can be "unpacked" even more. The attitudinal component of religion includes both definitions of salience, but it must also include measures of otherworldly orientation. This is important because even the differing components of subjective religiosity have distinct effects. Religious guidance had no impact on racial empowerment, but an otherworldly orientation was a strong positive predictor of a desire for racial autonomy, churches in politics, and racial affect. It may be true that it is difficult to come up with good indicators of otherworldliness. With the rise of the "mega-churches" and the mainstreaming of pentecostalism, the traditional distinctions drawn between churchlike activities and sectlike activities are particularly unsatisfying. Still, this research suggests that at least in the
African-American community, constructing such measures may be particularly worthwhile. Moreover, it may be necessary to understand how religion and politics works among blacks.

Third, it is important to recognize not only the differing effects of religiosity, but the pattern of religious impact revealed in this data. Organizational activity facilitated integrationist-oriented political participation. An otherworldly orientation was conducive to more separatist-oriented approaches. Organizational activity had no impact on a desire for institutional autonomy and racial solidarity. Otherworldliness had no impact on mainstream political participation. It may be that the interaction of church involvement acts as a resource for political mobilization, but the religious separatism inherent in otherworldly theology reinforces the desire for an insular and distinctive African American community free from the struggles of interracial discrimination.11

Finally, this analysis shows quite clearly that an otherworldly orientation is not incompatible with racial empowerment. This is the bedrock of the critique of religion and politics in the black community, but it is not supported by the data. Those respondents who felt black churches should spend more on personal salvation were not less inclined toward integrationist-oriented political participation. More importantly, they were actually more inclined to be supportive of the institutional autonomy and racial solidarity of the separatist approach. There may be components of the utopian community represented by otherworldliness that resonate with those who desire a society without the stress of racial strife.

A critic of this interpretation might contend that the data do not actually show any relationship between otherworldliness and political action. After all, the separatist-oriented dependent variables in this study include only beliefs about what should happen and closeness to blacks. One might contend that respondents who attend otherworldly churches say "amen" to statements about building the institutions of the black community, like black people, but do not engage in any real action. The data show they are not more likely to vote or participate in nonelectoral political activities. A critic might insist that such respondents are actually withdrawn from politics altogether. However, such an interpretation would represent a lack of appreciation for the historic debate between separatist and integrationist approaches to politically empowering the African-American community. Central to the separatist perspective is the importance of self-determination and the affirmation of blacks as a group. Rather than acquiring political power through effective incorporation, separatists seek power through control of their communities. It is a distinct ideological strategy. It is within the context of this debate that separatist-oriented attitudes reveal volumes about how those who are otherworldly in orientation believe that blacks should act to achieve social, economic, and political power. The type of racial autonomy index used in this study is a standard measure of these sentiments (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Allen, Dawson, and Brown 1989).

These data suggest that otherworldliness can facilitate certain components of racial empowerment. This would be hard to understand absent the history and place of religion in the African-American experience. In the context of racism and segregation, out of necessity, spiritual and natural concerns converged at the church door. These concerns may still be converged in the minds of African American people. Religion and politics have never been well differentiated among blacks. Thus, even otherworldliness may have a this-worldly application and it is not incongruent that the sentiment that black churches should spend more on personal salvation and a desire for racial empowerment should be associated.
NOTES

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 1997 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. I would like to thank Ted Jelen and Laura Olson as well as two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

1 Wilcox and Gomez (1990) did include a measure of subjective religiosity in their private religiosity scale. However in their study subjective religiosity was not conceptualized as an independent attitudinal factor.

2 The preceding studies were done using either the National Survey of Black Americans (1979) or the National Black Election Study (1984/1988). Neither contains any measures of otherworldly orientation.

3 This dataset is available from the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at www.spc.uchicago.edu/ucrpc/. It is also archived by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan.

4 The NBPS employed a multiple frame design comprised of two subsamples of equal size. One sampled using random digit dialing. The other sampled out of census tracts that were over 30% black. There were no appreciable differences between the subsamples. The response rate was 65%. Preliminary comparisons to 1997 U.S. census reports indicate the data are basically representative with regard to key demographic variables. NBPS respondents however are better educated and more female than census reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education %</th>
<th>NBPS</th>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Income %</th>
<th>NBPS</th>
<th>Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school diploma</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>$10,000–$25,000</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>$25,000–$50,000</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>+$50,000</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College +</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NBPS</th>
<th>Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get a clearer idea of the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample it can also be compared to the widely used 1984 National Black Election Study (NBES) conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The NBES was the first large-scale scientific study of the political beliefs of African Americans exclusively. NBPS principal investigators, Ronald E. Brown and Michael C. Dawson, report that the two studies are very similar. However, respondents in the NBPS are slightly better educated and more urban that those interviewed for the NBES. Please see Final Report on the 1993–1994 National Black Politics Study for further information.

5 Affect is measured on feeling-thermometer scales ranging from 0–100. Cases with missing data were omitted.

6 Principal components analysis with Varimax rotation produced two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The interpretation of these factors was based on the assumption that factor loadings of .5 or greater were substantively significant.

7 The zerorder correlation between otherworldliness and religious guidance was .08.

8 The correlation between organizational religiosity and otherworldliness was .05; the correlation between organizational religiosity and religious guidance was .26. These low correlations suggest no collinearity problems that would prevent them from being introduced simultaneously as exogenous variables.

9 These dummy variables were created from the combination of two questions: What is your current religion or religious preference? — Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, Judaism, None, Other, Don’t know; and, if Protestant, What church or denomination do you belong to? Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Church of God in Christ, National Baptist Convention, USA, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Church of God, Nondenominational, Christian Methodist Episcopal, All other predominantly white Protestant groups, Interdenominational, Don’t Know. Coding for the dummies is as follows: Baptist includes all Baptist classifications. Very few respondents actually identified a specific denominations. While there are certainly some Baptists who attend white denominations (i.e. Southern Baptist) the vast majority belong to black denominations (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Methodist includes all Methodist denominations. Holiness includes the Church of God and the Church of God in Christ. White denominations include interdenominational, nondenominational and all other predominantly white Protestant groups. Catholics are self-identified. Muslims are self-identified Islamics and include Sunnis, Black Muslims, and Shiites. There were no Black Jews. The religious "nones" and "others" identified in question 1 are deleted from the analysis because of missing correlations on the religiosity questions.
Black Muslims practice an entirely different religion than orthodox Sunni or Shiite Islam. Sunni and Shi'ite Islam do not have a race-conscious theology. It was not possible to separate the different types of Muslims with these data. However, many African Americans who identify themselves as Muslim can be expected to follow the Black Muslim faith (Wilmore 1983).

Multiple regression analysis of the underlying integrationist and separatist dimensions demonstrated that the patterns between the aspects of racial empowerment and otherworldliness and racial empowerment and organizational religiosity revealed in Table 2 also held for the aggregated factor dimensions (not shown).

REFERENCES


Allport, Gordon. 1950. The individual and his religion. NY: Macmillan.


