

Group Consciousness and Participation: The Indirect Link

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Abstract

A number of authors have argued that group consciousness increases individuals' political participation (e.g. Miller et al. 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). In perhaps the most widely cited paper on this question, Miller et al. (1981), the evidence rests largely upon bivariate correlations with participation. Further investigation, however, reveals three things. First, Miller et al.'s findings for group consciousness are not robust once controls for political efficacy, partisanship, and social connectedness are added. Second, simple recursive specifications of the effects of group consciousness upon participation overlook simultaneous effects of political efficacy and group consciousness as suggested by Shingles (1981). Finally, group consciousness affects individual political participation differently across different groups, suggesting that researchers who include group consciousness in models of participation need to be sensitive to these variations when modeling the behavior of different groups.

keywords: group consciousness, political participation, political efficacy, subordinate groups.

Studying the relationship between social groups and mass political behavior has a long history in political science. Early voting studies, for example, argued that social group membership dramatically affected one's political predispositions (e.g. Berelson et al 1954; Lazarsfeld et al 1948). These early accounts, however, offered a deterministic, apolitical (Natchez 1985), view of the effects of social group membership upon electoral behavior that often ignored the psychological basis to group behavior. Such a view seems hard to sustain considering that the bases of psychological group affinities are not fixed, but shift in response to changing political environments. For example, class was more strongly related to vote choice than religion in 1948 when Taft-Hartley was a salient campaign issue while the reverse was true in 1960, when there was a Catholic running for President (Abramson et al 1995:158). These kinds of changes imply that how one identifies with a group and the group's particular position in the current political environment are critical to the influence of social groups upon one's political behavior.

In examining the effect of the social group upon political participation, even political scientists who use a psychological approach sometimes maintain a less than discriminating view. In a widely-cited paper, Miller et al. (1981) argue that group consciousness strongly affects political mobilization. The authors of this study recognize that "the link between these attitudes and political behavior is complex and dependent on structural conditions and widely varying motivations" (506), but their analysis does not examine the complexity of these links. We need to look at these links between group consciousness and other political attitudes in order to understand fully the relationship between group consciousness and political participation. Such analysis is important because it may help uncover indirect links between group consciousness and participation and provide us with a means for better determining when group consciousness is more likely to influence group members' political participation. This information can also tell us how well psychological factors can compensate for the lack of political resources among members of "deprived" groups.

This paper argues that group consciousness affects groups' political participation in variety of ways. As described by Shingles (1981), the relationship between political attitudes and participation is the not same for all groups. Extending this logic, the effects of group consciousness upon participation may vary given the relationships between group consciousness, other individual political attitudes, and the political salience of the group as a whole. The role of attitudes and group salience are important, as a number of authors have suggested that group consciousness provides a lens through which group concerns take precedence within their political world (Conover 1984) and, thereby, acts as a substitute for other political resources of which group members are deprived (Verba and Nie 1972). If these views are correct, the effects of group consciousness upon political participation should be most direct for members of the most politically salient groups in society with the fewest political resources, and least direct, if at all relevant, for members of groups that are politically less salient and have the greatest political resources (Gurin et al. 1980). Such differences are particularly important in the United States where political parties are less likely than elsewhere to mobilize citizens from lower socioeconomic groups (Verba et al. 1978).

The paper proceeds in four steps. First, I briefly review the literature on social groups and political participation to develop a model that better allows us to understand how group consciousness affects political participation. Second, I re-analyze 1976 National Election Study data using a simple multivariate model to show that Miller et al.'s findings overstate the direct effect of group consciousness upon participation. Third, I analyze the same data and data from the 1984 National Black Election Study and the 1992 National Election Study, using non-recursive models to show how understanding the relationship between consciousness and other variables affecting participation is necessary for understanding how group consciousness affects participation. I conclude the paper by discussing some of the implications of the findings for how we view the role of social groups in promoting group

members' political participation.

Group Consciousness and Political Participation

Before examining how group consciousness affects political participation, we must first establish what we mean by group consciousness. The three, hierarchical, criteria for having group consciousness are objective membership in the group, subjective identification with the group, and, finally, political awareness of the group's position in society (Gurin et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1981). The first requirement, objective membership, is important because group consciousness must grow out of unique experiences to which only members of the particular social group can be exposed (cf. Lau 1983). If exposure to these experiences is not unique to a single social or ethnic group, the "group" to which consciousness should refer is one that shares the characteristics that produce the experiences. This last point is significant because such experiences provide a distinctive basis for contrast with out-groups that is necessary for the psychological formation of the group (Turner 1987:46-49).

The second requirement for group consciousness is group identification. Abstractly, the concept has been conceived as "[connoting] a perceived self-location within a particular social stratum, along with a psychological feeling of belonging to that particular stratum" (Miller et al. 1981:495) and reflecting the merging of a group schema with an individual's self-schema (Conover 1984:762). In either case, identification provides individuals with "norms and values. . . which influence their attitudes and behavior" (Turner 1987:1). The development of group identification provides group members with a frame of reference through which certain concerns, such as relations with out-group members, may take on a new relevance. For instance, experiments have shown that the recognition of even the most minimal level of group membership can prompt group members to act against the out-group, even at the cost of maximal in-group benefit (e.g. Wetherell 1982).

Finally, group consciousness has been argued to have a significant effect upon individu-

als' political behavior, particularly political participation, because group consciousness represents the “*political awareness or ideology regarding the group's relative position in society*” (Miller et al. 1981:495, emphasis added). Miller and his colleagues outline three concepts that, when coupled with group identification, indicate the presence of group consciousness. The first is *polar affect*; “a preference for members of one's own group (in-group) and a dislike for those outside the group (out-group).” The second is *polar power*; “expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the group's current status, power, or material resources in relation to that of the out-group.” The last component is *system blame*; “the belief that the responsibility for a group's low status in society is attributable. . . to inequities in the social system.” While there are also other conceptualizations of group consciousness (e.g. Tate 1991), I maintain the measures and concepts from Miller et al. (1981) to provide comparability between my results and theirs, because these measures are available for a greater variety of groups, and because these measures and concepts are still frequently used in the literature (e.g. Cole et al. 1998 and Koch 1994).

With this definition, it is easy to see why feelings of group consciousness can help increase political participation — especially among subordinate group members. The belief that one's group has been placed at a “competitive disadvantage” by the social system increases the value of using political participation as a means of correcting these disadvantages (Dahl 1961). Verba and Nie (1972:151) add that group consciousness helps foster participation for members of subordinate groups beyond normal levels of activity because it provides a substitute for the higher status that increases participation among members of dominant groups.

These explanations provide an important step toward understanding why group consciousness increases participation, but they beg the question of how group consciousness does this. Shingles (1981) argues that the “missing link” between consciousness and participation is political efficacy. His hypothesis is that consciousness “contributes to the

combination of a sense of political efficacy and political mistrust which in turn induces political involvement” (77). If we focus upon the system blame aspect of Miller et al. (1981), the link between consciousness, internal efficacy, and participation is comprehensible. If group members attribute blame for their subordinate political status to society, then their own sense of political self-competence should be strengthened. The relationship between group consciousness and political trust that Shingles discusses also makes sense within the Miller et al (1981) framework. Shingles writes that “by drawing attention to their status as a deprived and oppressed group” blacks will acquire a “more critical, cynical view of the system” (78). Here again, the twin components of system blame and the belief that the in-group’s influence in society is illegitimately lower than what it should be relative to the out-group leads individuals with group consciousness to believe that they cannot trust the political system to be responsive to the group’s concerns. From this, Shingles argues that the combination of high internal efficacy and political mistrust leads blacks to become involved in “high-initiative conventional policy behavior.”

One final matter for consideration is how this conception of how group consciousness affects political participation differently for subordinate and dominant group members. Clearly, dominant group members may feel that their group faces illegitimate barriers to political influence because of systemic factors. Yet, members of dominant groups should have less need for the enhanced feelings of internal efficacy that group consciousness has been proposed to provide to members of subordinate groups. Group consciousness may also be less relevant for dominant group members because their social group is less relevant for many politically salient issues, and so mistrust of the political system does not activate feelings related to group identification. Finally, dominant group members are less likely to suffer from the resource deprivation that group consciousness overcomes in increasing participation; although, one cannot rule out the possibility that members of dominant groups with fewer resources will focus upon the out-group as the explanation for their position. For

these reasons, it is hypothesized that group consciousness should have less effect upon the political participation and political efficacy of dominant group members than subordinate group members.

A Multivariate Specification of Group Consciousness and Participation

The significance of Miller et al.'s findings, and Verba and Nie (1972) before them, is that they indicate that psychological factors can reduce the disadvantages that subordinate group members face arising from a lack of socioeconomic resources related to political participation; thereby, increasing group members' political representation. Consequently, Miller et al.'s claim that "the strongest evidence of a mobilization theory based on group consciousness is found for blacks, but it is also evident for women and the poor" shows how greater awareness of group deprivation among group members helps level the playing field for subordinate groups with respect to participation and political representation.

There is reason, however, to question of Miller et al.'s conclusions because their analysis is based solely upon bivariate analysis of group consciousness and participation. The authors do write that their results are robust even when controlling for demographic variables, like education and income. Nonetheless, it is not surprising that attitudinal variables will outperform demographic variables (Achen 1992). Furthermore, if group consciousness is related to political efficacy (Shingles 1981), the results that Miller et al. report are biased because of specification error arising from the omission of political efficacy from the model. An appropriate test of whether or not group consciousness increases political participation, therefore, must include related attitudinal variables, such as political efficacy.

The first step, then, is to reanalyze the data using a common specification for participation models, including variables for political efficacy, as well as for partisanship and demographic variables, like age, marital status, church attendance, and region. For this, the measures of group consciousness were replicated as faithfully as possible given the in-

formation about the measures in the 1981 paper and an earlier paper, Gurin et al. (1980), cited in the 1981 paper. The dependent measures are also the ones that Miller et al. use in their analysis. The estimated model is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Participation} = & \alpha_1 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Age} - \text{Squared} + \beta_3 \text{Education} + \beta_4 \text{Income} + \\ & \beta_5 \text{Marital Status} + \beta_6 \text{Church Attendance} + \beta_7 \text{South} + \\ & \beta_8 \text{Partisanship} + \beta_9 \text{Internal Efficacy} + \beta_{10} \text{External Efficacy} + \\ & \beta_{11} \text{Group Consciousness} + u_1. \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

For the 1976 data, these models are estimated for turnout using probit and non-electoral participation using OLS.¹ The relevant population for each estimate is objective group members only, as defined in the appendix to the Miller et al. paper.

These results (Table I) indicate that group consciousness is positively and strongly related to political participation only for women — and only consistently for turnout, while other variables, like efficacy and partisanship fare much better.² The analysis also calls into question the degree to which group consciousness has any effect upon black Americans' participation (cf. Bobo and Gilliam 1990). It is also important to note that the effect of group consciousness upon participation is negative for the poor as well as for the groups that could be considered dominant, whites and the elderly. These results differ from the results that Miller et al. (1981) report in Tables 1-3, especially those that indicate that group consciousness is positively related to non-electoral participation among whites. For older people, the results presented here are largely insignificant, which is consistent with Miller et al.'s findings for turnout, but not for their findings with respect to participation in non-electoral activities. Furthermore, the statistically insignificant findings for the poor are consistent with the argument that the lower salience of class in American politics re-

¹The results reported below are not radically different from those obtained from the 1972 data. I concentrate on the 1976 data because all measures of group consciousness are available for all groups.

²Because of space limitations, parameter estimates for the other variables are available from the author upon request.

duces the effect of class consciousness upon political participation, and so may not provide the “substitute” for lower socioeconomic resources for these people. Finally, there is little evidence that the interactive measures of group consciousness significantly outperform the individual components, as Miller et al. argue. Future studies of group consciousness may have to consider which group-based attitudes are most strongly related to group consciousness and, even, the adequacy of these measures. The main point to take from these findings is that group consciousness does not have as nearly as strong an effect upon participation for many groups once the effects are estimated in a more fully specified model, and so we need to question just how much of a substitute group consciousness provides for other participatory resources.

[Table I about here]

A Non-Recursive Specification of Group Consciousness and Participation

The multivariate model provides important insights about the relationship between group consciousness and political participation, but these results may be deceptive. Shingles (1981) shows that there are more complex relationships between group consciousness and political efficacy that could produce biased estimates in a simple, single-equation model of participation. But while Shingles’s arguments point to some valuable insights about the relationship between group consciousness and political efficacy, his analysis leaves some questions unanswered.

First, Shingles assumes that group consciousness influences political efficacy, and while his data show that group consciousness is associated with feelings of high internal efficacy and low political trust, his results do not test the direction of causation. Second, Shingles argues that the relationship between group consciousness and political efficacy holds only for lower income blacks, but he does not present any results specifically for the relationship between participation, internal efficacy, and political trust for lower income blacks. Given

that he shows that lower income whites, on average, have both low internal efficacy and low political trust, one might infer that among the lower income respondents with high internal efficacy and low political trust, for whom political participation is highest, there are a significant number of blacks with group consciousness, but the link between group consciousness and political participation is not demonstrated directly.

So while Shingles makes a good case that group consciousness is related to both internal and external political efficacy, his analysis does not fully analyze the relationship from group consciousness through political efficacy to political participation. An alternative hypothesis is that individuals with a higher sense of internal efficacy or a lower sense of external efficacy come to adopt group consciousness as a more complete belief system that incorporates these feelings within a greater program for political action. Members of subordinate groups with a low sense of external political efficacy may develop group consciousness as a means of specifically identifying in-group members as the “people like me” to whose concerns public officials are not responsive. Similarly, attribution theories (e.g. Kelley 1967) show how subordinate group members with a higher sense of personal political competence may be more receptive to group consciousness as a means of explaining systematic differences in social groups’ political influence. If they, and others like them, feel politically competent, but unable to influence public officials, it would be easy to conclude that their inability stems from discriminatory treatment of their group. This relationship can also come about as people with the ego strength that goes along with a sense of competence recognize that individual action is not sufficient to achieve equal status with dominant group members, but also need collective group action. Finally, political efficacy and consciousness may feed upon one another in a simultaneous relationship. However conceived, the relationships between political efficacy and group consciousness must be considered in models of political participation that include group consciousness because there is clear evidence that political efficacy is related to political participation. The existence of these endogenous relationships

would mean that the lack of direct effects of group consciousness in Table I masks indirect effects upon political participation.

Because the residuals for models of group consciousness, political efficacy, and political participation could be correlated, I use two-stage least squares (2SLS) to estimate equation 1 and the following set of equations:³

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Group Consciousness} = & \alpha_1 + \beta_1 \text{Conservatism} + \beta_2 \text{Education} + \beta_3 \text{Party Identification} + \\ & \beta_4 \text{Issue} + \gamma_1 \text{Internal Efficacy} + \gamma_2 \text{External Efficacy} + u_1. \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Internal Efficacy} = & \alpha_2 + \beta_5 \text{Partisanship} + \beta_6 \text{Political Information} + \beta_7 \text{Age} + \\ & \beta_8 \text{Personal Competence} + \gamma_3 \text{Group Consciousness} + \\ & \gamma_4 \text{External Efficacy} + u_2. \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{External Efficacy} = & \alpha_3 + \beta_9 \text{Income} + \beta_{10} \text{Change Government Form} + \\ & \beta_{11} \text{Fed Gov't Performance} + \beta_{12} \text{Fed. Gov't Influence} + \\ & \gamma_5 \text{Internal Efficacy} + \gamma_6 \text{Group Consciousness} + u_3 \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

In these equations,⁴ I test endogenous relationships between consciousness and efficacy. For some of these relationships, I expect that there will be evidence for both subordinate and dominant group members. Other relationships are hypothesized as significant only for subordinate or dominant group members. Finally, although previous studies have shown that there are two separate dimensions of political efficacy (e.g. Balch 1974), the specified model allows feelings of competence (internal efficacy) and attitudes concerning system

³In equations with limited dependent variables, such as internal and external efficacy and some of the components of group consciousness, such as identification and, for the poor, system blame, I use 2SCML probit (Rivers and Vuong 1988). I use limited information estimators because they are less susceptible to specification errors in the other equations in the system than full information estimators.

⁴The *Issue* variable in equation 2 represents some issue that is relevant to the particular group, such as busing for blacks and whites.

responsiveness (external efficacy) to have simultaneous effects upon one another (Lane 1959; Abramson 1983).

The specific hypotheses concerning group consciousness and political efficacy are:

1. Group consciousness should be *positively* related to internal political efficacy for *subordinate group* members because of the role that group consciousness plays in reducing subordinate group members' beliefs about the locus of responsibility for their position in the social structure (Shingles 1981). I do not expect there to be any effect of group consciousness upon internal political efficacy for dominant group members. There is no reason to believe that group consciousness increases dominant group members' likelihood of developing a sense of political competence.
2. Subordinate group members with a high sense of internal political efficacy are more likely to develop a sense of group consciousness to bring their own beliefs about their personal political competence into line with explanations for their group's subordinate political status by way of system blame. Conversely, dominant group members with a low sense of internal political efficacy are more likely to develop a sense of group consciousness in order to counter their feelings of powerlessness. Therefore, internal efficacy should be *positively* related to group consciousness for *subordinate group* members and *negatively* related to group consciousness for *dominant group* members.
3. Subordinate group members with group consciousness should be more likely to develop a low sense of external political efficacy because the ideology of group consciousness is that the political system is not responsive to the group's political status (Shingles 1981). By contrast, it is more likely that dominant group members develop a sense of group consciousness *in*

response to low external efficacy rather than to start with consciousness and have those attitudes affect their sense of external efficacy. Therefore, group consciousness should have a negative effect upon external efficacy for subordinate group members, but there should be no effect of group consciousness upon external efficacy for dominant group members.

4. Likewise, subordinate group members with a low sense of external political efficacy are more likely to develop group consciousness as they recognize a shared frustration with the lack of government responsiveness to their group's political demands. Dominant group members should also display this relationship as a result of blaming the out-group for the perceived unresponsiveness to their group's political demands. Therefore, external political efficacy hypothesized as *negatively* related to group consciousness for members of both *subordinate* and *dominant* groups.

Along with these hypotheses, I also argue that group consciousness influences political participation more directly for members of social groups with greater political salience and political resource disadvantage. In the United States, the effect of discrimination against blacks and women upon their ability to reach the highest levels of politics, business, and society have been central issues, especially for blacks (Schuman et al. 1985) and women (Klein 1984), for more than the last 50 years. By contrast, there has been traditionally very little partisan political discourse about the unfairness of the free market system to the poor (McCloskey and Zaller 1984) or conflict between youths and the elderly, and reverse discrimination against whites is only a fairly recent phenomenon.⁵ This means that the effect of group consciousness upon political participation should be most direct for blacks and women, but less so, if at all, for the poor, youths, the elderly, and whites.

The analysis generally supports the hypotheses; although, the results are not as conclu-

⁵Although, if there are effects for youths, then the mid-1970s would be one time where we might expect to see some effects.

sive as one would hope. As expected, there is a generally positive effect of group consciousness upon internal efficacy for women and youths, but the effects for other subordinate group members, like the poor and blacks are opposite of what is predicted by the first hypothesis; although, any conclusions about blacks should be qualified by the small N (Table II). On the other hand, we cannot conclude that group consciousness does not have any effect upon internal efficacy for members of dominant groups, where there is a negative and significant relationship for whites. There is some evidence for the hypothesis that internal efficacy has a positive effect upon group consciousness for subordinate group members, but there is even greater support, statistically significant for whites, that there is a negative effect of internal efficacy upon group consciousness for dominant group members.

[Table II about here]

The analysis also provides general support for the hypotheses about the relationship between group consciousness and external efficacy, but again, the results are not crystal clear. Among subordinate group members, a sense of group consciousness does generally lead to a lower sense of external efficacy, but these results are statistically significant only for the poor. For dominant groups, group consciousness also promotes a lower sense of external efficacy, but as predicted, the effect is too small to be, with one exception, statistically distinguishable from zero. Finally, the analysis does not indicate that external efficacy has much effect upon the development of group consciousness. Where there are significant effects of external efficacy upon group consciousness, for whites, the results show that higher external efficacy actually *increases* the likelihood of developing group consciousness. Finally, one should note that for all groups but blacks, for whom there is a limited number of observations, there is evidence (results not shown) of simultaneous effects between internal and external efficacy.

[Table III about here]

The results for the direct effects of group consciousness political participation (Table IV) indicate that group consciousness does have direct and significant effects upon turnout for some of the groups, including the poor. In some cases, the results are mixed; consciousness is significant for some measures but not others, and in cases, like the elderly, where the effect is statistically significant, consciousness has a negative effect upon turnout. The fact that there are some direct effects of group consciousness upon participation in these models that did not show up in the recursive specification indicates that group consciousness needs to be considered with relation to other factors, such as efficacy, in order to accurately estimate the overall effects of group consciousness upon participation. Finally, the direct effects of consciousness upon non-electoral participation, contrary to the results from Miller et al., are very weak.

[Table IV about here]

Taken together, the results in Tables II-IV suggest different patterns to the effect of group consciousness upon participation. For example, whereas the recursive specification (Table I) indicates that group consciousness very strongly increases women's probability of voting, the non-recursive specification indicates that, even though some direct effects remain, most of the effect of group consciousness upon turnout is mediated through its positive effect upon internal efficacy. Similarly, while the single-equation estimates reveal no effect of group consciousness upon turnout for the poor, the multiple equation model shows a positive effect of group consciousness upon turnout — albeit one whose effect is mitigated somewhat by the negative effect of class consciousness upon external efficacy, which has a directly negative effect upon turnout.

All in all, the results should lead us to reconsider our views about the effects of group consciousness upon political participation. The effects of consciousness are certainly not consistent across either groups or measures. Furthermore, there is evidence that consciousness is endogenously related to other forces that affect political participation, like internal

and external efficacy, producing indirect effects that increase or decrease the effect of group consciousness upon political participation. The results also indicate that we must give attention to these relationships as they affect subordinate and dominant group members differently. Finally, for whatever findings are not conclusive, there can be little doubt that the effect of group consciousness upon participation is smaller and more complicated than that set out in Miller et al. (1981).

A Further Look at Endogenous Effects Between Group Consciousness, Political Efficacy, and Participation

Fortunately, the 1976 data are not the only data available for analyzing the effects of group consciousness upon political participation. The 1984 National Black Election Study provides measures that are analogous to the Miller et al. measures of consciousness and, because of the larger sample, a fairer test of the argument that group consciousness can still provide a psychological substitute for a lack of other participation-related resources for the most salient social group in American politics. Likewise, the 1992 National Election Study provides measures of women's group consciousness to examine further the effect of gender consciousness upon political efficacy and political participation. In both cases, examining later data allows for a comparison of the results across time and a look at the relative strength and consistency of the relationships found in 1976 into the present time, a concern that Bobo and Gilliam (1990) and Tate (1991) raised for the earlier conclusions regarding race consciousness. Finally, analysis of these data provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between consciousness, efficacy, and participation at two times where group identity was unambiguously salient in the political environment, with the candidacy of Jesse Jackson in 1984 and the unprecedented number of women running for the U.S. Senate in 1992.

The model related to blacks' participation takes the same form as that in equation 1,

except that variables have been added, following Tate (1991), measuring approval of Ronald Reagan's performance as President, support for Jesse Jackson's campaign during the Democratic nomination period, and membership in an organization that works on issues concerning the black American community. One difference is that the measure of race identification is not the one that Tate (1991) uses. Rather, I use the question about closeness to black Americans that is more similar to the Miller et al. (1981) measure to determine whether or not Tate's weak findings for race consciousness are a product of her measures. A variable for interviewer race is also included (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988). The analysis is carried out for both turnout in the presidential election and a summary index of both electoral and a summary index of participatory activities. For estimating the endogenous effects between group consciousness and participation, the model from equation 2-4 is followed, but again with the inclusion of a variable for race of interviewer. The models used for women are exactly the same as those presented in equations 1-4.

The results (Table V) show the endogenous relationships between race consciousness, external efficacy, and internal efficacy strongly support the proposed hypotheses for subordinate groups. There is strong evidence, for measures of both race and gender consciousness that internal efficacy and group consciousness are positively and simultaneously related, as predicted by hypotheses 1 and 2. Likewise, black Americans' level of external efficacy is negatively related to attitudes of group consciousness; although the causal relationship is significant only for the effect of external efficacy upon group consciousness, not the other way around (cf. Shingles 1981). The findings are consistent with what we found for women in 1976 and are much clearer for blacks, although I hesitate to make too much comparison between the two years for blacks because of the low number of black respondents available in 1976.

[Table V about here]

As for the black Americans' participation (Table VI), the results indicate that race

consciousness may not be a very important factor for turnout, but group consciousness is strongly related to overall participation. These results provide support for the value of group consciousness as it affects the political participation of members of subordinate groups. This result is important because of findings that the under-representation of black American preferences might be greater for political activity that provide policy leaders with more information than mere voting (Verba and Nie 1972). If race consciousness has positive and significant effects upon blacks' political participation, in general, then this suggests that consciousness does provide a way for black Americans to reduce any under-representation on issues that black Americans feel are especially important that is a consequence of their comparative resource disadvantage. Finally, these results indicate that the earlier findings concerning the effect of race consciousness upon political participation are not simply products of the singularly charged political atmosphere surrounding the civil right movement.

[Table VI about here]

For women, the results in Table VI provide a different pattern by which group consciousness influences participation. The direct effects of group consciousness upon participation are completely missing, but we can see how group consciousness influences women's participation indirectly through its relationship with internal efficacy. It would not, then, be fair to say that group consciousness has no effect upon participation, but this finding would be overlooked with a simple, single-equation model of these effects. Substantively, we can interpret these results as saying that group consciousness can still contribute to a social group's participation, even after the relative disparity in participation has been mostly reduced (Schlozman et al. 1995).

Discussion

The goal of this paper was to examine more closely the effect of group consciousness upon political participation. The results presented above agree with Miller et al. (1981) that

group consciousness can affect individuals' likelihood of participation in political activities. The results, however, are not a ringing endorsement of their findings on two fronts. First, whereas their findings are based upon bivariate analysis, the work above shows that analysis of the effect of group consciousness upon participation needs to consider multivariate analyses of a set of equations that also considers the endogeneity between group consciousness, internal efficacy, and external efficacy in order to fully understand the direct and indirect effects of group consciousness upon political participation. Second, as Miller et al. (1981) allude, group consciousness has stronger effects upon the political participation of members of some groups than others — especially groups who are more politically salient in the United States. The analysis in this paper illustrates that part of these differences concern not just the strength of direct effects, but also different relationships between the endogenous variables, such that consciousness, for some groups, has a direct effect upon participation and, for others, has either an indirect or no effect.

These findings are also significant in that they point to the continuing importance of the psychological basis of social group membership to political behavior, despite the improvement in the political position of some subordinate groups, like women and blacks, since the 1970s. While more recent work on political participation has, rightly, turned some attention to the role of mobilization (e.g. Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) and politically-relevant skills and resources (e.g. Verba et al. 1995), we need to remember that psychological forces, like group consciousness, work in combination with these other factors, such as making group members more responsive to mobilization attempts or recognizing how non-political skills and resources can be brought to bear in addressing a group's political problems. Again, the findings for blacks in 1984 and women in 1992 suggests a symbiosis between elite mobilization efforts and mass political attitudes conducive to participation. As such, the promise of social psychological forces to put subordinate groups on a more equal footing with traditionally dominant groups in the political arena, as recognized by Verba and Nie (1972) and

Miller et al. (1981), needs to be considered in conjunction with these more recent trends in the field.

These results are, however, preliminary in one sense. If we are to use group consciousness to explain how members of subordinate groups can overcome their resource disadvantage with respect to political participation, we must also understand the conditions under which group consciousness has an effect upon participation and the inter-relationships between these variables that are related to political participation. The results presented above suggest that there are important differences between groups for these questions. More work is needed to understand how complex relationships between group consciousness and other political attitudes related to participation affect the political mobilization of group members. For instance, group consciousness could produce a dealignment from parties for groups that did not see either party as representing their interests and, as a result, withdrawing from that part of the political arena. On the other hand, candidates and parties trying to mobilize such groups might profit from appealing to group interests. Finally, the inconsistency of results across some components of group consciousness indicates that we need to either re-evaluate our measures of these components or our understanding of how these components affect political participation.

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Table I: Effects of Group Consciousness Upon Political Participation

MLE Estimates – Recursive Specification for Turnout						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification	-0.10	-0.00	0.11	0.08	-0.09	0.05
(Id)	(.09)	(.16)	(.07)	(.08)	(.09)	(.05)
Polar Affect	0.01	0.03	0.06*	-0.01	0.01	-0.02
(pa)	(.02)	(.06)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.02)
Polar Power	-0.12	0.22	0.14*	0.04	-0.23*	0.10*
(pp)	(.10)	(.13)	(.05)	(.08)	(.09)	(.04)
System Blame	-0.05	0.06	0.14*	0.13*	-0.06	-0.05
(sb)	(.09)	(.14)	(.04)	(.05)	(.07)	(.04)
Id*pa	-0.00	0.01	0.03*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(.01)	(.02)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)
Id*pp	-0.03	0.10	0.09*	-0.00	-0.09*	0.06*
	(.04)	(.06)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)	(.02)
Id*sb	-0.03	0.02	0.04*	0.03	-0.03	0.01
	(.03)	(.05)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)
OLS Estimates – Recursive Specification for Participation						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification	-0.00	0.11	0.03	0.05	-0.05	-0.05
(Id)	(.05)	(.07)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.03)
Polar Affect	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03*
(pa)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)
Polar Power	-0.08	-0.00	-0.02	-0.01	-0.08	0.02
(pp)	(.05)	(.06)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)	(0.02)
System Blame	-0.01	0.04	0.04*	0.08*	-0.03	-0.08*
(sb)	(.05)	(.05)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)
Id*pa	-0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02*
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Id*pp	-0.02	0.03	-0.00	-0.02	-0.03	0.01
	(.02)	(.03)	(.01)	(.03)	(.02)	(.01)
Id*sb	-0.00	0.04*	0.02*	0.02	-0.01	-0.02*
	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)

Note: Data from the 1976 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (β_{11}) from equation 1. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$.

Table II: Simultaneous Effects of Group Consciousness and Internal Efficacy

Group Consciousness → Internal Efficacy						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification (Id)	-0.30 (.33)	-0.70 (.58)	0.38 (.39)	0.41* (.20)	-0.79 (.49)	-1.63* (.47)
Polar Affect (pa)	0.01 (.01)	-0.02 (.02)	-0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	0.05* (.02)	-0.01 (.01)
Polar Power (pp)	-0.55 (.45)	-0.50 (.58)	0.32* (.16)	-0.43 (.34)	0.86 (.76)	-0.09 (.11)
System Blame (sb)	-0.97* (.37)	-0.17 (.31)	0.13 (.08)	0.42* (.13)	0.14 (.17)	-0.16* (.08)
Id*pa	0.01 (.01)	-0.01 (.01)	0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)	0.02* (.01)	-0.01* (.00)
Id*pp	-0.22 (.16)	-0.17 (.16)	0.16* (.08)	-0.40* (.16)	-0.27 (.34)	-0.07 (.07)
Id*sb	-0.26* (.11)	-0.06 (.11)	0.06 (.04)	0.10* (.03)	0.03 (.08)	-0.11* (.04)
Internal Efficacy → Group Consciousness						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification (Id)	0.01 (.32)	0.28 (.48)	0.01 (.36)	-0.93* (.39)	-0.44 (.33)	-0.38 (.25)
Polar Affect (pa)	9.26 (7.00)	18.18 (9.24)	0.43 (5.31)	-13.64* (6.78)	1.28 (5.08)	-11.85* (4.88)
Polar Power (pp)	-0.15 (.20)	0.20 (.30)	0.55 (.30)	-0.43 (.30)	-0.15 (.26)	0.47 (.25)
System Blame (sb)	-0.25 (.31)	0.89 (.55)	0.48 (.42)	1.02 (.57)	-0.37 (.52)	-0.87* (.28)
Id*pa	34.12* (15.59)	53.44* (24.44)	-0.66 (10.90)	-37.71* (16.87)	-1.42 (9.87)	-18.64* (9.30)
Id*pp	0.09 (.48)	0.55 (.88)	1.22 (.66)	-0.76 (.64)	-0.66 (.55)	0.71 (.42)
Id*sb	-0.13 (.65)	2.76 (1.75)	1.22 (1.36)	0.83 (1.59)	-0.96 (1.26)	-1.86* (0.85)
N	108	66	478	263	183	863

Note: Data from the 1976 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (γ_3 and γ_1 , top and bottom, respectively) from the model from equations 3 and 2 using the measure of group consciousness in the left column. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$.

Table III: Simultaneous Effects of Group Consciousness and External Efficacy

Group Consciousness → External Efficacy						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification	-1.12*	-0.22	-0.16	-0.06	0.36	0.22
(Id)	(.33)	(.47)	(.39)	(.28)	(.35)	(.56)
Polar Affect	-0.03*	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.03*	0.00
(pa)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Polar Power	-0.76*	-0.44	-0.21	-0.44	0.53	-0.01
(pp)	(.36)	(.50)	(.16)	(.38)	(.52)	(.10)
System Blame	-0.51	-0.35	-0.09	-0.45	-0.30	0.09
(sb)	(.34)	(.22)	(.08)	(.25)	(.18)	(.10)
Id*pa	-0.01*	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.00
	(.00)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)
Id*pp	-0.43*	-0.10	-0.11	-0.29	0.17	-0.01
	(.13)	(.13)	(.08)	(.21)	(.19)	(.07)
Id*sb	-0.37*	-0.12	-0.03	-0.03	-0.07	0.04
	(.12)	(.08)	(.03)	(.04)	(.08)	(.05)
External Efficacy → Group Consciousness						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification	-0.11	0.08	0.66*	0.30	-0.01	0.41*
(Id)	(.26)	(.34)	(.28)	(.25)	(.34)	(.17)
Polar Affect	-10.09	1.89	1.07	6.99	-6.25	0.98
(pa)	(5.87)	(6.76)	(4.37)	(4.41)	(5.14)	(3.28)
Polar Power	-0.07	-0.03	-0.40	-0.04	0.01	-0.39*
(pp)	(.17)	(.22)	(.25)	(.19)	(.25)	(.17)
System Blame	0.27	-0.28	0.28	0.38	0.08	0.39*
(sb)	(.26)	(.41)	(.34)	(.34)	(.50)	(.18)
Id*pa	-24.34*	12.56	1.70	23.49*	-9.22	5.15
	(12.49)	(17.83)	(8.50)	(10.54)	(10.22)	(6.16)
Id*pp	-0.01	-0.13	-0.54	-0.11	0.00	-0.53
	(.41)	(.66)	(.53)	(.41)	(.54)	(.29)
Id*sb	0.15	-0.54	1.71	1.34	0.02	1.32*
	(.52)	(1.32)	(1.04)	(0.91)	(1.24)	(0.54)
N	108	66	478	263	183	863

Note: Data from the 1976 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (γ_6 and γ_2 , top and bottom, respectively) from the model from equations 4 and 2 using the measure of group consciousness in the left column. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$.

Table IV: Effects of Group Consciousness Upon Participation

Turnout						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification (Id)	0.40 (.60)	0.43 (.63)	0.64 (.77)	0.33 (.58)	-0.65 (.78)	-0.32 (.86)
Polar Affect (pa)	0.05* (.02)	0.03 (.02)	0.07* (.02)	-0.02 (.02)	-0.07* (.03)	0.02 (.01)
Polar Power (pp)	2.79* (.90)	1.55 (1.24)	0.19 (.36)	-0.40 (.48)	-3.22* (1.19)	0.46* (.19)
System Blame (sb)	1.13* (.50)	NA	0.25 (.16)	-0.37 (.29)	-0.43 (.40)	0.30* (.14)
Id*pa	0.01 (.01)	0.02 (.01)	0.04* (.01)	-0.02 (.01)	-0.05* (.02)	0.01 (.01)
Id*pp	0.83* (.30)	0.40 (.24)	0.16 (.18)	-0.30 (.22)	-1.96* (.66)	0.27* (.12)
Id*sb	0.18 (.16)	NA	0.10 (.07)	-0.00 (.08)	-0.38 (.20)	0.13 (.07)
Non-Electoral Participation						
Group	Poor	Blacks	Women	Youth	Elderly	Whites
Identification (Id)	1.16* (.55)	0.09 (.32)	-0.16 (.54)	0.41 (.58)	-0.32 (.46)	-0.01 (.71)
Polar Affect (pa)	0.00 (.01)	0.01 (.02)	0.00 (.01)	-0.01 (.03)	-0.02 (.02)	-0.01 (.01)
Polar Power (pp)	0.35 (.52)	0.47 (.49)	-0.13 (.25)	0.14 (.49)	-0.56 (.60)	-0.06 (.16)
System Blame (sb)	0.53 (.36)	0.44 (.29)	-0.06 (.11)	0.31 (.23)	0.01 (.16)	-0.00 (.11)
Id*pa	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)	-0.01 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)
Id*pp	0.54 (.28)	0.13 (.13)	-0.04 (.12)	0.09 (.22)	-0.17 (.30)	-0.03 (.10)
Id*sb	0.27 (.14)	0.11 (.07)	-0.03 (.05)	0.08 (.07)	-0.02 (.08)	-0.01 (.06)
N	108	66	478	263	183	863

Note: Data from the 1976 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (β_{11}) from the model from equations 1-4 using the measure of group consciousness in the left column. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$. NA=parameters did not converge.

Table V: Simultaneous Effects of Group Consciousness and Political Efficacy

Black Americans, 1984				
	GC → IE	IE → GC	GC → EE	EE → GC
Identification	1.04*	0.91*	-0.50	-0.30
(Id)	(.44)	(.45)	(.39)	(.17)
Polar Power	0.49*	1.14*	-0.16	-0.42*
(pp)	(.16)	(.52)	(.16)	(.19)
System Blame	-0.04	-0.22	-0.17	-0.34*
(sb)	(.16)	(.40)	(.14)	(.14)
Id*pp	0.18*	4.52*	-0.05	-1.32*
	(.05)	(1.56)	(.05)	(.57)
Id*sb	0.02	-0.03	-0.06	-1.04*
	(.05)	(1.25)	(.05)	(.46)
pp*sb	0.04	1.40	-0.04	-1.60*
	(.04)	(1.71)	(.04)	(.57)
Id*pp*sb	0.02	6.65	-0.01	-4.27*
	(.01)	(4.86)	(.01)	(1.63)
N	353	353	353	353
Women, 1992				
	GC → IE	IE → GC	GC → EE	EE → GC
Identification	0.37*	0.20*	0.03	0.01
(Id)	(.16)	(.09)	(.18)	(.15)
Polar Affect	1.10*	0.13*	-0.73	-0.09
(pa)	(.42)	(.03)	(.53)	(.05)
Polar Power	0.93	0.05*	0.27	0.00
(pp)	(.88)	(.02)	(.85)	(.03)
System Blame	1.13*	0.04	-0.34	-0.06
(sb)	(.39)	(.02)	(.44)	(.04)
Id*pa	0.32*	0.34*	-0.05	-0.07
	(.12)	(.09)	(.15)	(.14)
Id*pp	0.31*	0.25*	0.05	0.02
	(.16)	(.08)	(.17)	(.13)
Id*sb	0.30*	0.27*	-0.02	-0.04
	(.12)	(.09)	(.14)	(.16)
N	684	684	684	684

Note: Data from the 1984 National Black Election Study and 1992 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (γ_3 , γ_1 , γ_6 , and γ_2 , from left to right) from the model from equations 2-4 using the measure of group consciousness in the left column. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$. GC=Group Consciousness, IE=Internal Efficacy, and EE=External Efficacy.

Table VI: Effects of Group Consciousness and Efficacy Upon Participation

Black Americans, 1984						
Dep. Var	Turnout			All Participation		
	IE	EE	GC	IE	EE	GC
Identification (Id)	0.13 (.80)	0.26 (.32)	-1.96* (.87)	-0.21 (.66)	0.03 (.28)	0.83 (.71)
Polar Power (pp)	0.10 (.76)	0.43 (.31)	0.15 (.35)	-0.01 (.77)	0.19 (.31)	0.94* (.35)
System Blame (sb)	-0.39 (.79)	0.34 (.33)	-0.33 (.38)	0.43 (.70)	0.17 (.30)	0.65* (.30)
Id*pp	0.19 (.76)	0.35 (.31)	-0.07 (.11)	-0.29 (.69)	0.17 (.29)	0.25* (.10)
Id*sb	-0.41 (.76)	0.26 (0.33)	-0.19 (.11)	0.27 (.65)	0.07 (.28)	0.14 (.08)
pp*sb	-0.23 (.76)	0.30 (.33)	-0.06 (.09)	0.05 (.70)	0.21 (.29)	0.18* (.07)
Id*pp*sb	-0.13 (.76)	0.25 (.32)	-0.04 (.03)	-0.04 (.67)	0.13 (.28)	0.05* (.02)
N	353			353		

Women, 1992						
Dep. Var	Turnout			All Participation		
	IE	EE	GC	IE	EE	GC
Identification (Id)	1.44* (.31)	-0.42 (.42)	0.08 (.58)	0.46* (.12)	0.10 (.16)	0.05 (.22)
Polar Affect (pa)	1.53* (.35)	-0.52 (.45)	-0.17 (1.21)	0.43* (.13)	0.19 (.18)	-0.01 (.46)
Polar Power (pp)	1.43* (.43)	-0.46 (.46)	-0.00 (3.38)	0.37* (.15)	0.15 (.17)	0.39 (1.18)
System Blame (sb)	1.51* (.31)	-0.54 (.50)	0.17 (1.30)	0.43* (.12)	0.21 (.20)	-0.09 (.48)
Id*pa	1.44* (.32)	-0.47 (.40)	0.07 (.38)	0.47* (.12)	0.09 (.15)	0.02 (.14)
Id*pp	1.35* (.34)	-0.36 (.42)	0.21 (.62)	0.39* (.12)	0.07 (.15)	0.18 (.21)
Id*sb	1.45* (.33)	-0.50 (0.46)	0.21 (.46)	0.46* (.13)	0.13 (.18)	0.03 (.17)
N	684			684		

Note: Data from the 1984 National Black Election Study and 1992 National Election Study. The entries are parameter estimates (β_9 , β_{10} , and β_{11} , from left to right) from the model in equations 1-4 using the measure of group consciousness in the left column. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates are significant at $*p < .05$.