

AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

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How do views of citizenship vary by race and gender in the US? What are the underlying processes driving these differences? Scholars have studied citizenship and marginalized groups, however, few have fully considered the multiplicative impacts of race, gender, and class. I incorporate the contributions of analogous fields that interrogate this topic in different ways. This multi-method project takes an intersectional approach to studying American citizenship, thinking specifically about how women of color view themselves as citizens. I focus on the experiences of Black women. This project explores how race and gender influence Black women's political attitudes and highlights how Black women perceive their positionality in society. Black women are politically active. Although they vote at relatively high rates, they still express that they do not feel like they are treated as equals. I examine this disconnect and explore how their attitudes about and complex engagement with the political system. I pay particular attention to the political and economic history and institutional arrangements that have impacted Black women's status in the US. I find that Black women engaged in state building. The results show the compounded effect of race *and* gender. My findings demonstrate that Black women understand their citizenship to be treated as conditional.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Adrienne Scott holds a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University, specializing in American Politics. She earned her M.A in Government from Cornell University and her B.A. in Political Science from Brooklyn College (CUNY). Her research focuses on social policy, inequality, and marginalized groups.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iii
Biographical Sketch	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	x
List of Tables	xi
List of Abbreviations	xii
Chapter 1	1
Intersecting Identities	1
Methods	6
Chapter Outline	7
Chapter 2	10
Introduction	10
Current Explanations	10
Citizenship Defined	13
Social Movements	15
Societal Changes	19
The American Economy and the Welfare State	22
Labor	22
Consumers	25
Limited Access to the Economic System	27
Structure	28
Conclusion	30
Chapter 3	31
Introduction	31
Black Women State building	32
The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom	33
American Economic System	37
Intersecting Identities & Leadership	39
From Voting to Citizenship	41

Citizenship Education Program	42
Consumer Education Program	44
Basic Needs.....	45
Womanpower	46
Conclusion	47
Chapter 4.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Bridge.....	52
Political Participation and Attitudes	53
Hypotheses.....	55
Data and Methods - Full and Equal Citizens	56
Results.....	59
Discussion.....	64
Conclusion	66
Chapter 5.....	68
Introduction.....	68
Bridge.....	69
Argument	71
Process and Methods.....	74
Voting	76
Positionality	79
Government Policy and Daily Processes	79
Status.....	80
Discrimination, Race, and Class Hierarchies.....	82
Feeling Undervalued	83
Contextualizing Race and Gender	84
Conclusion	90
Chapter 6.....	92
Contributions and Implications.....	92
Further Research	96
References.....	99
Appendices.....	111
A. Survey Data	111

Data Sample Sizes.....	111
Alternative Model	111
Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey 2008.....	113
Youth Participatory Politics Survey Project (YPPSP)/GenForward 2015	124
B. Interview Questionnaire	125
C. Interview Data	130
Demographics of Research Participants	130
Coding Scheme	133
Participant Response Chart	134
D. Voter Turnout Rates	136

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Differences in groups' attitudes in the probability of feeling like a full and equal citizen.....	60
Figure 2. Voter Turnout Rates for Presidential and Midterm Elections 2000-2022, Center for American Women and Progress.....	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Percent that Agree to Feeling like a “Full and Equal” Citizen.....	58
Table 2. Difference of Means	58
Table 3. Ordered Logistic Regression Results	63
Table 4. Alternative Model Ordered Logistic Regression Results	112
Table 5. Voter Turnout Rates for Presidential and Midterm Elections 2000-2022, Center for American Women and Progress.....	136

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAWP	Center for American Women and Progress
CMPS	Collaborative Multiracial Post-election Survey
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CUCRL	Council for United Civil Rights Leadership
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
MFDP	Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NALC	Negro American Labor Council
NCNW	National Council of Negro Women
NOW	National Organization for Women
NWRO	National Welfare Rights Organization
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SCLC/W.O.M.E.N.	Women's Organizational Movement for Equality Now
SGIPS	Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
VA	Veterans Affairs
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
YPPSP	Youth Participatory Politics Survey Project

Chapter 1

Introduction

Intersecting Identities

Black women have been formulating the connection between race, class, and gender for a long time. Throughout history, Black women pursuing human rights and equality have recognized, acknowledged, and embraced their identity as a significant part of their activism. Sojourner Truth, a prominent abolitionist, was at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention, where she delivered her famous speech, "Ain't I a Woman". In her speech, she pointed out the hypocrisy within the women's rights movement because it did not acknowledge how women, collectively, were treated. Despite the movement's claim to represent the needs of women, she did not see her experiences reflected. As a Black woman, she was not shown the same chivalry that white women were beneficiaries of, nor was she treated as delicate and in need of protection. She performed grueling labor—she was born into slavery and bore children into slavery. Truth's words reflect her awareness of the intersecting nature of her identity and the role that her race, gender, and labor played in American society. These additional identities altered her experience of what it meant to be a woman in American society. In Claudia Jones' 1949 essay, she is keenly aware of intersecting identities—her peers' status as workers, as Black people, and as women—emphasizing that this combined status makes them "the most oppressed stratum of the whole population." Additionally, Jones asserts that when it comes to the work done by Black organizations, Black women are "the real active forces—the organizers and the workers—in all the institutions and organizations." Her inferences predate the movement era and yet still hold true thereafter. The Combahee River

Collective, a Black feminist organization active in the 1970s, asserted that these facets are ever-present in their daily lives and make a connection between political and economic conditions. They write that it is through “The synthesis of these oppressions [racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class] creates the conditions of our lives.” Further, they contend, “Black women’s extremely negative relationship to the American political system (a system of white male rule) has always been determined by our membership in two oppresses racial and sexual castes” (1977).

These women—leaders, thinkers, activists—are acutely aware of the multiple identities they embody. While Black women are not a monolith, this reoccurring theme of referencing the relevance of their identity exists. Additionally, it is difficult not to notice the linkage of these identities to American institutions and the state. These identities have shaped the complicated relationship Black women have had with the American government, a relationship that has changed over the years but is nonetheless complex and strained. In other words, identities, such as race and gender, have been integral to their daily lives and how the state has treated them.

Analyzing the influence of groups’ identities and their relationship to and opinion of government is not new—the policy feedback literature documents how policies influence groups’ attitudes and behavior. The literature demonstrates that policies create interpretive effects—sending signals about the policy’s merit, including whether recipients are deserving (Pierson 1993). Some programs have produced positive feedbacks, while others produced negative or mixed feedbacks (Campbell 2003; Mettler 2005; Soss 1999; Roberts 2002). On the one hand, Andrea Campbell (2003) argues that policies make citizens, as her work showed that repeated threats to social security led senior citizens to become more politically engaged—showing high levels of participation among low-income seniors, unlike programs that were reduced significantly, such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) with lower levels of political

participation (2003). Government programs have improved the lives of many. However, all policies possess some elements of regulation and control (Lowi 1974) and some policies have had coercive and punitive aspects, such as paternalism (Jackman 1994; Soss et al. 2011) and an over-regulation in exchange for government benefits (Piven and Cloward 1971, Weaver and Lerman 2010; Bridges 2017; Kohler-Hausmann 2015). Research shows program participation's effects on beneficiaries' participation in a democratic society (Soss 1999; Mettler and Stonecash 2008), including political participation and government responsiveness. It also shows how interactions with political institutions, in this case, the criminal system, influence political behavior (Walker 2020) and political participation (Garcia-Rios et al 2020).

There has been a long tradition of studies in minoritized communities. However, intersectional studies that explore those with multiple identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, etc., are still burgeoning. Contributions to political science that explore groups with intersectional identities include sexual minorities within the Black community and the AIDS crisis (Cohen 1999), the most marginalized within marginalized organizations (Strolovitch 2007), the voting patterns of women of color (Junn and Masouka 2019), and Black women's legislative behavior and policy preferences (Brown 2014). Hancock outlines intersectional study as an “analytical approach to understanding between-category relationships *and* a project to render visible and remediable previously invisible, unaddressed material effects of the sociopolitical location of Black women or women of color” (2016, 33). This dissertation aims to do both.

The literature dictates that for many groups, the American state facilitated citizenship; however, that has not been the case for Black women. Instead, there have been many times when their identities have been cast at odds with American citizenship. For example, since American industrialization, there have existed systems of oppression that upheld racial hierarchies—slavery

and segregation. Enslaved persons were denied legal status as citizens, and segregation barred Black people from being treated as equals. Although social demarcations, these systems of oppression also had implications on economic and political status. The subsequent years followed with a denial of voting rights, access to resources, and discriminatory treatment. However, unlike Black men, Black women were also subject to patriarchal norms and statutes. Black women's contributions are responsible for the continued maintenance of the American economic and political system. Despite this strained relationship between the people and the state, Black women have engaged in state building and today are a dedicated voting block with one of the highest turnout rates of race-gender groups. The literature dictates that high levels of political participation correlate with a strong sense of citizenship. However, for Black women that has not been the case, as they continue to feel a disconnect between the responsiveness of political institutions to their needs.

Because the relationship to the state has run counter, so too will understanding and experiences of citizenship. I argue that because Black women have been constantly positioned as outside of the system and tasked with supporting the system, this has created a unique sense of citizenship that differs from other groups. This is to say that for Black women, citizenship cannot quite as easily be disentangled as political, economic, or social. Instead, I argue that it has created an overlapping notion of citizenship.

In this dissertation, I explore how race and gender influence Black women's political participation and attitudes and highlight Black women's positionality in society. I explore how Black women perceive their positionality in American society and their complex engagement with the political system. I move through various moments in time, paying particular attention to the political and economic history and institutional arrangements that have inarguably impacted Black

women's status in the US. I connect related themes addressed in the intersectionality and policy feedback literature.

This project makes several contributions to literature. First, it adds to the body of work examining groups' agency within a structure as it explores Black attitudes and experiences and how Black women navigate the political system. Black women's experiences are disproportionately absent in the discipline. Likewise, in political science, there is a "paradox of Black women's hypervisibility and centrality to politics, on the one hand, and Black women's invisibility or "absented presence," on the other (Jordan-Zachery, Sheron, and Alexander-Floyd 2018, 7). Second, it integrates contributions sub-disciplines tackling analogous questions. Lastly, it interrogates the sustainability of a democratic system that relies upon a group that feels undervalued by society.

My dissertation seeks to understand American citizenship in terms of the multiplicative impacts of race, gender, and class. I examine how attitudes of citizenship—social and civic status—differ for previously disenfranchised groups. As groups, both women and Black people vote at relatively high rates. Despite these gains, Black Americans¹ continue to feel like second-class citizens—an experience not shared by women, more generally. By focusing on the experiences of Black women, who contend with the struggles of both groups, I parse out these distinctions. I argue that Black women will develop a unique sense of citizenship, distinct from that of Black men and white women. I argue that social, political, and economic citizenship is intertwined for Black Americans, especially Black women. By applying theories of intersectionality, I contribute to the literature on political attitudes by demonstrating how women

¹ I use the terms Black people and Black Americans synonymously. Therefore, I am referring to the African diaspora generally, including Afro-Caribbeans, African Americans, and recent African Immigrants. When I use the term African American, I am referring to the descents of enslaved Africans.

of color, specifically Black women, perceive their positioning in this polity. I argue that although those of differing status may express citizenship differently, I expect they will still mention politics as the mechanism to alter the material reality in which they live.

I ask, how do views of citizenship vary by race and gender in the US? Why do views differ? What are the underlying processes driving these differences?

Methods

This dissertation is a multi-method project using quantitative and qualitative techniques. I utilize archival data, close-ended survey questions, and semi-structured interviews to answer this research question. The use of multiple methods strengthens this project. This research question is so analytically complex in that no one method alone can sufficiently answer it. The archives and interviews provide texture to women's activity and attitudes. The survey data concretely establishes a phenomenon among Black women concerning their attitudes toward politics. Together, the varied techniques not only complement each other but are essential to answering the question.

The archives document Black women's political activity in the past, demonstrating what citizenship looked like at the height of the expansion of citizenship. Additionally, as a researcher, the archive visits illustrated images of the movement that secondary sources alone could not. I visited multiple archives in person: the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas; the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia; and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, NY. In other instances, I utilized the digital collection of others: Wisconsin Historical Society, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) Digital Gateway.

To move this project to the present, I shifted my research method. I use survey data to present descriptive analyses and correlations. I analyze attitudes using Collaborative Multi-racial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) 2020 data; however, I consulted with multiple other surveys in crafting the chapter, including the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIPS) 2008 and Youth Participatory Politics Survey Project (YPPSP)/GenForward 2015. Overall, among the data sources listed, I believe the 2020 CMPS data is the most suitable for several reasons: (1) it is the most recent, (2) it purposefully oversamples minority participants of all ages – giving me a large sample of Black participants to draw conclusions about the attitudes of Black women (3) and it includes race/behavior questions.

Although the survey provides a foundation for investigating this phenomenon, it cannot fully articulate Black women's experiences. I conducted intensive interviews (Hochschild 2009; Mosley 2013) in 2023 to supplement this data. By conducting interviews, I not only explain attitudes but also give voice to their experiences. I allow Black women to convey their experiences in their own words. The interviews will provide depth to the survey results and a more exhaustive understanding of citizenship.

Chapter Outline

In chapter 2, I define citizenship. In doing so, I discuss how previous scholarship defines citizenship and how I am specifically thinking about citizenship. I develop a framework for thinking about intersectional identities and citizenship. I consider the political and economic system as a whole. Instead of considering marginalized groups outside the system, I reorient the position of an outsider as part of the system instead. My theory rests upon involvement in social movements and the welfare state. I think in terms of the political economy, and I emphasize the social and economic elements of political history and consider the impact of socioeconomic status

on political attitudes. The American welfare state is a system reinforced by government policy and daily experiences. In addition, I describe economic citizenship, elaborating on the relationship between labor, earning, and consumerism. I argue that the combination of government policy and daily processes is what influences attitudes on citizenship.

In chapter 3, I demonstrate Black women's role in the pursuit of rights, showing not only that they were the unsung heroes but that women orchestrated this idea of citizenship. I demonstrate that Black women engaged in state-building to create opportunities for themselves and others. I examine the decade of movements through the vantage point of Black women and a social and economic lens. This chapter documents Black women's role in the movement's relationship with the state and documents Black women's activism since.

Chapters 4 and 5 collectively explore the crux of my research question as they explain how understandings of citizenship extend beyond electoral politics into everyday life. In chapter 4, I demonstrate Black women's attitudes about how they feel as US citizens. I show stark differences in how groups think about their status. I draw on data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). Using a regression analysis, I show that there are, in fact substantive differences in how different racial- and gender-based groups experience American citizenship. I find that although there are sizable gender differences for Black Americans, there are not those differences for white Americans. This analysis provides the impetus for us to think about how race and gender influence groups' opinions. In chapter 5, I dig deeper and explain why Black women feel so different from others. I discuss my findings from 22 in-depth interviews, where I asked participants questions about their community, society, government, and policy and how their everyday experiences shape these views. This chapter emphasizes present-day attitudes and relationships toward government and policy. I consider the impact of socioeconomic status on

political attitudes. I expect those of different means may express economic and social citizenship differently but will still pertain to this socioeconomic agenda and mention politics as a mechanism to alter the material reality in which they live.

In Chapter 6, I conclude by detailing the contributions of this project and the implications my findings have on politics and society. Black women's expression of mistreatment in American society and politics presents a problem for democratic engagement. Their concerns highlight an issue of a group feeling like they have both overcontributed to and been undervalued by a system. Lastly, I provide avenues for further research.

Chapter 2

Redefining Citizenship

Introduction

To cultivate a definition of citizenship that reflects the experiences of Black women, I turn to the civil and women's rights movements and the politics of the decade. I then connect the developments during the movements to present-day political attitudes. I draw on previous studies (Shklar 1990; Roberts 1995; Marshall 1992) to develop this understanding of citizenship. Scholars have theorized citizenship in many ways—in the strictest sense, as legal status; in the most descriptive sense, as active participation in democratic processes (whether that involvement is minimal, such as voting in elections, or more expansive, including different forms of political participation).

I argue that Black women will develop a unique sense of citizenship, distinct from that of Black men and white women. I assert that concepts like social, political, and economic citizenship are intertwined for Black Americans, especially Black women. Groups' understanding of their positionality in society informs this notion. In this case, Black women, having been constantly positioned as outside of the system and tasked with supporting that system (without recognition of their efforts), has created a unique sense of citizenship that differs from other groups.

Current Explanations

Brady, Verba, and Scholzman (1995) assert that resources matter for participation. They propose the resource model as an alternative to the socioeconomic status (ses) model (education,

income, occupation), arguing that time, money, and civic skills are necessary for political participation (4). They argue that time, money, and civic skills. Scholzman, Verba, and Brady (2018) wrote in response to class politics, motivated by “two significant trends over the past generation: increasing economic inequality and decreasing labor union membership” (69). Scholzman, Verba, and Brady (2018) examine a variety of political acts, including voting and campaign contributions, and find gaps in political participation among more-resourced groups. Although their analysis focuses on class, this does not disqualify inequality amongst other groups: “that socio-economic status is behind the attributes that explain racial or ethnic and gender differences in political participation does not, however, justify the conclusion that those differences are all about SES and that race—or ethnicity or gender—is irrelevant. Just because we use SES to explain disparities in political voice between groups differentiated on the basis of such characteristics as race, ethnicity, or gender, does not reduce the substantive political significance of these characteristics” (24). Holman (2016) argues that traditional models of participation do not accurately capture the experiences of those who lie at the intersection of differing groups and claims that they do not experience the political system in the same way that white males have. Instead, she applies an intersectional model to see how Black and Hispanic women’s participation differs from white women. Karpowitz and Mendelberg show that some resources, such as civic organizations and unions, “that forcefully propel men to take action merely give women a gentle nudge” (Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2014, 40). However, Strolovitch (2006) finds that even among advocacy groups that promote the needs of disadvantaged communities, they do little to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged within the group.

The use of intersectionality as an analytical tool has gained momentum in political studies. There is a growing body of literature that centers Black women and women of color more generally

(Brown and Gershon 2016; Gillespie and Brown 2019; Brown 2014; Junn and Masouka 2019). Recent works have applied intersectional models to understanding political behavior (Simien 2005), political participation (Brown 2014), and representation (Brown 2014; Brown and Gershon 2017). Brown (2014) argues that political participation, in both traditional and non-traditional forms, looks different for women of color than for white women. Findings show that Black and white women vote at high rates, 76.1 and 71.2 percent, respectively, however, fewer Black and Latina women report contacting an elected official, 8.7 and 7.2, than white and Asian women, 13.7 and 12.2 (Brown 2014).

People generally express low levels of political efficacy, but studies (Lansing 1977) have shown that Black women held the lowest levels of political efficacy and trust in government (as cited in Michener et al 2012). Soss (1999) finds that Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries are more likely to report the program as being responsive to their preferences than Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) beneficiaries. His findings show that men have a higher degree of internal political efficacy than women and inconclusive results for African Americans (Soss 1999).

Another understanding of citizenship is norms-based. Goodman (2002) argues that ‘good citizenship’ consists of a set of norms on behavior, democratic beliefs, and belonging. She uses the concept of ‘good citizenship’ in the US, UK, and Germany to examine how attitudes of citizenship influence behavior and the conditions that they change. Goodman applies this citizenship in a comparative context to European countries, focusing on democratic threat. Goodman’s analysis differs from Shklar’s because she conceptualizes citizenship as a set of norms, not a singular political act. For example, she shows that activity differs for different types of citizens. For those for whom citizenship is a group identity, when they do not participate in politics,

they are not being ‘inactive’ because that is not what their citizenship entails. However, when liberal democratic good citizens do not participate, they are ‘inactive’ because participation is at the core of their citizenship.

Citizenship Defined

Another understanding of citizenship is social and civic status. I build on the work of Shklar, Marshall, and Roberts, who interrogate citizenship as social and civic status and find them most influential in motivating my rationale. I emphasize shared histories, societal interactions, and the political economy. I define citizenship as influence, both perceived and realized. As scholars have theorized, citizenship requires voting, earning, and civil, political, and social rights, but it also involves agency and protection from the state.

I argue that citizenship extends beyond political participation and attitudes toward government responsiveness. Here, I refer to citizenship as social status, extending beyond legal status and democratic citizenship. Scholars have conceptualized citizenship as social and civic status (Marshall 1992; Shklar 1991; Roberts 1995). Marshall (1992) proposes that full citizenship requires civil, political, and social rights; Shklar (1991) states that citizenship, rooted in social standing and voting rights movements, necessitates political and economic rights. She emphasizes social status and histories of exclusion, particularly the civil rights and women’s rights movements, and proposes that political rights (voting) and economic rights are essential for full citizenship. Roberts (1995) insists that a lack of social rights has hindered full citizenship for Black Americans.

Shklar argues that within the democratic polity, actions and directives issued from American institutions that set bounds for the inclusion and alienation of groups made citizenship selective and relative. Further, she argues that voting is vital to American citizenship and that disenfranchised groups pursued suffrage because it was a marker of one’s social standing. Holding

voting rights confers status, regardless of whether people choose to exercise that right. Shklar posits a definition of citizenship applicable to groups with histories of exclusion, rooted in the goals of civil and women's rights movements—therefore, the experiences of African Americans and women. Citizenship is social and relational. Shklar (1991) defines citizenship as one's socioeconomic standing or positioning in society, predicated upon political and economic rights. Social standing describes one's "relative social place, defined by income, occupation, and education" (2). Shklar's definition relates to groups with histories of exclusion, especially African Americans and women. Securing voting rights and economic security was essential for both groups to be considered equal citizens. She writes, "They have regarded voting and earning not just as the ability to promote their interests but as the attributes of an American citizen. And people who are not granted these marks of civic identity feel dishonored, not just powerless and poor" (3). Unique to the Civil Rights Movement is that it did not grant voting rights but re-instated them. Valelly (2004) refers to this period as the "second reconstruction." He writes, "No other democracy in the world has ever enfranchised a large group, then disenfranchised it—then reenfranchised it" (ix).

While I agree that political and economic rights are essential for full citizenship, suffrage and participation do not guarantee equality of status. Voting rights were an essential part of both movements, however, groups continue to pursue movements long after they attained suffrage. Additionally, social welfare programs are a site of both political and economic rights and autonomy (Marshall 1992). While both women and African Americans have both fought to secure political and economic rights, those that lie at the intersection of these identities, in particular Black women, may form a different understanding of citizenship because of their unique experiences.

Marshall defines citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community" in which "all who possess the status are equal" (p. 18). It entails that citizens have

civil, political, and social rights, where rights flow in a natural order from civil to political and then ultimately social rights (1992, p. 17). Shklar defines citizenship as one's social standing, whereas T.H. Marshall places citizenship and social standing at odds with one another. By putting these works in conversation with one another, I reveal that Shklar's definition presents more of a reality (in the US), whereas Marshall presents more of an ideal type (as he is referring to Britain). However, this definition is instructive as it demonstrates what full citizenship entails and stresses the importance of social welfare (particularly education). Scholars have criticized T.H. Marshall's theory, demonstrating that disadvantaged groups, particularly women and people of color, fail to follow this trajectory (Fox 2012; Mettler 1998).

Although Shklar restricts political rights to that of voting, Roberts defines citizenship, specifically for Black Americans based on welfare rights. Roberts articulates that some welfare programs treat some groups as citizens and others as subjects (1995, p. 1576), and the distinctions between programs are glaringly racialized. She writes, "The opposition to Black citizenship has a profound impact on our conception of welfare: It not only denied Blacks benefits to which whites were entitled; it also constrained the meaning of citizenship for all Americans" (Roberts 1995, p. 1574). Likewise, "America's stratified and unequal welfare state reflects Americans' adherence to a racial definition of citizenship" (Roberts 1995, p. 1575).

Citizenship presumes equality, a sense of a shared experience despite individual variation, and that it will sustain. However, research demonstrates that people experience differential treatment based on race, class, and gender in their interactions with the state. It questions who can lay claims to such protections and entitlements without dispute.

Social Movements

The 1960s was a pivotal moment in redefining American citizenship. The 1960s was a time of the development of (1) new institutions—ideas and governing, (2) when US citizens were

experiencing an identity shift and rethinking what it means to be an equal citizen, (3) and the mechanism for pursuing and creating opportunity was through the welfare state.

Political scientists regard the 1930s and the New Deal as an expansion of the welfare state and a shift in American citizenship. The 1950s brought economic growth and the development of a more modern, global economy oriented around consumerism. 1960s national policy of “The Great Society” revived the sentiment of the New Deal, focusing on poverty alleviation and expanding old age and children’s policy.

(1) The 1960s redeveloped administrative institutions, including the welfare state, and redefined American values in the context of this new infrastructure. It was also a decade of movements and unease. In addition to the civil and women’s rights movements, there was also the consumer and the welfare rights movement. The latter half of the decade was consumed by not only the War on Poverty but also the War in Vietnam. Each moment of progress for the civil rights movement was met with white backlash. There was the assassination of several leaders, including Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert Kennedy.

(2) I argue that this was a period in which US citizens were experiencing an identity shift and rethinking what it means to be an equal citizen. The focus of this decade keeps with a definition of citizenship rooted in social movements. Of course, the civil rights and women’s rights movements are important movements individually on their own. However, this account references other movements, as well. By drawing attention to these other concurrent movements, I demonstrate how these movements overlapped and responded to each other. I contextualize the Civil Rights Movement in the context of other developments and movements happening alongside it.

(3) Despite Americans' continued debates over the size and scope of big government—the welfare state is and has been the vehicle towards achieving the American Dream. The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act procured Black Americans political rights, but the pursuit of social and economic rights came from the inner functions of government. Social and economic rights were not an addendum to citizenship but part of the formula.

Although many scholars explore citizenship through the 1930s, Shklar is an exception. Shklar argues that citizenship and one's interpretation of politics are rooted in social movements. However, she treats women's rights and civil rights as binary issues. According to Shklar, American citizenship is voting and earning, political and economic (thereby presuming the movement is a social equalizer). She writes, "To be a recognized and active citizen at all he must be an equal member of the polity, a voter, but he must also be independent, which has all along meant that he must be an "earner," free remunerated worker, one who is rewarded for the actual work he has done, neither more or less" (p. 64-65). Shklar is correct; to be full citizens, we must earn, but as with political participation, it doesn't end there. The problem with this (and previous definitions of citizenship) is that although she incorporates marginalized groups, she does not make space for individuals with intersectional identities. Additionally, despite being rooted in the civil and women's movements, I think her understanding of economic citizenship is incompatible with Black people, and Black women especially.

While scholars have conceptualized citizenship in similar ways (Shklar), I think this explanation more accurately accounts for the experiences of Black Americans. Much of the literature focuses on the role of labor; however, how I articulate labor here is more nuanced. Regardless, different from many accounts of citizenship, I emphasize credit's role in the US

economic system. The market economy comprises producers, consumers, labor, and capital, but she only mentions consumers in passing.

Although the civil rights movement dominated the 1960s, it began long before. The overarching narrative of the movement was a fight for human rights and against subpar social conditions. They organized sit-ins and boycotts of establishments that upheld segregationist policies and practices.

The women's rights movement was a rejection of domesticity and patriarchic values and to secure a livable wage. Although the second wave movement was in its early stages, there were some gains during this time—the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved birth control in 1960 and the National Organization for Women (NOW) was established in 1966. Women's rights activists very much learned from the tactics of the civil rights movement, as well as gained from the advancements of the movement. The major civil rights bills, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Higher Education Act of 1965, 1967 Executive Order on Affirmative Action (amendment to the 1961 Executive Order), the Civil Rights (Fair Housing) Act of 1968, were an advancement for Black people, but they were also an advancement for women of all colors. Civil rights policies served as a catalyst for improvements for the lives of women.

I craft an intersectional approach to the understanding of American citizenship—drawing from the women's and civil rights movements as well. However, during that period there existed a vibrant nationwide movement that integrated along race-gender-class lines. The welfare rights movement spoke on issues of race, gender, and class, collectively. Like other groups, the 1960s drove welfare recipients to mobilization and activism, however, they developed a “multiple consciousness,” reflective of experiences based upon race, gender, class, and sexuality (Nadasen 2004, p. xvii). Their consciousness was distinct—deriving from their specific experiences as

welfare (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) beneficiaries—as “They do not fit easily into one of the standard narratives of race/class/gender of the 1960s, which demarcate struggles of that era into poor people’s, black freedom, and women’s movements” (Nadasen 2005, p. xvii). To have a more complete picture of American citizenship and positionality, it is necessary to consider welfare developments. Kornbluch finds that for welfare recipients “Citizenship meant full participation in the economic, legal and governmental institutions that shaped people’s lives” (2007, p. 10). This definition included consumer rights to purchase material goods (Nadasen 2005, Kornbluch 2007).

Even though Shklar is responding to the politics around workfare, she does not reference the welfare rights movement in her analysis. While there are many takeaways from the movement, what I focus on is the importance of credit to the story. I do not debate the politics of or the sustainability of the movement (Nadasen 2005), but the fact that beneficiaries coalesced around this topic as a potential solution to their problems. The welfare rights movement shows that consumer power is essential. If we think about the resources necessary for political participation, money, time, and civic skills, welfare beneficiaries are at a disadvantage, yet managed to organize for things they needed (Nadasen 2005). These welfare beneficiaries, an organizing group of majority women, mobilized because they felt very unequal because of their class status (Nadasen 2005, Kornbluch 2007). Moments like this intrigue me, where you can see the interactions between issues of race, gender, and class.

Societal Changes

Additionally, during this period, there were more widespread changes. The Vietnam War conscripted young adult American men in masse. This incidence deals with citizenship in the most typical sense. At the time, the voting age was 21; therefore many of those drafted were not eligible to vote. Although Congress later lowered the voting age to 18, after heavy critique that men could

serve in the army and yet were unable to vote and have a say in the electoral process that ultimately sent them to war.

With any large-scale war, with men abroad, women managed homes. While war directly impacts conscripted males, it also indirectly affects non-conscripted females. Vietnam veterans' homecoming was a stark difference from that of WWII veterans. Vietnam veterans endured both physical and emotional side effects and sustained debilitating injuries. Unlike their predecessors, who were decorated as war heroes, Vietnam veterans returned to a deeply divided US, with people becoming increasingly frustrated with and opposed to the war. WWII veterans had the G.I. Bill, which granted them additional aid for education, housing, and employment assistance, ultimately leading to social mobility for this generation of soldiers.

Vietnam was the first large-scale war following the desegregation of the armed forces². An estimated “2,700,000 American men and women served in Vietnam” (US Department of Veterans Affairs), about 300,000 of whom were Black (Elsbury). In 1965, African Americans filled 31% of the ground combat battalions in Vietnam, even though the percentage of African Americans as a minority in the general population was 12%. In 1965, African Americans suffered 24% of the U.S. Army's fatal casualties (Elsbury). Although other civil rights leaders shied away from and rejected connecting the anti-war and civil rights efforts because it would interfere with progress towards achieving civil rights, King addressed the two simultaneously in his 1967 speech “Beyond Vietnam” (Siedman 2018). The public and media outlets heavily criticized the speech, including the New York Times and The Washington Post (NPR 2010). King felt that US involvement in the Vietnam War was a distraction from poverty efforts at home—resources could have been better

² An American institution in conflict with the ideology of serving in the army.

spent on social programming than military use abroad. It was also a war about class, as it was easier for wealthier individuals to pursue higher education to evade the draft.

Two significant changes: (1) a shift in consumerism—both in the consumer economy and in consumer rights and protections (2) and the Great Migration were happening long before and after this. These movements' issues overlap. Participation in the consumer economy was an important part of the women's rights movement. Women may have done much of the shopping within the home, but they lacked financial independence, were reliant on their husbands for their livelihood, and lacked access to a mortgage or credit. Beneficiaries coalesced around a shared identity during the welfare rights movement and championed rights as consumers (Nadasen 2005). They sought economic citizenship as "Welfare rights activists attempted to gain some economic control over their lives and find ways to better provide for their children. They wanted welfare benefits to be recognized as income and fought for the same credit and purchasing opportunities as other Americans." (Nadasen 2005, p. 103). Additionally, the Great Migration enabled political engagement by some Black people. According to Grant (2020) this mass migration "led to the potential enfranchisement of millions of Black American citizens who had been unable to participate in the political process when they lived in the South" (p. 56-57). Although leaving the South expanded the voting rights of many, about 60% of Black people still lived in the South (Frey 2022). Black people in the North and South faced different challenges they sought to overcome.

The Great Society was the greatest welfare state expansion since the New Deal. In his speech, "To Fulfill These Rights," Johnson promotes a new vision for the country. His "Great Society" was a reinvigoration of the government sentiment of the New Deal; however, he promised that this model would include Black Americans and non-whites. Even the term "The Great Society" in many ways reflects the interconnectedness I describe; the title reflects not just

government policy but also community. The new social programs, especially Medicare, Medicaid, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, added additional layers to the patchwork system of the US welfare state. These additions liken the system to the one that more resembles the one we are familiar with today and serve as the foundation for more recent expansive advancements (e.g., the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid). The Kennedy administration emphasized community services, and Johnson's vision of a "Great Society" included "aid to education, attack on disease, Medicare, urban renewal, beautification, conservation, development of depressed regions, a wide-scale fight against poverty, control and prevention of crime and delinquency, removal of obstacles to the right to vote" (Obama White House Archive).

Each of these incidences exemplifies questions of citizenship in a nuanced way. Groups were coalescing and reconstructing citizenship differently, learning from ideas of the Civil Rights Movement. For such reasons, I focus here. Scholars often point to the New Deal as a place to investigate citizenship. I, however, pivot and investigate the system that more so incorporated Black people into it rather than a bifurcated system (Frymer 2008). I discuss how Black Americans redefined and asserted what full citizenship meant to them—that what they lacked was not just a few allowances but a denial of benefits granted with American citizenship.

The American Economy and the Welfare State

Labor

The literature focuses extensively on the role of labor. However, the distinction between "labor" and those in "laboring roles" is important. It is implied that labor is paid and valued, but it is important to note that it is not what has value but what is valued. This is an active choice of what we value and don't. For example, despite slave labor having immense value—the United States was able to become the great industrial power it is today because of the labor of enslaved Africans (Baptist 2014).

Despite Black American's contributions to US economic development, they were not treated as contributing members of society. Instead, Black persons were reduced to a Black body that was objectified and commercialized. Therefore, although Black people may have been “voiceless in public councils” (Dubois as cited in Shklar 1990, p. 84), they were not absent from social and economic systems. Instead, they were treated as inputs and commodities in the US economic system (Baptist 2014; Roberts 1997). In this system, Black people were both the labor and the capital, and enslavers were the “producers” who owned the means of production. Marable argues that there is an incongruence/negative relationship between Black Americans and American economic development. Marable writes, “Blacks occupy the lowest socioeconomic rung in the ladder of American upward mobility precisely because they have been integrated too well into the system. America’s ‘democratic’ government and ‘free enterprise’ system are structured deliberately and specifically to maximize Black oppression. Capitalist development has occurred not in spite of the exclusion of Blacks, but because of the brutal exploitation of Blacks as workers and consumers. Blacks have never been equal partners in the American Social Contract, because the system exists not to develop, but to *underdevelop Black people*” (Marable 2000, p. 2). For Marable, Black people were not outside of the system but held a specific place inside the system.

Black women had a distinctive experience—as the Black female body produced the nation’s workforce. Marable (2000) emphasizes that both racism and paternalism are embedded in the American capitalist system. However, this does not mean that the Black people’s and white women’s work was constrained, but that Black women, Black men, and white women had differing experiences. Marable also draws on Du Bois’ scholarship for a theoretical basis; however, unlike Shklar, he more thoughtfully incorporates Black Americans into his argument. Marable refers to Black women’s experiences as “triple oppression,” what other scholars (Crenshaw 1990, Collins

2000, Hancock 2011) call intersectionality. Black women's reproductive systems were treated as production machinery. A distinct feature of the US slavery system is that the economic system relied on *production and reproduction* (Roberts 1997; Bridges 2011; Marable 2000; Collins 2000) rather than importation (as cited in Roberts 1997). Black women endured sexual violence (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1990; Marable 2000; hooks 1981) from enslavers who used it as a coercive tactic to maintain control of Black women's lives (Roberts 1997). This meant that enslaved women had political, social, and economic constraints. Black women dealt with the "denial of autonomy" and "social regulation" and were considered "commercially valuable" for their labor and reproductive capacity (Roberts 1997); these are reoccurring themes across this literature. Therefore, enslavement was a political, social, and economic status—a citizenship status bolstered by government doctrine through laws that protected the interests of enslavers.

Further, it was not just from enslaved laborers but also economic developments for Black Americans after that, such as "sharecropping, peonage, and industrial labor at low wages" (Marable 2000, p. 3). This segmentation in the labor force meant that this interrelated status continued. Several scholars have noted the propagation of oppressive structures, one after the next, each by a different name. Michelle Alexander refers to mass incarceration as the "New Jim Crow," having replaced the earlier system of de jure segregation. Ruha Benjamin refers to "the employment of new technologies that reflect and reproduce existing inequities but that are promoted and perceived as more objective or progressive than the discriminatory systems of a previous era" as "the new Jim Code" (2019, p. 5-6). What these systems have in common is this constant reimagining of systems of oppression meant to constrain Black Americans and reproduce structures of racial oppression. The following system, structurally, looks remarkably similar to the previous iteration.

Political theorist Iris Marion Young defines marginals as “people the system of labor cannot or will not use” (2011, p. 18). This is correct in many circumstances (e.g., elderly, disabled). However, when thinking about early American history, the system of labor very much used enslaved men and women’s labor—it used Black people in a very strategic way. Additionally, it also made use of white working-class women’s labor (in factories doing garment work). Conceptualizations like this, by default, reorients us back to who is viewed as the “norm.” Placing Black folks outside the system undermines their contributions to the system. Instead, I think about marginals as people whose labor the system exploits. I consider that position as an “outsider” as part of the system and seek to understand the whole system. Although her work provides several contributions to thinking about systems of oppression, I believe this articulation of marginals better encapsulates the systems of oppression I focus on in this project: race, gender, and class. From Young’s work, I emphasize the “material deprivation” that marginalized groups experience, so I focus on social mobility and economic progress.

Consumers

Focusing on labor is limiting because it automatically positions marginalized groups outside the system. Although they are on the periphery as a product of being “outsiders,” they are part of a more extensive system that is society. If we change our vantage point and include consumerism, we can add marginalized groups into the picture. Unlike Shklar who says that to be citizens we must earn, I show that one must earn, their labor must be valued (i.e., paid), and must be consumers.

However, for Black Americans, the ability to be consumer citizens matters. When separate-but-equal was law, Black people were denied basic privileges, like the right to enter or be served at public and private establishments. Today, there are instances where Black people are not allowed

in high-end stores or watched as they do regular shopping with the accusation that they might steal something.

I emphasize the role of consumers. While many Americans at the time viewed the movement as hollow (Nadasen 2005), I highlight the connection between credit and the welfare state. Shifting to consumers also includes those that do not earn income. By thinking about women as consumers, you reinsert them back into the system. While upper-class white women may not have earned wages and had to rely on their husbands, they managed their households. As is typical with gender roles, women in non-white communities also manage and do shopping for the home.

Credit

The development of credit plays in the US economy an important part in American citizenship. Credit is not just a part of the economy, but the welfare state as well. Hyman (2011) argues the American welfare state is a system of debt (extols benefits in the form of debt). The government issues Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) mortgage loans, Fannie Mae, and student loans, Sallie Mae. Therefore, to navigate this system, you need access to credit.

Citizenship cannot be just earning; it requires the ability to purchase goods and partake in social life. For example, “In 1970, Fannie Mae proposed new rules that would have (among other things) not counted income from paid overtime, bonuses, or part-time work, and counted only up to 50 percent of the wife’s income” (Thurston 170). Additionally, even if a Black family could afford to buy a home, they were prohibited from purchasing real estate in the majority of white neighborhoods and often denied credit. These examples highlight not earning power, but consumer power.

Limited Access to the Economic System

Despite a history in which Black people lacked access to many social programs (Roberts 1996, Pimpare 2007), in the modern era there is a strange association of Black people as beneficiaries of government social programs, especially Black women. Scholarship traces the feminization (Gordon 1994; Hancock 2004) and racialization (Quadagno 1994; Gilens 1998; Gilliam 1999; Hancock 2004) of poverty—in which public representations of the poor became disproportionately female and Black, following the War on Poverty. However, before that Black Americans were often excluded from many of the benefits provided by the welfare state that created social and economic mobility for white Americans, including New Deal labor policies, mortgage loans through the Federal Housing Administration, and education assistance through the G.I. Bill. Even Eisenhower’s highway system created opportunities for white Americans, as they gained more space in the suburbs, while Black Americans were concentrated in larger cities.

As more groups became incorporated into the welfare state and eligible for benefits, regulations changed, with legislators introducing more restrictive features such as work requirements and time limits. Also, Brown (2021) argues that the tax system is organized in a way that benefits white Americans. Despite limited access to the early welfare state, the 1980’s solidified Black women’s connotation to government programs, even if they were not the greatest beneficiaries of such benefits. The moniker “the welfare queen,” synonymous with the demolition of “welfare”—the needs-based cash-transfer program—placed into question beneficiaries’ deservingness. The derogatory term “the welfare queen” did not allude to all recipients—the term was a dog whistle about Black women in particular. Jordan-Zachery analyzes the ways in which social constructions of black women, shaped by racist assumptions of Black women’s sexuality and morality, influence policy formation (2009, p. 6). She demonstrates that

although these constructions have changed over time, they all label black womanhood as outside of the norm (2009, Preface).

The US welfare state has also extended benefits in the form of debt and access to credit (Hyman 2011). Granting students federal loans to afford the costs of higher education is just one example of that. Student loans, a system that was meant to increase one's earning and potential for social mobility, have come to be regarded as a crisis with the collective debt at 1.7 trillion dollars in 2022. Black students borrow more (Redd 2022), and Black women hold the most student loans (Kindelan 2022).

Structure

I suggest that social policy operates as an ecosystem. I emphasize that it is through the welfare state that political, social, and economic structures connect. In an ecosystem, smaller ecological (sub) communities are dependent upon one another. Disruptions in one system cause a reaction that alters the conditions in another. The government provides necessary benefits and assistance via cash transfers, vouchers, and access to services. As in an ecosystem, through these systems people interact with government, whether directly or indirectly, as do organisms in an ecosystem. Government also provides resources to institutions, i.e., schools, hospitals, and local governments, to distribute services. The complex and fragmented structure of the welfare state is integral to policy formation and thus citizen creation. Scholars have theorized the welfare state in a variety of ways, emphasizing the function (Marshall 1992; Esping-Andersen 1990), structure (Howard 1999; Hacker 2002; Mettler 2011; Morgan and Campbell 2011), and visibility (Howard 1999; Mettler 2011). Regardless of the structure, submerged (Mettler 2011), hidden (Howard 1998), delegated (Morgan and Campbell 2011), and divided (Hacker 2002) the authors describe a complex, inter-networked system. The scholars describe a system in which the welfare state is concealed—through subsidies, buried in the tax system, or channeled out of the hands of the state

to non-state entities or administered by the private sector. In likening the welfare state to an ecosystem, I emphasize that all communities are connected. I consider the political history of racial inequality for Black Americans, integrating economic and social inequities and individuals' daily interactions with both formal and informal institutions. Allison Anoll (2022) mentions “the centrality of the social” (p. 27). In some respects, Anoll and I hold similar views, as norms are informal institutions, and understanding informal institutions is important for understanding the political participation of marginalized groups. In her book, she creates a framework for analyzing political patterns across racial groups by interviewing Black and Asian people. From these interviews, she observes two norms, the honoring ancestors' norm (honoring those before them that make the life they have now possible) and the helping hands norm (caring for those in need), that influence behaviors (of obligation). These norms are relevant to both groups, however, the manner in which they are expressed is different. For black people, these obligations are fulfilled through political action whereas for Asian people these duties are realized through cultural customs (p. 67).

Although it is not always visible, government is clearly all around us. We approach the welfare state at every turn. By extension, it is embedded in our social fabric, and through societal relationships it maintains its structure. While there may not be agents of the state patrolling our interactions and reminding us of its presence, through our daily interactions the welfare state is buttressed.

Scholars commonly refer to the US as a “patchwork system” yet often study a single program (or group of similar programs in isolation). There is an obvious and analytical research rationale for that, as each program in itself is incredibly complex. What I uncover in this dissertation is how this complex larger system has an impact on citizenship. While this dissertation

emphasizes social mobility, one needs to have their basic needs met to even begin to achieve social mobility. And so while the authors above expose the breadth of the welfare state, I demonstrate that even though we do not see it, or think about it constantly, the welfare state is ever-present. It is important to think about how people operate within that structure and the impact that structure has on our day-to-day lives.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a framework for thinking about Black women's political experiences and positionality in the US. I discuss the relevance of social movements and societal changes and the American political economy in the context of social and political arrangements. I emphasize the importance of structure and history. By thinking in this framework, I think about the whole system, rather than a group outside of the system. By likening the system that surrounds us to an ecosystem, I show that institutions are reinforcing. I define citizenship as influence, perceived and realized, and it requires agency and protection from the state.

Chapter 3

Creating Opportunity: Black Women's Activism in the 1960s

Introduction

The November 1963 issue of *Ebony* featured the March on Washington, and like the event program—the images and descriptions from news outlets and this magazine—document male civil rights leaders and women entertainers. However, the depiction of key women leaders was missing from the magazine spread. Other leaders make an appearance on that issue in passing. Dorothy Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), appears in an ad for American Airlines—showing how convenient flying the airline is to get her from New York, Washington, and Chicago all in one day—recognizing her prominence as a public figure, without much said about the actual work she has done. The National Women's Conference of 1977 did not make the cover page, nor did it receive any articles or specific mentions. While the National Women's Conference did not achieve the same notoriety as the March on Washington, several prominent Black women were in attendance there. Although the event is not mentioned, there is mention of several influential women as part of a special issue called, “The Black Woman” in the August 1977 issue of *Ebony* Magazine, published a few months prior. This suggests some recognition of the prominence of women's influence during this time but does not necessarily form a direct link to the women's conference (as an event pertaining to all).

Black Women State building

In this chapter, I document activism and the work of leaders in the civil and women's rights movements, focusing mostly on the 1960s, at the height of both movements. Giardina (2018) argues that the 1960s were a transition point from the civil rights movement to the women's rights movement led by the women of the civil rights movement. This chapter highlights the pivotal contributions Black women made to both movements. This chapter shows the contribution that Black women made, not only to the movement but also in cultivating this overlapping notion of citizenship. It also shows how Black women fit into this idea of opportunity and how organizations envision progress. It highlights efforts they made in various realms—sometimes focusing on the individual and other times on the organization. Further, it shows the myriad ways Black women were active in their communities and working towards multiple goals of citizenship—political, economic, and social—simultaneously. Not only did they believe that these things were important to citizenship, but they made the connection between these arenas of citizenship the basis for their programs and activism. Political efforts were tied to social and economic efforts—from literacy to food insecurity.

Citizenship came to mean access to *opportunity*. I show that the development of opportunity accumulated momentum from the power of Black women, in both their ability to perceive inequality (Giardina 2018) and their strength to change it. By this, I mean that women did the labor of cultivating citizens. Black women tasked themselves with developing an active citizenry. For example, Septima Clark's Citizenship Education Program (CEP) led to the registration of many new voters. Black women have approached their work and these areas of citizenship simultaneously. Further, their contributions are often reflective of their intersectional identities, race, gender, labor, and sexuality, reoccurring most often. Clarie Collins Harvey's

Womanpower Unlimited began by nurturing activists, though they later included civic and political programming.

This chapter centers around the question of: “After the March, what?” and explores how Black women created opportunities for themselves and others. I draw on primary and secondary sources—academic scholarship, historical documents, and (auto)biographies—to demonstrate this.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

The March on Washington was where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Accounts of the march and the Civil Rights Movement, more broadly, attribute the movement to the pursuit of human rights. However, economic freedom, employment, and equal rights were a significant and often overlooked part of the movement. As its name depicts, the march was equally about *jobs* and *freedom*. In fact, the idea originated among Black labor activists (Jones 2010), and the final name arose from a combination of two larger movements happening within Black communities—the pursuit of human rights in the South and labor rights in the Northern states (Jones 2010). Although Martin Luther King was the face of the Civil Rights Movement and leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), this event was spearheaded by the Negro American Labor Council (NALC) led by A. Philip Randolph (Jones 2010).³ Both groups (civil and labor) had planned to hold two separate events, but Randolph thought that a single event, rather than conflicting events, would be better for progress at large.

Missing from many accounts is Black women’s history of this event. Anna Arnold Hedgeman, leader of the Emergency Committee for Unity on Social and Economic Problems and the only woman on the organizing committee (US National Park Service, para. 6), brokered the

³ This would be the second march. The first, during the 1930s, was unsuccessful in securing its demands.

deal. Randolph enlisted her help to convince the civil rights leaders to coordinate efforts (Jones 2010). Although Hedgeman was tasked with meshing the priorities of both groups, she still struggled to get them to concede to her demands. While the march was progressive in that it displayed a wide-ranging coalition that was “interracial and interfaith” (Hedgeman 1964, p. 176), that progress was limited because it was still patriarchal.

When Hedgeman realized she was the only woman on the organizing committee, she requested that other women be included. Her request went unheard. She also noticed that Black women’s organizations were missing from the program. Only a few high-profile women were included as a “token tribute” (Jones 2010). According to Hedgeman, Randolph was initially scheduled to deliver the remarks, and the women honored would “merely take a bow at the end of his presentation” (Hedgeman 1964, p. 178). Hedgeman requested that Mrs. Medgar Evers deliver the tribute instead, as was done (Hedgeman 1964, p. 180).

In Hedgeman’s account of the day, “Daisy Bates was asked to say a few words,” and Rosa Parks “was presented, but almost casually.” Although she speaks with profound reverence for the civil rights leaders, especially Martin Luther King and John Lewis, she acknowledges that women were expected to take a back seat in this movement. She recalls, “We grinned; some of us, as we recognized anew that [we] are second-class citizens in the same way that white women are in our culture” (p. 180).

The event program shows that when women's voices are included, it is in the form of entertainment. They were included ceremonially during the tribute and through the tunes of Marion Anderson, Eva Jessye, and Mahalia Jackson; however, as for the voice of Black women of the movement, in the form of leadership, organizations, and opinions, they were absent. Despite their direct influence in the movement, their voices were missing on this platform heard nationwide.

This absence not only removed them from the historical record but also obscured them from media coverage.

Dorothy Height was active in politics before and after the March on Washington. She was the longtime president of the NCNW, an organization created by Mary Mcleod Bethune specifically for advocating Black women's interests. She frequently volunteered NCNW headquarters for events, participated in Eleanor Roosevelt's women's committees, and served on Kennedy's President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. As the leader of the NCNW, Dorothy Height was an official member of the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership (CUCRL). Despite this, Height was excluded from early leadership meetings—the enumerated leaders of the march met with the Kennedy administration directly after the event (Murray 1987, p. 353). Although Height was the only woman on the leadership team, she speaks fondly of her colleagues and her experience on CUCRL. However, when it comes to their exclusion of women from the march, she says, “They were happy to include women in the human family, but there was no question as to who headed the household!” (Height 2003, p. 146). Although she attended subsequent meetings, the environment still suggests that hierarchy was still delineated:

It was hard, [Roger Wilkins and Clifford Alexander] said, to find a picture of me in meetings with the President. I tended to sit on the Vice President's side of the table, while the men sat on the President's side—where the photographers focused. To correct that, the two walked me into the room in advance and placed me at the chair to the President's left. But when my friends and colleagues entered, Roy Wilkins eased into his usual place, moving me down the line without a chair. Roger Wilkins added an extra. When the LBJ Library opened in Texas, the picture taken that day was hung in a prominent place. Sure enough, there I was at the end of the table (Height 2003, p. 141).

Height's role was also different than others. She offered a unique perspective. She approached their shared goals differently, as she was “always linking desegregation with hunger and children and other social welfare issues,” to which the men “had trouble seeing why” (Height 2003, p.141). For Height, the connection between the two was intuitive. She was an arbitrator

“when the men disagreed with each other” (Height 2003, p. 141). Years later, Height learned that she was the only leader not paid by their organization for her time on the council (Height 2003, p. 141).

Although Dr. Pauli Murray did not plan the march, they did participate in the demonstration. Murray was a lawyer, a priest, queer, and a staunch advocate for women’s rights.⁴ Murray served on the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and was a founding member of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Murray envisioned NOW as an “NAACP for women” (Giardina 2018, p. 755). In the article “Jane Crow and the Law,” Murray and Eastwood (1965) parallel the experience of African Americans to women, suggesting that the systems in place also create a notion of inferiority. They make legal arguments around the equal protection clause, successfully used to advocate for African Americans' rights and advance women's rights. They argue that women lack certain civil rights, thereby making their rights in need of protection, as is the case for other social groups. Further, those laws should reinforce equality and not be paternalistic (Murray and Eastwood 1965, p. 238).

These women were actively involved in both movements. In their accounts of the events of the March on Washington, the women express both frustration with the exclusion of women from planning efforts and an immense regard and pride for the march, speakers, and its historic aims. The next day, Height, Hedgeman, Murray, and others met privately for a conference called “After the March, what?” held at the NCNW headquarters and the Shoreham Hotel to discuss the lack of inclusion of women despite their contribution to the movement, in the formal leadership of the conference.

⁴ Murray was born Pauline and later changed their name to Pauli. In the 1987 autobiography, *Song in a Weary Throat*, Murray refers to their self as a woman, however, Murray also questioned their gender identity (Pauli Murray Center). It is unclear how Murray would have chosen to identify (he/she/they), however, it is clear that the way society received their gender identity played an impact on her activism.

American Economic System

The SCLC documents the historic March on Washington in the September 1963 issue of their newsletter (SCLC CEP Records, Box 545, Folder 12). It includes details of the march, upcoming related events, and a copy of King's "I Have a Dream" speech superimposed on the backdrop of the Lincoln Memorial. In this speech that captivated Americans across the US, King makes the connection between political and economic circumstances. He discusses debt and liberation together. He iterates that Black Americans are not making a request but instead have come to "cash a check" that is given to everyone, promised to everyone by being a citizen of this country. He likens the American values and rights listed in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence to a "promissory note" in which the United States has defaulted since it has failed to meet this guarantee.

The barriers to attaining social, political, and economic citizenship have been fraught for Black Americans. Barriers to participation in one sphere created limitations in another. For example, voting necessitated basic education and payment of poll taxes. Segregation, both a political and social statute, created boundaries that defined who you were where you could go, and dictated the resources you were allocated. Therefore, overcoming challenges in these three arenas required activists to approach these things together.

Social inequities impact groups' experience as citizens. For Black women, who endure discrimination on multiple fronts, the effect is compounded even further. The association with Black people and social rights is evident—the civil rights movement dominated the 1950s and 1960s. However, economic rights were visibly present—the monumental March on Washington was a march for *jobs and freedom*. So too, is it synonymous with women in the 1960s and 1970s, with the conversation around equal rights and reproductive rights. Second-wave feminists of the

women's liberation movement argued that *the personal is political*. Furthermore, Black Feminists emphasized that for Black people to achieve liberation, *all Black people must be liberated, not just half the race*.

Marable (2000) argues that there is a negative relationship between Black Americans and American economic development—Black people were exploited as workers and consumers in the capitalist system. Despite Black Americans' contributions to US economic development, they were not treated as contributing members of society. Rather, elites sought to objectify and commercialize Black persons through the system of chattel slavery. Enslavement was a political, social, and economic status—a citizenship status (or lack thereof) bolstered by government doctrine through laws that protected the interests of enslavers. Black women had a distinctive experience—as it was the Black female body that produced the nation's workforce because the system relied upon their reproduction (Roberts 1997; Bridges 2017; Marable 2000; Collins 2000). Marable (2000) emphasizes that both racism and paternalism are embedded in the American capitalist system. Economic developments after slavery, such as, “sharecropping, peonage, and industrial labor at low wages” (Marable 2000, p. 3), maintained this relationship over the next century.

The 1960s were a pivotal moment in redefining American citizenship. With the creation of new institutions, the welfare state was the mechanism for pursuing and creating opportunity. Political scientists regard the 1930s and the New Deal as an expansion of the welfare state and a shift in American citizenship. The welfare state has been the vehicle toward achieving the American Dream through education, employment, and housing assistance. However, Black Americans were often excluded from many of the benefits provided by the welfare state that created social and economic mobility for white Americans, including New Deal labor policies and

mortgage loans through the Federal Housing Administration. Although Black Americans received education assistance through the G.I. Bill, other social inequities limited the impact the G.I. Bill had on increasing economic mobility (Mettler 2005). Also, women could not pursue the American dream on their own. That vision is directly tied to a man and necessitates their financial support. The 1950s brought economic growth and the development of a more modern, global economy oriented around consumerism. The Great Society revived the sentiment of the New Deal, focusing on poverty alleviation and expanding old age and children's policies. During this period, Black people were formally included in the welfare state. Activists made great efforts to educate people on the benefits available to them.

Intersecting Identities & Leadership

Sisters in the Struggle discusses the contributions of prominent women involved in the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. While the civil rights movement advocated for integration, it didn't eradicate hierarchy. Without the input of women leaders sitting at the table in meetings and deliberation, it was by nature patriarchal, relegating women to second-class citizenship. Belinda Robnett (1997) refers to many women, often activists, as "bridge leaders" because scholarship did not portray them as leaders in the traditional sense (as the head of an organization or face of a movement). Rather, they more often assumed intermediary positions between more senior leaders and the public (Collier-Thomas, Bettye 2001). The term reflects their positionality in politics, society, and the larger movement.

However, their organizing did not end with the civil rights movements—many of these leaders also spearheaded the women's rights movement. In *It's Our Movement Now*, Lovett, Daniel & Giles document the contribution of Black women leaders and their participation in the 1977 National Women's Conference. They show that Black women were active, present, and

engaged in pursuits for women's rights and that their contributions were formative in highlighting and including the voices of marginalized groups (2022). The authors argue that it differs from the dominant narrative that Black women were absent from the women's rights movement. They were in rooms with each other, exchanged ideas, and established organizations together. On June 7, 1978, Bella Azbug, Shirley Chisholm, Betty Friedan, Anna Hedgeman, Dorothy Height, Florynce Kennedy, and others were collectively honored by The National Conference of Christians and Jew, New York Region, Committee on Women's Concerns for their contributions to women's advancement (Hedgeman Papers, Schomburg Center).

The traditions of Black feminists inspired past and even more recent movements. In *Reckoning*, Deva Woodly analyses the Black Lives Matter Movement. Woodly (2021) notes that social movements promote citizenship and "re-politicize public life" (Young 1991). Woodly writes, "the political philosophy of the Movement for Black Lives cannot be collapsed into what Michael Dawson has called the "Black visions" of the twentieth century" (Woodly 2021, p. 49). She says that it is rooted in the philosophy of radical Black feminist pragmatism: "*radical* is a mode of questioning, *Black feminism* is an ethical system, and *pragmatism* is a mode of judgment that guides action" (Woodly 2021, p. 50). Woodly summarizes organizing as having the following goals: building relations, structural analysis, building power, and public action. Specifically, the Movement for Black Lives has two additional elements: (1) leaderful—the movement is not built around individual leaders, but rather power is dispersed (influenced by Ella Baker) and (2) public education—educating people in the history and language of the movement (Woodly 2021). These two components come from the Black Feminist Tradition.

From Voting to Citizenship

The sixties reified that Black people lacked *access*, and it was a period of creating *opportunity* for Black people. Dawson (2001) categorizes Black ideological thought in the following manner: Black liberals (radical, disillusioned, and conservatives grouped within that), Black feminists, Black Marxists, and Black Nationalists. Liberals sought opportunities in areas, especially in education and social services. Creating opportunity involved incorporating Black people into the American welfare state, of which they were previously excluded. The SCLC educated Black people who were financially struggling about social programs they were eligible for. Although the Black Panther Party was by no means liberal, the women of the Black Panther Party also embedded themselves into communities, establishing a free breakfast program in 1969 (Blakemore 2021). They later expanded their services to include health and education services, too (Gerhardt 2023).

At the federal level, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 granted Black Americans the right to vote. Reaching this significant moment required grassroots organizing, endless mobilizing, and a coordinated effort between organizations, activists, and campaigns like the March on Washington and Freedom Summer. Federal funds and grants also became available from early 1960s legislation. Many of the SCLC programs were supported by federal funds, for example, Peace Corps volunteers' participation in their programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965 provided financial support to students and universities. It is well known that the bill created opportunities for Black people by funding HBCUs. However, by providing financial aid to those who could not afford to attend college on their own, it also created opportunities for women. Rose (2018) argues that the Higher Education Act of 1965 was one of several pieces of legislation that was influential in "promot[ing] of women to first-class citizenship" (ch 1). However, she also notes, "It remains

to be seen whether federal higher education policies have had identical feedback effects for all American women. Given the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and age, it seems unlikely.”

Citizenship Education Program

The connection between education and citizenship is perhaps most evident from Septima Clark’s citizenship schools, but the role of education is pervasive throughout. Education was foundational to creating opportunity. Ella Baker was a leader in the SCLC and set out to found other organizations. She understood the importance of sites of education and is the reason for the development of the SNCC. Ella Baker targeted college campuses for activists to organize, creating a path for future activists like John Lewis. Citizenship Schools began with Clark and Jenkins as the Highlander Folk School, became the bedrock of the SCLC, and was later replicated by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the SNCC (Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, p. 117, Footnote 8). Septima Clark served as the Supervisor of Teacher Training, developing the curriculum for citizenship schools, and Dorothy Cotton worked as the program director. They taught civic skills, reading, writing, and arithmetic. They also taught other skills necessary for navigating life, like writing a check. In fact, this is a skill that Clark’s mother had learned young, but her father, previously enslaved, had learned alongside her and her siblings (SCLC CEP Records Box 543, Folder 2). In a letter penned by Septima Clark in 1958, we can get a sense of how she saw herself and understood her role in an organization. She writes:

“Men like my father and women like me could never be head of an institution. We do not have the personalities that are necessary. I do not know anything that my father resented, but a part of my mother helps me to resent being told what meetings to attend, what organizations to affiliate with, and to ask some daring risky questions in integrated or segregated group meetings” (SCLC CEP Records Box 543, Folder 2).

Later in the letter, Clark describes herself in the following way: “I’m not an administrator, a boss or a manager but there are some things I can do. I can work with people.” She saw this as her skill set. Her contribution. Although Clark may not have described herself as a leader, her actions fit Baker’s idea of being leaderful and Robnett’s (1997) description of a “bridge leader.” Her work was not a supporting role or auxiliary of the movement but central to the movement. Women were often educators and occupied social service-related roles, however, what is exceptional here is the largescale effort in which they sought to educate, and therefore enfranchise the South. They played a role that should have been filled by the state, but long been neglected. Therefore, they assumed the role of the state.

The SCLC had several programs, three of which were (1) citizenship education (2) voter education (3) consumer education. The Citizenship Education program was unique from their political initiations. The Voter Education Program pertained to voter registration, local and state election laws and the electoral process, ballot petitioning, whereas the Citizenship Education Program (CEP) taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and understanding the constitution. This program wasn’t just called “education” or “foundational education”. Naming it citizenship meant that these things were required to be able to fully participate in politics. It is the precursor to voting.

Education was a crucial component of citizenship. In the CEP program description, it specifies that “Underlying the whole concept of political, economic, and social progress is the importance of education” (SCLC CEP Records, Box 559, Folder 1). The goal of CEP was “to make sure that every man exercises his rights as full citizens of the United States of America” (SCLC CEP Records, Box 559, Folder 1). They describe the origins of the Citizenship Education Program:

“More than two decades ago one man and one woman in South Carolina saw communities of black people suffering in untold ways. They saw people starving,

fearful and brutally treated: they even saw, to their horror, these same folk failing to relate their own misery to those who were controlling local, state, and national governments. Mrs. Septima P. Clark and Mr. Esau Jenkins were determined to help the disinherited and powerless poor regain pride and satisfaction in knowing that **THEY THEMSEVES COULD AND INDEED MUST WORK TO RIGHT THESE WRONGS...**and thus, the Citizenship Education Program was born” (SCLC CEP Records, Box 559, Folder 3).

CEP was a critical part of the SCLC’s mission. The organization documents Clark’s contribution in the newsletter dedicated to the March on Washington. However, it does appear on the last content page before the letters to the publication. It includes her photo and a summary written by Clark highlighting the program’s influence. By summer of 1963 leading to registration of 50,000 new voters (SCLC CEP Records, Box 545, Folder 12). From June 1963 to June 1964, they trained 502 teachers in their workshops and registered 6,581 in their classes (SCLC CEP Records, Box 559, Folder 9). Although the consumer education program began later, it was a part of their approach towards equipping African Americans with the things they needed. Interestingly, the proposal for the CEP between the SCLC and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries includes a 1968 training workshop schedule that includes a session for Planned Parenthood. It does not include details of the specifics of the, however, it does suggest that there was some sort of education on family planning.

Their programs not only benefitted African Americans but also low-income whites. CEP began in 1957 at the Highlander Folk School, became a part of the SCLC in 1961, and expanded throughout the following decade. Program development expanded especially in 1963, as there was a concerted effort to expand in Mississippi and it was a critical part of Freedom Summer.

Consumer Education Program

The SCLC later added consumer education as one of their programmatic areas. SCLC records contain a collection of pamphlets on government programs, how to start credit unions and

other local institutions in their area, and farmer cooperatives (SCLC CEP Records, Box 551, Folder 1). Their classes taught people how to be diligent consumers and not fall victim to deceptive marketing. The consumer education program is a way in which women were incorporated into the program. There is no program dedicated specifically to women during this time, however, women did and continue to do most of the shopping for the household, whether it was preparing meals, household appliances, or clothing. A study on consumers specifically surveys women participants (SCLC CEP Records, Box 551, Folder 1), asking questions about shopping preferences and concerns.

Basic Needs

Hamer's organizing shows that she thought about citizenship in multiple ways. Fannie Lou Hamer formed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in response to the Democratic Party's exclusionary practices. In Mississippi, the Democrats maintained a party of white voters by intimidating Black voters who sought to exercise their right to vote. She also organized Mississippi's Freedom Summer with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) registering Black people to vote. While Hamer is most well-known for her fight for electoral representation, community and economic development was also important to her. Growing up impoverished in rural Mississippi, inspired her to form the Freedom Farm Cooperative so that families could sustain themselves. Like Hamer, though many activists sought to gain achievements at the ballot box, this was not the sole goal. Their daily activism became a way of life. They addressed hunger, housing, education, and employment (Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, 2001).

Feminists point out that the needs of low-income women are often neglected from the conversation about women's rights. Mikki Kendall (2020) regards "basic needs as a feminist

issue”. Kendall writes, “Food insecurity and access to quality education, safe neighborhoods, a living wage, and medical care are all feminist issues. Instead of a framework that focuses on helping women get basic needs met, all too often the focus is not on survival but on increasing privilege” (Kendall 2020). The National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) became active in 1966, in the midst of the civil and women’s rights movements. Many with less means viewed the dominant movements as a movement of elites. Although both movements addressed economic mobility, they did not prioritize those who struggled to have their most basic needs met. For example, although welfare beneficiaries benefitted from *Roe v. Wade*, they had little to gain from other successful initiatives as many of them focused on groups with means, i.e., advances in higher education (Nadasen 2005). Welfare recipients, such as Johnnie Tillmon, sought to have a more active role in their care and their basic needs met—needs that were unfulfilled by current welfare policies. Welfare activists mobilized a movement around rights as consumers.

Womanpower

Womanpower Unlimited was a grassroots organization in which registering voters was just one of its activities. Womanpower Unlimited began in 1961 when Clarie Collins Harvey noticed “some of the girls were improperly clothed, without sweaters, and were cold and shivering” at their trial (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 194). They provided imprisoned Freedom Riders with “transportation, food, housing, and clean clothes” and “free beauty and barber services” (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 201). Its network expanded across the state of Mississippi to support the work of the Freedom Riders. Their main form of activism was to give economic and social resources to those who were fighting the political cause. Their goals were not just about providing basic necessities but also equipping volunteers with “dignity and pride” (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 201). They also sought to alleviate barriers to political citizenship for people in their

communities by paying voters poll taxes (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 203). Morris describes their activities as “mothering” (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 194) and demonstrates that they pursued “nurturance as a form of resistance” (Theoharis and Woodard 2005, p. 206).

Conclusion

Leaders like Height, Hedgeman, and Murray provided a foundation for women to organize politically. By thinking about political, social, and economic rights collectively, Black women sought to sustain their legislative accomplishments. Even though Black people faced different challenges in northern and southern states, their issues still were still a combination of political and socioeconomic constraints. The SCLC’s programming, especially Clark’s citizenship education program, provides a vision of an overlapping notion of citizenship. The citizenship education program provided the necessary foundation to become politically active citizens. Black women’s activism and contributions were integral to the Civil Rights Movement. Women spearheaded programs, led organizations, and did the groundwork during the movement era. They focused on supporting movement efforts beyond the most prominent issue of voting. They were continuously concerned about the welfare of their communities and made it their mission to provide them with the skills and resources they needed to thrive. Their priorities benefitted women directly by giving women a voice and indirectly through universal programming. Further, their actions not only helped Black women but supported those in need of assistance, regardless of race or gender.

I did not find evidence of a targeted effort for women’s programming or issues in the SCLC’s 1960s programming. However, the topics discussed in the consumer education program seem to directly influence women’s lives. In 1979, Evelyn G. Lowery created a program called SCLC/W.O.M.E.N., which stands for Women’s Organizational Movement for Equality Now.

Although initially a part of SCLC, it became an independent organization in 1989 and still exists today. They focused on issues of “family values, education, health awareness, and human rights” and focused on AIDS education and activism in the 1980s (Emory News Center 2016). This orientation towards nurturing is consistent with other organizations' programs, like Womanpower.

Chapter 4

Exploring Attitudes of Citizenship

Introduction

On November 7, 2020, Biden and Harris won the presidential election. In her victory speech, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris paid tribute to women. She singled out Black women in particular, “Black women are too often overlooked, but so often prove, they are the backbone of our democracy.” This phrase of Black women being “the backbone of democracy” was frequently repeated during the 2020 election cycle by media outlets highlighting the political activism of Black women, grassroots activists like Felicia Davis and Wendy Caldwell-Liddell, and more profile activists like Kimberle Crenshaw and other Democratic leaders (Herndon 2020; Bolduan 2020; Garrett 2020). This statement suggests that our political system was in such dire conditions and that we needed people to save the system and keep it afloat from collapsing. Why? Because we could always depend on them to turn out the votes. This dependable group was one whose incorporation into the polity was not specifically targeted by formal legislation.

Interestingly, the group that we have come to depend on to preserve democracy is not those whom democracy was initially intended for. Political life was originally reserved for white, male, land-owning men. These few had voting rights and access to political and economic institutions. Suffrage movements secured women and Black people the right to vote. Today, women of all racial and ethnic groups vote at higher rates than men of all racial and ethnic groups. This trend of women out-voting men has occurred for the last few presidential elections (CAWP Voter Turnout). In the 2020 election, the voter participation rates were 69.6% for white women and 67% for white

men (CAWP Voter Turnout). The voter turnout gap between Black women and Black men is greater—with 66.3 percent of Black women who were eligible voters having voted, as opposed to 58.3 percent of Black men (CAWP Voter Turnout). Regardless, the participation rates of white women, white men, and Black women are comparable, ranging from 66 to 69%. In other words, Black women participate just as much as white men and white women.

Abrams embodies this ethos. Her efforts had a profound impact on the election. Stacey Abrams, former Georgia State Representative, 2018 and 2022 Gubernatorial candidate, and political organizer, spearheaded a voter outreach program with the help of grassroots organizations, which ultimately flipped the state of Georgia from red to blue in the Senate and Presidential Elections. Despite the multiple people she helped get elected, her organizing efforts did not secure a victory in her gubernatorial races.

Individuals in society belong to groups, whether by a collective interest or shared attributes, some of which are politically relevant. Behavioral studies show that group identity is important for how we perceive the world and shapes our perceptions of policy and politics.

While decades of civil rights and women's rights movements and advocacy have given previously disenfranchised groups legal permission to vote, that has not resolved all political, social, and economic issues, although the United States governing body has become more representative of our demographic population over the years, it is still not reflective of it across the chambers. While still not equal to the number of white men, as of 2022, there were far more white women in Congress (74 US Representatives and 21 US Senators) than Black people (CAWP Women Elected Officials). As of 2022, 12 percent of Congress members were Black. However, most of them were in the House of Representatives. Although Black women vote more than Black men, in 2022 more Black men held office in Congress—36 US Representatives and 3 US Senators

are Black men (US News), and twenty-five US Representatives are Black women (CAWP Women Elected Officials). The number of Black female representatives has increased; as of 2023, there are 30 Black women in the House (CAWP Women Elected Officials). When Kamala Harris left her senate seat in January 2021 to become vice president, there were no Black women in the Senate for almost three years until Laphonza Butler was appointed after Dianne Feinstein's passing.

In addition, disparities in groups' access to resources persist. Americans live in a highly unequal society. In almost all areas of life—ranging from wealth, income, housing, health, education, employment, etc.—there are large gaps between Black and white Americans. In 2020, the median income for white households was \$74,912, whereas the median income for Black households was \$45,870 (US Census Bureau 2021). When disaster strikes, Black people suffer from higher rates of unemployment; even in times of growth, the Black unemployment rate is well above the national average. More Black people are uninsured (Ndugga and Artiga, 2023). Life expectancy is lower for Black people, especially Black men, who have the lowest life expectancy (Ndugga and Artiga, 2023). Black maternal mortality rates are three times higher than those of white (Hill et al., 2022). Housing and education are deeply interrelated, as school districts are funded by property tax. Neighborhoods are more segregated now than they were in previous decades, with predominantly Black neighborhoods skewed toward lower incomes and predominately white neighborhoods skewed toward higher incomes. There are gender disparities among white Americans. White women couldn't get access to a mortgage or credit until 1974, dealt with harassment in the workplace, and continued to make less than white men, now at 80% of white men's income.

In this chapter, I focus specifically on racial- and gender- groups. I explore how one's social group identity influences attitudes on one's positionality in this country. I ask, how do views of citizenship vary by race and gender?

Bridge

Scholarship has defined citizenship as political, social, or economic. Participation in politics is not just activity, but it is the mechanism in which resources are allocated and thus status is conferred. This chapter aims to show the impact that race and gender have on groups' identity as citizens. I take an intersectional approach to studying American Citizenship, thinking specifically about how women of color view themselves as citizens. Collins describes intersectionality as a "critical social theory" in which its "critical analyses and social actions are interrelated" (Collins 2000, 4). Rather than treating social constructions as independent categories of analysis, intersectional scholarship treats them as "mutually constructing features" (Collins 2000, 299). Women of color maintain a unique positioning because "[they] are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas" (Crenshaw, 1252). Studies that place race or gender as a sole factor of analysis are unable to accurately describe the experiences of women of color, as "the narratives of gender are based on the experience of white, middle-class women, and the narratives of race are based on the experience of Black men" (Crenshaw, 1298). In highlighting the distinctions between groups, I stress that groups' experiences of citizenship differ. I examine how the opinions of Black women differ from that of Black men and white women. By focusing on the experiences of Black women, who contend with the struggles of both groups and their unique challenges, I can parse out these distinctions. By examining government policies' impact on Black women, I demonstrate the impact on those with compounding identities.

I explore the relationship between political and social context and one's subjective sense of citizenship. This chapter builds upon notions of citizenship by considering the multiplicative impacts of race, gender, and class. I expect views of citizenship to differ across race-gender groups. Racism and sexism are social structures that shape one's experiences in this country—social interactions and interactions with government institutions. White women, Black men, and Black women experience political and social struggles based on their identities. However, Black women have a unique position in which they can identify with the issues that Black men and white women face, but also their own issues that merge at the intersection of racism and sexism, exclusive to being a Black man or white woman.

Political Participation and Attitudes

Scholars have theorized citizenship in many ways. In the strictest sense, as legal status; in the most descriptive sense, as active participation in democratic processes (whether that involvement is minimal, as in voting in elections, or more expansive, including different forms of political participation).

Brady, Verba, and Scholzman (1995) assert that resources matter for participation. They propose the resource model as an alternative to the socioeconomic status (ses) model (education, income, occupation), arguing that time, money, and civic skills are necessary for political participation (4). They argue that time, money, and civic skills. Scholzman, Verba, and Brady (2018) wrote in response to class politics, motivated by “two significant trends over the past generation: increasing economic inequality and decreasing labor union membership” (69). Scholzman, Verba, and Brady (2018) examine a variety of political acts, including voting and campaign contributions, and find gaps in political participation among more-resourced groups. Although their analysis is class focused, this does not disqualify inequality amongst other groups:

“that socio-economic status is behind the attributes that explain racial or ethnic and gender differences in political participation does not, however, justify the conclusion that those differences are all about SES and that race—or ethnicity or gender—is irrelevant. Just because we use SES to explain disparities in political voice between groups differentiated on the basis of such characteristics as race, ethnicity, or gender, does not reduce the substantive political significance of these characteristics” (24). Holman argues that traditional models of participation do not accurately capture the experiences of those who lie at the intersection of differing groups and claims that they do not experience the political system in the same way that white males have (2016). Instead, she applies an intersectional model to see how Black and Hispanic women’s participation differs from white women. Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2014) show that some resources, such as civic organizations and unions, “that forcefully propel men to take action merely give women a gentle nudge” (p. 40). However, Strolovitch (2006) finds that even among advocacy groups that promote the needs of disadvantaged communities, they do little to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged within the group.

The use of intersectionality as an analytical tool has gained momentum in political studies. A growing body of literature centers Black women and women of color more generally (Brown and Gershon 2016; Gillespie and Brown 2019; Brown 2014; Junn and Masouka 2019). Recent works have applied intersectional models to understanding political behavior (Simien 2005), political participation (Brown 2014), and representation (Brown 2014; Brown and Gershon 2017). Brown (2014) argues that political participation, in both traditional and non-traditional forms, looks different for women of color than for white women. Findings show that Black and white women vote at high rates, 76.1 and 71.2 percent, respectively. However, fewer Black and Latina

women report contacting an elected official, 8.7 and 7.2, than white and Asian women, 13.7 and 12.2 (Brown 2014).

People generally express low levels of political efficacy, but studies (Lansing 1977) have shown that Black women held the lowest levels of political efficacy and trust in government (as cited in Michener et al. 2012). Soss (1999) finds that SSDI beneficiaries are more likely to report the program as responsive to their preferences than AFDC beneficiaries. His findings show that men have a higher degree of internal political efficacy than women and inconclusive results for African Americans (Soss 1999).

Another understanding of citizenship is norms-based. Goodman argues that ‘good citizenship’ consists of a set of norms on behavior, democratic beliefs, and belonging. She uses the concept of ‘good citizenship’ in the US, UK, and Germany to examine how attitudes of citizenship influence behavior and the conditions that they change. Goodman applies this citizenship in a comparative context to European countries, predominantly white societies, focusing on democratic threat. Goodman’s analysis differs from Shklar’s as she conceptualizes citizenship as a set of norms, not a singular political act. For example, she shows that activity differs for different types of citizens. For those in which citizenship is a group identity, when they do not participate in politics, they are not being ‘inactive’ because that is not what their citizenship entails. However, when liberal democratic good citizens do not participate, they are ‘inactive’ because participation is at the core of their citizenship.

Hypotheses

I argue that race-gender groups’ understanding of themselves as citizens differs. Because of groups’ varied histories in this country regarding their paths toward political incorporation, their

struggles to attain economic and social rights, and inequalities that persist today, I expect group attitudes about citizenship to differ.

My core hypothesis is that Black women will articulate a unique sense of citizenship, distinct from that of Black men and white women. In doing so, I also think about groups relationally, laying out the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: White men are **most likely** to feel like full and equal citizens

Hypothesis 2: White women are **likely** to feel like full and equal citizens, though to a lesser degree than white men

Hypothesis 3: Black men are **less likely** to feel like full and equal citizens, though to a greater degree than Black women

Hypothesis 4: Black women are **least likely** to feel like full and equal citizens

Data and Methods - Full and Equal Citizens

To describe this phenomenon, I evaluate participants' political attitudes, drawing on data from the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS). The CMPS is a self-administered online survey that oversamples Black, Latino, and Asian participants and provides a larger sample to analyze the political attitudes of marginalized groups. The number of participants ranges from about 1300 to 2300 across race-gender groups. It also includes additional measures of attachment to social identity. Data was collected in 2020 and early 2021.

The dependent variable, *full and equal citizen*, is available on other surveys; however, they have a few limitations in answering this question. The SGIPS is nationally representative, so the sample size for Black men is small. The GenForward surveys are designed to measure the attitudes of young adults (ages 18-35) so I cannot make claims about populations at large. Previous analyses of the SGIPS and GenForward 2015 (wave 3) provide substantively similar results. See the appendix for additional information. However, the sample size of the CMPS provides the most

analytical leverage for this research. Although the CMPS was conducted in previous years, the questions can vary from year to year. This question is only available on the 2020 version of the survey; therefore, I cannot trace attitudes over time at this point. Additionally, *full and equal citizen* is a distinct measure from political efficacy. The appendix details how I differentiate citizenship from other measures of people's attitudes towards government using a factor analysis from SGIPS data.

The survey asks participants how likely they agree (and how strongly) with the following statement: "Generally, I feel like a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have." This concept is consistent with my understanding of citizenship, as it emphasizes the importance of 'rights and protections' in society. It uses a seven-point Likert scale, with one being the lowest, strongly disagree, and seven, the highest, strongly agree. A score of 4 indicates a response of neither agree nor disagree.

Table 1 shows the percentage of people who express any agreement—whether somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree—with the statement stating that they feel like a full and equal citizen. In both instances, men agree more than women with this statement. White men and women overwhelmingly agree they feel like full and equal citizens. However, while about 86% of white women agree with this statement, Black women agree the least, only about 46%. Unlike white men and women, where there is a minute difference in their level of response, the responses of Black men and women are noticeably different by about 13 percentage points. This suggests that there may be substantive differences between the attitudes of Black men and Black women but not between white men and white women, as I had previously hypothesized. This would be heavily obscured in an analysis of gender or race only.

Table 1. Percent that Agree to Feeling like a “Full and Equal” Citizen

Feels like a Full & Equal Citizen	Percent Agree
White Men	86.69
White Women	86.51
Black Men	58.68
Black Women	45.93

In my analysis, I pay particular attention to the differences between (1) **Black women and Black men** and (2) **Black women and white women**. Table 2 shows the difference in means for Black and white populations. Table 2 shows that not only are there differences, but these differences are meaningful. Results from a difference in means test demonstrate that the differences in means across most race-gender groups are statistically significant. The CMPS shows that the differences between white men/women and Black men, white men/women and Black women, and Black men and Black women are statistically significant. When you compare the means of Black men to white men and white women, the difference is about 1, and for Black women, the difference is about 1.5. So, while we only see within-group gender differences amongst Black people in the CMPS, this does provide evidence of distinctions based on race *and* gender. The role of gender is complex. In fact, the difference in means of the attitudes of white women and Black men are closer in distance than that of white women and Black women.

Table 2. Difference of Means

	White Men & White Women	White Men & Black Men	White Men & Black Women	White Women & Black Men	White Women & Black Women	Black Men & Black Women
Feels like a full and equal citizen	0.0972	1.0922***	1.5128***	0.9949***	1.4156***	0.4206***

Results

Table 1 depicts the results of ordinal logistic regression, showing the probability that one strongly feels like a full and equal citizen. I created two models, one that includes a subset of Black respondents and another that consists of a subset of white respondents⁵. Then, I measured the relationship between *full and equal citizen* and *gender*. In each model, I collapsed the categories of agree and disagree, changing the variable from a 7-point Likert scale to a 3-point Likert scale.

Additionally, I control for *education*, *age*, *income*, *party identification*, and *linked fate* and apply the survey sample weights.⁶ *Education*, *age*, and *income* are associated with higher status. In addition to race and gender, *partisan identity* is another politically meaningful group. Studies have shown that partisanship influences attitudes. *Linked fate* measures one's sense of belonging to one's social group. Individuals with a high sense of linked fate express that what happens to other members of their social group also impacts their lives. Dawson (1994) introduces the concept of linked fate to explain why Black people hold similar policy preferences despite differing classes (unlike white people who express differing policy attitudes as they rise the socioeconomic ladder). Since then, researchers of Black studies have applied this concept to their work, showing the relevance of linked fate. Scholars have used the concept of linked fate—one's sense of belonging to other members of their group—to explain why Black people hold consistent policy preferences despite in-group variation (Cohen 1999; Tate 1994; Simien 2005). Simien (2005) expands this theory to account for gender, analyzing one's affinity to their respective subgroups.

Although this concept is unique to Black Americans, researchers have also applied this concept to the study of other marginalized groups. The survey includes measures of linked fate for all groups.

⁵ See the appendix for an alternative ordered logistic regression model.

⁶ The regression does not include post-stratification weights.

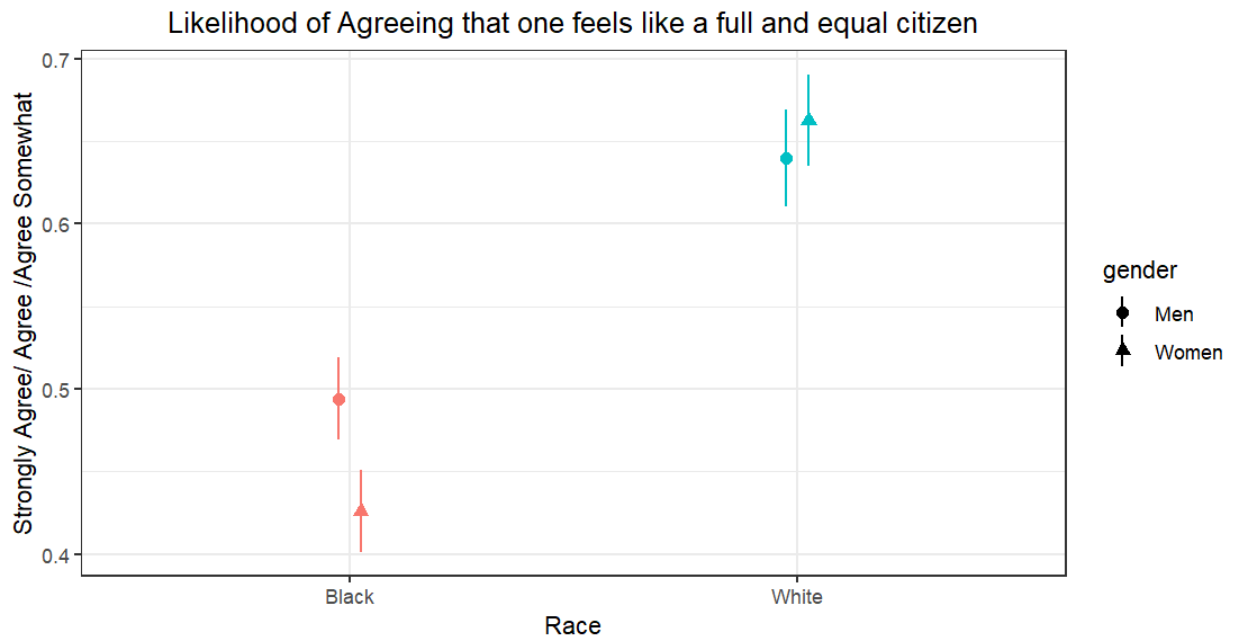


Figure 1. Differences in groups' attitudes in the probability of feeling like a full and equal citizen

The results in Table 3 show the impact race has on views of citizenship. Overall, the results show that white people are more likely to feel like a full and equal citizen. Gender is an important factor for Black people but not for white people. Age and income have a greater impact on the attitudes of white people than they do on Black people. Differing levels of income have no effect on Black people's attitudes about citizenship, which is interesting since income is a typical marker of status. It suggests there is still commonality amongst Black folks who are more- and less-resourced. Interestingly, the relevance of age moves in opposite directions for the groups. For white people, there is a negative relationship between increases in age and likelihood of disagreeing. For Black people, there is a positive relationship between increases in age and likelihood of disagreeing. This inverse between groups also appears for linked fate. For Black people, there is a positive relationship between those with a high sense of linked fate and

disagreeing with this statement. However, for white people, there is a negative relationship between having a high sense of linked fate and disagreeing. Consistent across the two is the impact of party identification—Republicans are more likely than Democrats to feel like full and equal citizens. This is not surprising considering the orientation of the parties, with respect to the role of government intervention towards reducing inequality. However, for Black respondents this is only statistically significant at the .05 level.

Although white women are more likely to strongly agree that they feel like citizens, the difference between white men and women is not statistically significant. Black men are less likely to feel like citizens. Black women are least likely to feel like full and equal citizens. Therefore, I find evidence supporting hypotheses 3 and 4 but only partially supporting hypotheses 1 and 2.

My analysis reveals striking points about the relationship between (1) **Black women and white women** and (2) **Black women and Black men**.

(1) **Black women and white women**

Black women are less likely to perceive themselves as full and equal citizens than white women. There is a disparity in the likelihood of white women feeling like citizens and Black women feeling like citizens. This presents an interesting relationship in the role of race and gender in shaping citizenship. Although Black and white women share commonality as women, Black women have a very different interpretation of citizenship. Not only are white women as likely as white men to feel like full and equal citizens, in fact, distance between the likelihood of white women and black women feeling like citizens is greater than that of white men and black men.

(2) **Black women and Black men**

Black people are less likely to feel like full and equal citizens than white people, regardless of education and income. These results resonate with earlier studies of the cohesiveness of the

political attitudes of Black communities (Dawson 1994). Gender and linked fate (and age to a lesser degree) do, however, appear to be important factors that reduce one feeling like a full and equal citizen. There are distinguishable differences in the attitudes of Black men and Black women. Black women are less likely than Black men to agree that they feel like full and equal citizens.

The differences between Black women and white women, and Black women and Black men speak to the compounding factors of both *race* and *gender*.⁷ These results emphasize that there is a unique experience that cumulates based on interacting power structures.

⁷ Additionally, I estimate another model for Black Participants that includes an additional control for skin tone. I do this to see if experiences of colorism have an impact on attitudes of citizenship. Analyses show that Black people who have darker skin complexions are more likely to agree but it is not statistically significant.

Table 3. Ordered Logistic Regression Results

Full and Equal Citizen	White	Black
Strongly – Agree – Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree	-1.31 *** (0.23)	1.46 *** (0.16)
Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat – Disagree – Strongly	0.17 (0.23)	2.48 *** (0.17)
Women	-0.10 (0.10)	0.27 *** (0.07)
Education	-0.09 * (0.04)	0.07 * (0.03)
Age	-0.22 *** (0.03)	0.06 * (0.02)
Income	-0.06 *** (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
Democrat	0.38 *** (0.10)	0.27 * (0.12)
White linked fate	-0.16 *** (0.04)	
Black linked fate		0.31 *** (0.03)
nobs	2237.94	2993.62
edf	8.00	8.00
AIC	3408.37	6199.55
BIC	3454.08	6247.58
logLik	-1696.19	-3091.78
df.residual	2229.94	2985.62
nobs.1	2237.94	2993.62

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

Attitudes about citizenship mirror voting patterns for some groups but not others. For white women, this is the case—there are both higher rates of political participation and a high probability of feeling like a full and equal citizen. Conversely, Black women participate at high rates, similar to that of white men and women, but are least likely to feel like a citizen. For Black men this is a bit more complicated. Black men are unlikely to feel like full citizens but participate at rates lower than that of white men and women, and Black women.

(1) Black women and white women

Even though Black women vote as much as white women, they hold very different opinions of their experiences as citizens. One might expect that Black and white women hold similar responses based on a shared gender identity, however, that is not the case. White women do not share in their experience of feeling unequal in American society. This is revealing in two ways, first, it suggests that despite a history in which white women fought for voting rights and incorporation into the polity, there do not seem to be strong attitudinal differences between white men and women. Second, despite other persisting inequities, such as wage inequity, reproductive rights, and women in positions of power, when it comes to “rights and protections” afforded by government, they still tend to respond similarly to white men. This suggests that there is a significant racial gap when it comes to attitudes of feeling like a full and equal citizen. Despite their fight for voting rights, white women do not share this experience of feeling unequal in American society. The most obvious answer here is time. White women have secured the right to vote long before Black women did. They were politically incorporated through the passage of the 19th amendment, almost 45 years before Black women could. That being said, this does not suggest that the further we get from 1965, the more equal Black people will feel. Rather, I think

this reflects the difficulties many still face in the exercise of their vote (i.e. long wait lines, transportation to polling place for rural areas, etc.) and other social inequities.

(1) Black women and Black men

Despite holding voting rights and active participation in democratic processes, feelings of citizenship do not reflect voting patterns for Black Americans. Even though the turnout rate for Black men is much lower than that of white people and Black women. It is still much higher than the turnout rates of men and women of other racial backgrounds⁸. These results draw attention to the absence of Black women as a focal point in research and information about inequality and suggests that greater attention and focus be paid to the impact this has on women. For example, when we discuss policing, the media and political science literature tends to frame this as an issue that only affects Black men. It wasn't until 2014, where the #SayHerName campaign, highlighted that Black woman also die at the hands of police. However, these results reveal that Black women are more likely than Black men to feel like they do not have the full rights and protections that come with being a citizen.

My findings suggest a few things. First, it shows that the processes for Black women (and Black people overall) are antithetical to those most scholarship suggests. This reinforces Holman's analysis that women of color's participation differ from that of the traditional ses model. More so, it suggests that reasons for participation in politics differ, i.e., they participate more because their rights are at risk. Second, it suggests that to be "full and equal" may mean different things to different groups. This may be most evident by the responses of white women. Although there are many reasons that suggest that white women may not feel "full and equal" in society, they do.

⁸ When you expand this analysis to include Asian and Latinos, Black people collectively have the second highest voting rates yet feel the most unequal.

Therefore, this reflects Roberts's conclusions that social rights are especially meaningful for Black people. The link between social and political may not be as readily evident to white people.

Third, these results suggest that citizenship as a concept is not constant. There is no denying that legal citizenship affords you rights—it gives you access to government benefits and social services and allows you fully participate in politics—from voting to holding political office. However, even while holding such rights people feel devalued. Therefore, it suggests that being a citizen, while equal in the eyes of the law, does not actually make you equal in practice. My definition is rooted in having resources (this does not just mean monetary or nominal access) but the ability to actually attain such things without an additional hardship that others do not bear. It suggests that perhaps the definition of citizenship can vary based on histories. It also suggests that simply having access to political rights does not connote full citizenship. It is no surprise that Black people are less likely to feel like full and equal citizens. (It took until 2022 to make lynching a federal crime). While Black Americans has had access to voting rights since 1965, they do not feel like “full and equal citizens”. It is also worth noting that the power of the Voting Rights Act has dwindled over time as crucial provisions have been gutted. Even further, the exercise of those political rights does not guarantee full citizenship. It suggests that citizenship, even in an egalitarian society where “all men are created equal” can be conditional, based on some other aspects. Without fulfillment of certain conditions, even with political citizenship it is hard to achieve full citizenship for marginalized groups. Fourth, the data reveal the impact that compounding identities—identities that are politically meaningful—have on members in society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated differences in views of citizenship across race and gender groups. I establish that not only are there differences across groups, but for some groups

those differences are much greater than others. I find that although Black women participate at high rates, at a rate that rivals the participation rates of white people, white men and women share similar attitudes of feeling like full and equal citizens in this country, but Black women do not. Not only do Black women feel less like a citizen than white women, but they also feel less so than all other groups, including Black men. My findings reveal that even though Black women perform the quintessential acts necessary for democratic citizenship, they feel the least like “full and equal citizens.” The striking difference in attitudes between Black and white women does not suggest that gender is not relevant here, but this exemplifies the point that for Black women, these identities are not mutually exclusive but compounded. The analysis demonstrates that there is a combined effect of race *and* gender.

These findings reflect a necessity for further exploration. I establish the existence of these differences; however, the data does not reveal how groups interpret the concepts of what it means to be a “full and equal citizen.” It demonstrates the need to uncover the unique experiences that make Black women feel so disconnected in society. Additionally, it shows a necessity to examine the impact on other marginalized communities. In the next chapter, I investigate this disconnect further and seek to uncover what is driving these differences and how one’s lived experiences influence these views. I examine Black women’s attitudes on American citizenship.

Chapter 5

Explaining Attitudes of Citizenship

Introduction

Loretta⁹ is an American. She was born in the United States. Her family has lived in the South for generations. She has never left the country and has no intention to. She's in her late sixties and recently retired but still sees herself as an educator. She's obtained both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from public universities. Many cast the legacy of slavery and inequality as a thing of the past. However, for some, it is sticky. Evidence suggests that slavery continues to influence politics and attitudes (Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen, 2018). Acharya et al. (2018) developed the concept of behavioral path dependence: "behavioral outcomes, including in attitudes, norms, and beliefs" therefore "once the culture of a community has moved along a path, it becomes firmly rooted and difficult to reverse or change" (p. 25). Loretta's great, great grandfather was enslaved. Years ago, Loretta learned that her last name, the family's surname, was his master's name. Loretta is African American. She believes she deserves "as many privileges as the next person does." Loretta, born before the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, thinks that "we have come such a long way...but there's still room for improvement. But it's not coming quick enough."

Loretta is one of several Black women who shared their stories with me. All of my interviewees are US citizens, though not all have a generational story like she does. Most of them were born in the US; those not born in the US became citizens by early adulthood. There are certain

⁹ To protect the identity of my interviewees, I gave all participants a pseudonym.

ideals associated with being an American citizen. They associate being American with equality and fairness, but also privilege, superiority, and power (domestic and abroad). Monica describes American citizenship, exemplified by an American passport, as a “strong global currency.” Discussions reveal a misalignment between the ideals they understand to be associated with American citizenship and their own experiences as American citizens. They understand their citizenship to be conditional. Denise discusses American ideals such as freedom and opportunity as “tempered, depending on what identities you hold.” They convey that they recognize the ideals but are not afforded them. Keisha associates “American citizen” with “unfairness, lack of respect, lack of tolerance” and “not equal, not treated fairly.” When I asked her why she felt that way she said, “Because I’m an American citizen. And I know [that] because of the color of my skin, there are things that I’m not privy to, or accessible to, because of the color of my skin, or even the community that I live in.” She understands her identity to be in direct opposition to what an American citizen is, what she lacks and is not granted. The conversations suggest that views of citizenship differ because of their identities and that their lived experiences shape these views.

Bridge

Social constructs, such as race and gender, shape how people see and experience the world. Scholars have pointed toward identity-based power structures that reinforce oppression. Crenshaw (1990) describes racism, sexism, etc., as “structures of domination” that impose further control on already vulnerable populations (p. 1249). Black women report experiencing a fair amount of discrimination and perceive structural barriers to economic progress. When asked questions about their perceptions of discrimination in everyday life, 20-25% of Black women express that they experience these instances very often or somewhat often. Black women and Black men respond similarly to the statement “People act as if they think you are not smart” and “treated with less

respect than other people,” to a lesser extent. Where they differentiate is “you receive poorer service than other people at stores and restaurants” and where” and “people ignore or overlook you.” Overall, by this metric, Black men report higher rates of discrimination in daily life than Black women. Black men also experience higher rates of policing. Policing is often portrayed and interpreted as a man’s issue. However, Crenshaw argues that Black women also die at the hands of police. Although the number of women killed by police is less than that of men, policing is still relevant to their lives. The policing of Black men impacts the lives of Black women. Black women spend their time dealing with their own problems but are also overwhelmingly concerned for their male counterparts. This is to say that Black women and men experience discrimination in nuanced ways. Black women also appear to be more attentive to structural issues. 57% of Black women (and 53% of Black men) respondents reported that they think the economic system is stacked against Black people (Black Women in America Survey 2011). Regardless, this data gives cause to include people’s daily experiences in our articulation of the welfare state.

It is no surprise that Black people vote Democrat. They vote Democrat more than any other group. Frymer’s (1999) concept of *electoral capture* discusses this. This fact results from a lack of party competition and interest in addressing issues that matter to Black voters (1999). Black people may consistently vote Democrat, but Black women do so even more so than Black men. Media has highlighted this fact in recent elections; however, we can expect gender differences. In Dawson’s 1994 study, he finds that Black women tend to be more progressive than Black men (1994, 2001). In almost all years from 1992 to 2020, more Black women than men have voted for the Democratic candidate by about 10 percent. There are two exceptions. One is the 2004 election, by about 4 percent (CAWP Gender Gap). The other is Obama’s *first* election in 2008, where the difference is negligible (CAWP Gender Gap).

Education assistance policies have been valuable in facilitating social mobility and providing a mechanism for achieving higher wealth. The literature demonstrates that education is the most significant determining factor in political activity and reducing inequality. In recent decades, there has been a gender shift in college degree attainment. Although white people earn more higher degrees, both Black and white women earn more degrees comparable to Black and white men, respectively (Reeves and Guyot 2017). However, despite its potential to reduce inequality for many, college-educated Black men and women earn comparably less than their white counterparts (Reeves and Guyot 2017). Income and wealth disparities persist between Black and white Americans. According to the Brookings Institute (Moss et al. 2020), “In 2019 the *median* white household held \$188,200 in wealth—7.8 times that of the typical Black household (\$24,100).” There are also gender differences, as the median wealth of single Black women under 35 is \$101 and Black men is \$1,550; by 55, that switches reaching \$40,760 and \$27,100 respectively (Moss et al. 2020).

Lastly, people may form opinions about their value and worth and make judgments about how others perceive them. Research demonstrates that policies create interpretive effects—sending signals about the merit of the policy, including whether recipients are deserving (Pierson 1993).

Argument

Earlier, I showed that Black women are least likely to agree that they feel like full and equal citizens (compared to Black men, white women, and white men). Further, unlike white men and women, there are distinct differences between Black men and women. In this chapter, I explore Black women's attitudes toward citizenship further. I aim to uncover why they feel so unequal yet are a politically mobilizing force. I focus specifically on the attitudes of Black women and highlight the nuances of Black womanhood.

I argue that Black women feel different due to a combination of lived experiences and social policy—the interaction between social life and material policy resources. Racial and gender identities are politically relevant because they shape how people both see and experience the world (Simien 2005). Sitting at the intersection of two non-dominant identity groups, Black women will have a unique perspective on how they interpret the world around them.

Here, I build on previous analyses. In this chapter, I dig into the social context that motivates such attitudes. In this section, I present the results of data collected from interviews. I find that Black women convey an understanding of citizenship that is conditional (or limited). Citizenship is not defined exclusively by their experience in electoral politics or only by their experience with government programs, but rather, these are supplemented by their experiences with other structures in society, e.g., race and gender. Politics and government policies are embedded within a social framework. While status as a US citizen should be an equalizer of sorts, granting people access to the receipt of benefits that they invest in federal and local governments, political-economic-social citizenship is more complex. Policies and social context influence one's experiences in everyday life, sending messages about who is an equal citizen. Policy feedback scholars have examined the effects of specific programs on groups' attitudes and behaviors (Skocpol 1992; Pierson 1993; Soss 1999; Campbell 2003; Michener 2018). I am not doing that. Rather, I am referring to social policy as an ecosystem—the interconnectedness of political, social, and economic institutions. Instead of thinking about the direct effects of a particular program, I envision an arena (Mann 1984)¹⁰ where policies interact. I argue that it is government policy and daily processes that influence attitudes on citizenship.

¹⁰ Mann refers to the state as “an arena, in which struggles of classes, interest groups and individuals are expressed and institutionalized.”

This dissertation extends beyond electoral politics into details of everyday life, and considers the impact socioeconomic status has on political attitudes. I contribute to the literature by examining social and political processes in parallel. I discuss the relationship between groups' perceptions of Black equality and advancement in the United States.

I do not deny the importance of legal status to citizenship. Legal status is an important factor modulating one's life experiences. Additionally, it acts as a barrier to entry to the inner sphere of this ecosystem—where the basket of goods is held (Fox 2012). However, I emphasize that even for those who hold legal status, ascriptive identities and socioeconomic status still make people feel very unequal. I seek to understand why even those who hold legal status as citizens—an indicator of equality—continue to feel unequal.

While the US does not have a system with distinct class hierarchies, class is still a marker throughout everyday life and relevant to how people organize themselves. On the one hand, socioeconomic status and citizenship are relational, we know what we lack by comparing it to what others around us have. But even more so, they are formed by the material realities that people experience. Michener (2017) argues that “social class is produced by political experiences.” This happens in that it “disproportionately exclude[s] some populations from protective and empowering political institutions and disproportionately include[s] those same populations in repressive and disempowering institutions” (p. 94). It is through daily interactions and these fortifying structures that act as extensions of government. The actions they take and how people respond to those actions reinforce these institutions.

I anticipate that attitudes will be consistent regardless of education and income. Although an increase in income and higher education will lead to more access and resources, and thereby materialistically increase one's status. However, race and gender are factors that still condition

their lives. For example, Dawson (1994) finds that despite class differences Black people continue to hold similar policy preferences. I expect that those of different means may express economic and social citizenship differently but still pertain to this socioeconomic agenda and mention politics as a mechanism to alter the material reality in which they live.

Process and Methods

This project sought a broad array of Black women from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, eligibility for the study was open to those who identify as Black, which includes African Americans and Black immigrants from Caribbean and African countries, and those of mixed ancestry. I utilized a combination of voluntary response, snowball, and convenience sampling. I shared and posted the flyers in public spaces. I advertised the study on public college campuses, beauty supply shops, auto shops, and nonprofit organizations in New York City. I leveraged personal networks to advertise the flyers in auto shops and shared flyers with personal contacts to share with their connections. I also gained participants outside of New York City by advertising in a community group for women in higher education and sharing through personal networks. The sample is biased toward more highly educated women. This suggests that this would be a hard case for examining my research question because high levels of education are associated with higher income, resources, and status. Therefore, interviewing women with multiple degrees adds more evidence to my theory. Learning that such highly educated women continue to feel unequal makes this phenomenon more compelling and concerning.

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews, using an exhaustive questionnaire that included questions about their community, society, government, policy, and high-profile current events. This allowed me to get a sense of them as a person, their upbringing, and their surrounding communities. It provides depth and clarity and details more nuanced interpretations of the concepts

than the survey can provide. Rogers asserts that interviews are a useful method for learning more about concepts in studies of race and ethnic politics, as they have contributed to much about what we know about new phenomena in Black politics (Rogers 2013, p. 229). Further, unlike surveys, we can learn about the process by which opinions form (p. 229).

Interviews were conducted virtually during April and June of 2023. In all, I conducted 24 interviews. Most interviews lasted about 1 hour in length; however, a few were shorter (39-74 minutes) and a few lasted longer (1 hour and 18-46 minutes). Participants received compensation of \$30 for their time. Eligibility for this study was determined by race- and gender- identification and required participants to be 18 years old or over, English speakers, and currently reside in the US. My findings are based on information gathered from 22 of them, one participant did not complete the interview and another participant's research knowledge was very close to the topic. Therefore, their transcripts were not included. Research on qualitative studies shows that a researcher has an adequate number of cases for analysis when they have reached saturation, as additional interviews did not seem to yield new information about the topic of study (Small 2009), and studies of race and class have demonstrated use of this method (Michener 2020, Nuamah 2021). I believe that the data collected is exhaustive, as I reached saturation and responses to the topic of concern began to sound similar. I transcribed the interviews and compiled notes (if participants declined recording) and analyzed the information gathered by focusing on (1) specific questions I asked that yielded direct answers and then being attuned to (2) themes and patterns that emerged in the data.

Demographics. In the end, interviewees included college students, educators, health professionals, and more. Some were first- and second-generation immigrants, while other participants' families have lived in the US for multiple generations. Many participated in

government programs at some point in their life, as do most Americans (Mettler 2018). This includes Medicaid, SNAP, and more commonly, education grants and loans. While many participants are from New York City, several others are from the Midwest, West, and South. They range in age from 20 to 69 years old.

Limitations. One limitation of this study is age. The largest group is millennials—defined as between the ages of 27 and 42. However, many of them are younger millennials. The average age is 36 years old, but the median age is 30. Another limitation is education. This group is highly educated. Because I advertised the study to a group of Black women pursuing doctoral degrees, the number of people who fit this description is overrepresented. Therefore, included among those I spoke with include graduate degree holders (Ph.D., EdD, master's degrees) and bachelor's degree holders/students currently enrolled in college. See the appendix for additional details on the demographic representation of my interviewees.

Voting

Unsurprisingly, my interviews reveal that voting is important to Black women. This is consistent with the literature on Black political participation and election results. Similar to Shklar (1991), they identify voting as the most important aspect of political citizenship and refer back to the movements. Specifically, they reference the Civil Rights Movement because early women's rights movements did not yield the right to vote to Black women. The connection to the movement does not apply solely to African Americans. Many Black people that have a heritage that they can trace back outside of the US (more recent immigrants of African and Caribbean descent), reference the movement's counter to Black disenfranchisement.

My cases support claims in other works, such as the linkage between politics and honoring your ancestors (Anoll 2022) and Black identity (Rogers 2006). Sharon, now 64 years old, has been

a lifelong voter. She says, "My mother always voted. So, I do the same thing too" and refers to voting as "the only way you have your rights." Kayla is a second and third-generation immigrant from the Caribbean. She says, "It wasn't a given right. Like we earned it, we earned the right to be able to have a say in what goes on in the areas in the country that we live in." Tiffany, Gabrielle, and Keisha also refer to those who fought for the right to vote or were previously unable to vote. They are all second-generation immigrants. This finding alludes to Rogers (2006) hypothesis that second-generation immigrants may form a greater attachment to Black identity than first-generation Afro-Caribbeans and Africans. Voting was not as important to Keisha as a young adult; however, it became more important to her as she got older and learned more about American history. She says:

I'm still an American citizen. So that makes me want to embrace voting and take it seriously. Because ... It's not that long ago, we couldn't vote. We couldn't go to school, wherever we want[ed] to go to school... But things have progressed to this point because of those people long ago, what they did. And ... it sticks with me in my heart and my mind. And it's something that I'm really serious and passionate about.

Black women's voting record demonstrates the importance of voting, but these conversations illustrate why they vote. As I previously argued, voting is important to citizenship, however, for Black women citizenship extends beyond voting. I hypothesized that to this socioeconomic agenda and mention politics is a mechanism to alter the material reality in which they live and secure that through the welfare state. Loretta says that voting is "one, I won't say right, but that's one avenue, by which raises the standard to keep us moving." She continues, "And that's my responsibility to view and voice my opinion, according to whatever the situation may be. And I think when I say obligated, it's an obligation because I owe it to myself and my future young people, of people coming after me." Several others believe that if you do not vote, you cannot

complain about the situation because opted not to partake in the established decision-making process.

Most vote consistently in all elections, from presidential to local. Others stress the importance of voting in state and local elections because they more readily impact them. Olivia is a survivor of domestic violence. The last time Olivia voted in a presidential election was when she voted for Obama, as that was the last time she really believed in a presidential candidate. However, she is aware of state and local politics and the actions that elected officials have done, especially services that impact her and her family directly. She conveys that it is important for politicians to do something for their communities. She commends Governor Kathy Hochul for the additional SNAP benefits she provided. Although she is not a supporter of Mayor Adams, she cites the Big Apple Connect Program, which provides free internet to low-income New Yorkers, as an example good what he has done. She discusses her dissatisfaction with the lack of programming for children and the reduction of services that do exist. Despite not having voted recently, she is highly aware of how politics impacts her life and the services she receives.

Of those I interviewed, only 2 said that they do not vote at all. Brittany is 31 years old and has never voted. She is a new stay-at-home mom and would like to pursue her art. When it comes to politics, she is apathetic. She feels that there is no point in voting because the system is corrupt. Brittany says, "I feel like it's important for some people because they feel like things are gonna change, which some things do get changed, but most of it is not really for them. It's mostly for the other type of communities." I asked to elaborate on which groups she was referring to when she said, "some people" and "other types of communities". She continues, "Well, I feel like people of color, Blacks, or whoever, if they vote, they'll get some type of change. But it mostly caters to the white people. I feel like for them, it's just like, oh, we can just make up whatever rules and you're

just gonna have to follow it because it's the law or something." Brittany's words make a connection between the voting system and racial hierarchies; she feels that even if Black people vote, they still will not have the power to create change. I will continue to show the connection between politics and social context. Many associate politics with elections. However, I view these social aspects that they care about as political. Several mention the importance of community involvement.

Positionality

Understanding citizenship is multi-faceted. I focused on (1) specific questions that seemed generative and provoked responses and (2) themes that emerged in the data. I interrogate my initial claims. I asserted that concepts like social, political, and economic citizenship are intertwined for Black Americans, especially Black women. It is groups' understanding of their positionality in society that informs this notion. I argue that Black women feel different due to a combination of lived experiences and social policy—the interaction between social life and material policy resources. From the data gathered, I have concluded that one's understanding of (1) status is comprised of the following factors: (a) discrimination (b) racial hierarchy (c) class hierarchy, and (d) value and worth. From the data, I find that there is another element, lack of recognition. I argued that (2) it is a combination of government policy and daily processes that influence attitudes toward citizenship. I find moderate support for this, and I provide insights on how Black women view their positionality in this country. Lastly, I (3) contextualize the impact of race and gender on their status.

Government Policy and Daily Processes

Government policies inform citizens of who is included and excluded, deserving and undeserving, whose voice matters, and who holds political power. Therefore, program experience will have an impact on attitude formation. I identify interviewees use of *visible* government

programs. Here, I focus on the use of programs that attend to one's basic needs, including SNAP (food stamps), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), TANF, Subsidized Housing, and Unemployment Insurance. Interviewees also mention the use of social mobility/education assistance programs (e.g., Pell grants and student loans). I labeled their experiences as *positive* if they found the programs helpful. I categorized their experience as *mixed* if they found the program to be helpful but also limiting in some way (arduous paperwork process, burdened with student loan debt). Their experiences are *negative* if they had difficult experiences or only focused on the programs' limitations and *neutral* if they lacked further detail.

Keisha, Olivia, and Tiffany have relatively negative experience experiences with basic needs policies. After Keisha had lost her job, she applied for unemployment. Taking care of herself alone, she found it difficult to get by on unemployment, however, receiving unemployment made her unqualified for food stamps. Olivia had difficult experiences in this foster care system but values food stamps. She was grateful for the expanded benefits during the pandemic, but they found it difficult to adjust back, as prices are still high. Tiffany was an indirect beneficiary of public assistance programs. As a child, she watched her mother navigate the system and would assist her with the paperwork. She holds fairly negative views of government programs. Olivia and Keisha conveyed that their treatment by government institutions impacts their views of citizenship, but Tiffany did not.

Status

Capturing their understanding of status and positioning was more elusive. It required paying attention to references of categorizations of rank or levels, along multiple dimensions, social, economic, and political. Even though they know that the US has roots in egalitarianism, they perceive the US as having a hierarchical structure. First and foremost, were **class** and **race**.

Wealth determines status. However, that status one's status can be augmented. Denise refers to money as power but sees other identities, specifically, race, as a dampener to that power. When asked, if there was any group they perceived to be treated equally in the US, their response was rich, white men. There were variations to that answer, some included white women or specified cisgender men. They describe a system that is not only partial to race but also **skin tone**, preferencing lighter skin to darker skin. **Discrimination** in everyday life looks more like regular social interactions, such as shopping, school, and the workplace. They discuss being followed in stores, told what they can and cannot afford, people clutching their purses or walking on the other side of the street when they see them, and the difference in treatment and workload they receive in comparison to their other colleagues.

It's not a strict hierarchy; it's maneuvering through a matrix. For example, they perceive white immigrants as receiving preferential treatment to people of color and Shirley views that no one should receive the treatment that undocumented immigrants have experienced by border agents and points out distinctions between media coverage of the atrocities happening to Latinx immigrants in comparison to Haitian immigrants arriving. Therefore, race allows people to supersede this structure, and entitles them to the "rights" of citizens—access to nicer neighborhoods and better services. I noticed the following themes in my data: (1) *racial hierarchy* (2) *class hierarchy* (3) *discrimination* (4) *value and worth*. I then searched transcripts/notes for references to these topics and documented if participants mentioned any of the factors. I found that 18 people mentioned *racial hierarchies*, 16 people mentioned *class hierarchies*, 13 people mentioned instances of *discrimination*, and 18 people mentioned themselves/identity being *undervalued*. (Statements can reflect multiple factors). Figure 3 shows factors that influence status, as well as the description for each factor.

Table 4. Status

Status	Racial Hierarchy	Reference to the US and treatment of people as a racial hierarchy, a rigid system where race determined value, power, access to resources
	Class Hierarchy	Reference to the US and treatment of people as a class-based hierarchy, a rigid system where money determined value, power, access to resources
	Discrimination	References to specific instances of racism or sexism (unfair/preferential treatment) in social settings that they have experienced in their own lives (workplace, school, errands)
	Undervalued	Reflections on feelings of value and worth. Discussions of being undervalued by society & government (workplace, school, errands). For example, having to work "twice as hard."

Discrimination, Race, and Class Hierarchies

Many perceived the US to have rigid social hierarchies. Likewise, they view that those who have money have the power. Many discuss being followed or watched as suspected of stealing and two recall interactions with police officers. However, being well-off or highly educated doesn't make people feel like they are treated equally. They still experience discrimination in the workplace. Those with higher degrees discuss experiences of discrimination in the workplace. Monica, Tiffany, Denise, and Robin would fall into the range of middle to high-income earners. The American Dream is often a symbol of opportunity and social mobility, so, interestingly, many do not think it exists. In my earlier interviews, many alluded to the American Dream and the opportunities available in the United States, so I began including it in my future conversations. Many, do not think they've achieved the American Dream, do not believe it is attainable, or are not striving for it. According to Dominique, the American Dream is a "delusion". Like citizenship, it is something they perceive as not applying to them.

Denise and Robin are 30 years old. Both would describe themselves to be high earners or upper middle class, although it hasn't always been that way. They've achieved economic mobility but to varying extents. Denise immigrated to the US as a toddler, grew up in a low-income

household, and her parents went to school up until middle school. Robin grew up middle class and is of African American and Caribbean descent. One of her parents has a master's degree and the other has some college education. When I asked them if they felt they had achieved the American Dream, they said:

Robin: "I think from the outside, if someone was to look at me, because of the educational level I've attained, they might say I have. And I do think there are aspects of it that maybe I've reached, but still, not fully, no, because the biggest part for me is the wealth aspect. Yes, I have a PhD, but I also have student loan debt, because I grew up in a household where my parents couldn't pay for me to go to college. So, it's like, yes, I do enjoy a nice life now, but it still comes with caveats. So, I would say not fully."

Denise: "For myself, yes. I don't know. I don't really know what the American Dream is anymore. I'm doing well for myself."

Feeling Undervalued

In some instances, they discuss this as being a product of their race and/or gender. But in a few cases, it has to do with their occupation/earning potential or cannot identify why. For example, being a teacher or stay-at-home mom. Most of their reflections come from two very pointed questions:

- (1) On November 7, 2020, after Biden and Harris won the 2020 election, Kamala Harris said in her speech: "Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all. Including the Black women who are often, too often overlooked but so often proved they are the backbone of our democracy." Many news outlets repeated similar news stories. How does this make you feel?¹¹
- (2) Do you ever feel the pressure to overperform or achieve excellence?

¹¹ I asked multiple iterations of this question, which include using the statements "the backbone of the *Democratic Party*" and "the backbone of *democracy*". Later, I contextualized the phrase using Kamala Harris' acceptance speech. There are no distinguishable differences underlying inquiry of the question in the responses the question elicits, except for maybe a few misinterpretations: having not heard the statement before, not understanding the context in which the statement was made, having interpreted the question as support for the Democratic Party, or having interpreted the question as support for Kamala Harris.

These questions reflect Black women's orientation towards politics: the combined behavior of consistent voting, coupled with the sentiment of feeling very unequal. Most regard Harris' statement as true and express all the ways they know it to be true. They state that it should be made known and acknowledged by others, but also express frustration because it feels like they are being pandered too. Therefore, despite these feelings of being undervalued by the political system and society more generally, there are still feelings of pride. They are proud of their strength, perseverance, and contributions. The factors of *racial hierarchy* and *class hierarchy* reference ideas they know to be true (how society operates), and *discrimination* discusses their personal experiences, but *value/worth* reflects their opinions.

Contextualizing Race and Gender

As I developed this project, the sociopolitical landscape continuously changed. In the wake of a pandemic, highly visible and gruesome instances occurred that could not be ignored. And as the country began to recover from the toll of the pandemic on Americans, the Supreme Court changed the law that immediately impacted the lives of many. (1) In my interviews, I explicitly ask about George Floyd and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter and the overturning of *Roe v Wade*. Many other events occurred between 2020 and 2022 that I could have asked about, however, I reference these two because they are inarguably about race and gender. I constructed the questions to prime race and gender and determine if they saw a connection between that and citizenship and if it elicited references to status. I asked the participants:

In May 2020, George Floyd was murdered at the hands of police. His death and the death of others, including Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, sparked protests across the US. When you heard about this news, how did it make you feel? Does this make you think about citizenship in this country?

In May 2022, the draft opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States was leaked to the public ahead of the final ruling. In June, that ruling was finalized. In it, the court wrote a majority opinion criticizing abortion, and overturning *Roe v Wade*.

When you heard about this news, how did it make you feel? Does this make you think about citizenship in this country?

These questions yielded discussions of agency and bodily autonomy. These comments provide insights into the "rights and protections" half of the question. There is a long history of policing in the United States. There is substantial literature about the connection between policing/carceral state and the impact that has on citizenship (Lerman and Weaver 2014; Soss et al. 2011). Not only was 2020 a global pandemic but a moment of widespread support (and disagreement with) for Black Lives Matter. The murder of George Floyd and the lack of accountability for the perpetrators sparked protests throughout the US (and in other countries). These are examples of both government action and inaction. Although the murders of Floyd and Arbery yielded a conviction, it was also a failure of an institution. In Arbery's case, the case stalled for months and reached a trial because of public demand. These cases went to trial because of widespread outrage from videographic evidence not because of standard processes. The lack of government action conveyed the message that this behavior is tolerated.

Sad. Angry. Disappointed. Depressed. Numb. That is how Black women expressed their feelings about the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. These very visible deaths impacted them in multiple dimensions. For them, 2020, was not a moment of enlightenment the way it was for many non-Black Americans. Rather, their deaths were a moment, one of many; instances such as these have happened before, and they expect unfortunately will happen again. In addition, they feared and continue to fear for the safety of themselves and their loved ones.

A noticeable trend is how quickly Black women assumed their role as a protector. They often reference their concern for the safety of Black men—brothers, sons, cousins—before speaking about their concern for themselves.

Even now I say a short prayer, every time my brother comes home late because I don't know. And I'm not just only saying for my brothers. For myself as well.

- Jasmine

It made me feel both heavy and invisible at the time. Because [he has] my brother's name... And I watched him struggle through this time, and knowing that he needed more support, but I wasn't in the place to give it.

- Chelsea

Not only are they concerned about their physical safety but are also the support system for their community.

The overturning of *Roe v Wade* shocked many, as access to abortion was a right that several generations of women had grown up with, and therefore saw as protected. However, the history of Black women and reproductive rights is complicated. Birth control measures were used as a part of deceitful and discriminatory methods to control Black populations (Davis 1983). For example, Fannie Lou Hamer was sterilized without her consent. Her experiences and belief in God shaped that opinion (Larson 2021). Although her views on abortion were the non-dominant opinion, she still occupied feminist spaces (Larson 2021) and organized with the National Women's Political Caucus (Larson 2021). However, Black feminists still maintain that reproductive rights are essential for women's equality and freedom (Davis 1983, Lovett et al. 2022, p. 180).

Many who identify as religious still believe that women should have the right to choose. (I did not ask people if they were religious, rather 7 participants volunteered this information unprompted). Some identify as 'pro-life,' in the sense that they would not consider an abortion personally, but they still respect others' decision to choose that for themselves. They see reproductive rights as more of a reflection of American values, rather than religious ones. Regardless, they believe that the government has no right to infringe upon a woman's right to have an abortion, if she so chooses, as that is her decision. They describe the court's decision as

"backwards". For one, the answer was less clear. Chelsea, who identifies as a "Christian woman" felt "conflicted." She says:

I guess I would identify myself as pro-life...But I feel conflicted also, because...I think about like, domestic violence, and what we're [society] doing to stop perpetrators, and what we're [society] not doing to stop perpetrators. And ... contraception and its effectiveness and then sex education. Like everything that happens before conception that we're not doing enough to actually value the lives of actual human beings. So, it's very conflicting because I know people [are] still gonna get abortions and if you make things less accessible, they get a lot more dangerous. And then you're really not valuing life.

Another, Olivia, supports a woman's right to choose but is also untrusting of birth control and its health efficacies. Although many voiced their sadness and frustration, for Monique this law was personal. She says:

I actually ended up having an abortion and it was a very trauma filled experience. However, I know that raising a child at that time and even going forward was not a feasible option. It just was not. And so, to have that option or that choice be taken away, considering there are so many reasons as to why women do choose to get an abortion, is devastating. You're talking about ripple effects of generations, you potentially are setting up children to grow up in an environment in which are not conducive for a healthy child to live in. Right? You're asking potential survivors of assault, to carry a child to term.

The decision was emotionally taxing on Monique as she felt “maybe guilt, because I could have [an abortion] and some future person couldn't.”

Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization also united women around the country. Because abortion was no longer a federally protected right, women mobilized around reproductive rights. Democratic states quickly moved to codify rights into law and Republican states pushed to ban it. Kansas surprised many, as its electorate voted to uphold abortion rights within the state. The *Dobbs* decision left reproductive rights fragmented. Although it was an issue that women politically mobilized around, it left a feeling of a schism among some women. Shirley says:

I think this is where, as a black woman in this country, where you realize that our fight is different from white women in this country. I do think white women

contributed to that being overturned. Whether it's the appointment of Amy... or the fact that Clarence Thomas's wife has so much influence over the direction of the court right now. Or the fact that...white women helped vote Donald Trump in and as a result, we have a Supreme Court that looks like it does, or the fact that Ruth Bader Ginsburg when she had the opportunity to step down and allow Obama to replace her, she said, "no".¹² So, when I look at all those things, all I see is white women who cause that situation to be overturned. So, for me when I heard it, I don't know, I didn't feel surprised when I saw it happen. What I felt sad about, however, is that I know that Black and brown women [Native American/Hispanic/Latinx], because it's in our communities where healthcare services are least available. And especially when you go more rural... that's where the impact really, really will be felt.

Shirley expresses her disconnect from other groups. Although she perceives access to abortion as a women's rights issue, that understanding is paired with a reflection of social inequities. Even though this has the potential to impact all women, it will disproportionately impact women of color.

For Aaliyah the connection between reproductive rights and citizenship was clear:

I don't honestly feel completely respected as a citizen at the end of the day... Abortion was supposed to be your right to have, your right to say yes or no. And then it's like, all of a sudden, society's like, oh, actually, never mind. And that's so confusing, because you think you're a US citizen, and you have all these rights and accesses and then turns out, it can be taken away from you, in the blink of an eye.

(2) Before asking these questions that explicitly reference race and gender, I asked questions in a way that left topics about citizenship and inequality open to interpretation. I was looking to see if there were any specific references to race and gender or the instances listed above. Because topics like Trump and COVID have received widespread media and public attention, I expected that these topics may come up as well. By leaving the question open to interpretation, I was able to see what issues were on their mind. And to see if issues of race and gender appeared despite the recent state

¹² As Ruth B. Ginsburg was nearing old age and had frequent health problems, there were public calls for her to retire from the Supreme Court while Obama was president so that she could be replaced by another liberal judge.

of American politics (as this project began development in the fall of 2019). I asked the participants:

Some people have described the last few years as quite tumultuous. Are there any instances that made you re-think, alter, or question your ideas of citizenship?

Some people say that inequality persists in the United States, especially in the last few years. Are there any instances that made you re-think, alter, or question your ideas of equality?

These questions yielded responses about the January 6th insurrection, Trump and the 2016 election, COVID, and book bans, abortion, race relations, and economic concerns. I consolidated similar categories, reducing it to the following topics:

- (a) *Trump*: reference to Trump (his policies), the January 6th insurrection, Trump's handling of Covid
- (b) *Covid*: reference to general concerns about Covid
- (c) *Women's rights*: reference to women's rights or abortion
- (d) *Black rights*: reference to rights for Black people, book bans (e.g., teaching of slavery)
- (e) *Economic concerns*: reference to the state of the economy

However, even in their discussions of Trump and Covid, there were specific references to other categories then they were coded as both. For example, if discussions of Covid referenced racial disparities in Covid deaths, then that comment was coded as both *Covid* and *Black rights*. Due to time constraints, not all participants were asked these questions. Of the 18 participants that were asked either or both of these questions, 13 referenced one or both of these topics—9 mentioned *Black rights*, 1 mentioned *women's rights*, and 4 mentioned both *Black rights* and *women's rights*.

My interviewees perceive themselves to lack autonomy, agency, and power in society and see men making decisions. In both circumstances, they perceive a group to have power and them to lack power. Unlike some other groups, they feel like their identities can be attacked on two fronts. Even if interviews with Black men and white women revealed that they expressed their concern about the issues listed above, both issues would not impact them personally.

Conclusion

The last few years have been particularly attuned to issues of race and gender. Even instances that seem like idiosyncrasies, like COVID, reveal disparities for marginalized groups, including Black people and women. Many of these events may have illuminated inequities for some, but for Black women, they only reinforced what they knew to be true. However, the relationship between this feeling of unequalness and political activity is not a new phenomenon. I draw connections between why they continue to vote and their disillusion with politics. Interviewees understand the US to be hierarchical and their understanding of status is defined by the interlocking of systems of race, gender, and class and form opinions based on their positionality in the US based on that. From their experiences, history, and current events (media), they draw conclusions that society does not value them as much as they do others.

I discuss women's experiences with basic needs policies.¹³ Shirley used government programs, SNAP and WIC, to support herself and her child while she was working a job in retail. Simone experienced financial insecurity post-divorce. These tend to be gendered issues.

My findings demonstrate that Black women understand their citizenship to be limited and come with conditions. Despite this, they still express an immense amount of pride for the contributions they have made.

¹³ Additionally, debt and student loans appear quite often in the data. When I asked about experiences with government programs, I provided examples and listed education assistance in the form of student loans and grants as options. Additionally, I have an over-representative set of cases of millennials and Gen Z that have pursued higher education, and unclear how much of a generational issue this is. Student loan forgiveness is also a hot-button issue, especially during June 2023 when interviews were conducted. Lastly, because this was a program in which many believed they had participated, I asked follow-up questions when relevant to understand their experiences with the program, as I did when they mentioned other programs. Although federal student loans are a common program, this is still relevant considering the rate at which Black women pursue higher education. It also puts into question that education will continue to operate as an equalizer of sorts.

There are limitations in this study as I have a relatively small number of cases and many of my interviewees are highly educated. However, the overrepresentation of women with higher degrees suggests that more education and higher income does not make Black women feel more like a citizen in the US. Education and income may change many conditions around them, but it does not erase their identity. I find some support for my claims that government policies and daily processes influence citizenship among those with negative views of government programs, however, I do not perceive a direct link. None of my participants mentioned vulnerability in their legal status. Most of my participants were born in the US, and those who immigrated spent their formative years in the US. This makes my findings insightful in that even those that are US citizens, do not always feel like they are treated as such.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Contributions and Implications

This project adds to the literature on Black women and politics regarding how they navigate and respond to political systems. I make connections within the discipline that are intuitive but still unrealized by the discipline. This dissertation encourages scholars to examine how universally applied concepts pertain to marginalized groups. As a result, it provides an analysis of understanding how those with intersectional identities feel in society and, therefore, a foundation for achieving political incorporation for those groups. Political incorporation dictates that people “think of themselves as Americans with political rights and with a voice in politics, should they so choose to exercise it” (Gerstle 2010). However, although Black women can and do exercise their right to vote, they feel that they lack a voice in politics and that their rights as citizens are limited and differentially applied.

In this dissertation, I emphasize the interplay between political, social, and economic contexts. I emphasize the importance of government policies but also recognize that they are embedded within a social context, thereby discussing complex histories, social interactions, and overlapping political and economic systems. By envisioning the system in this way, I can account for things like experiences about racism and sexism and experiences in everyday life.

I have demonstrated that positive government intervention did not cultivate Black women’s political engagement. Rather, it was developed by the government’s failure to take their needs seriously. They took matters into their own hands and engaged in state building, not only for themselves but also for others.

I have also demonstrated that despite Black women's high participation, they feel incredibly unequal. The survey analysis illustrates that the difference in their views is distinct from other groups. Not only is their participation high, but it is comparable to the political participation of white men and women; no other group of color has participation rates this high. I reference other groups not to establish comparisons but to establish how significant this paradox is. By showing the relationship between groups, I demonstrate that there are, in fact, groups in the US that feel like they are treated like "full and equal" citizens. This means that this concept is not an ideal type; it is attainable. Additionally, I show that there is something unique about the influence of the combined effect of both race *and* gender.

The comparisons reflect how those who have been incorporated fully view things. My findings suggest that enfranchisement is not the sole definition of political citizenship. Of course, it is a required component, but it is not the last step. There is something else operating here. Therefore, citizenship must mean something bigger, more expansive. Michener argues that systemic pathologizing causes Black youth's feelings of alienation (Cohen and Michener 2010). Black women's sustained political participation demonstrates that the prescription isn't more political activity; elected officials need to show that they are responsive to their concerns and valued members of society.

My interviews reveal that Black women perceive the US to have a hierarchical system where race and wealth determine power and access to resources. Their attitudes are complex and layered. Our conversations suggest they recognize American ideals but do not see them as applying to them—they are citizens "on paper." I find that Black women's low likelihood of feeling like full and equal citizens is tied to feelings of being undervalued by the political system and society.

My findings have larger implications. My findings show that concerns like racism and sexism are not a thing of the past and are structures that influence how they understand their status as Americans. These factors condition their interpretation of their positionality in the US, and they perceive their citizenship to be limited—or constrained. This leaves concerns for the future of the Democratic Party and democracy at large. Disillusionment with government and politics and low efficacy is common among Americans, but this still stands out. This is perhaps most exemplified by phrases like Black women being the “backbone of democracy.” Phrases like this indicate that, to some degree, the Democratic Party is aware of this, as elected officials have used it often in recent years. This phrase has both positive and negative connotations. Unlike other groups, their citizenship was cultivated in “lack of.” On the one hand, it recognizes Black women’s contributions. On the other hand, it emphasizes that Black women have taken a supporting role, uplifting the rest of the country without recognition (until now). Harris’s statement makes apparent that complexity.

In discussions of income inequality, there is a concept called coincidental representation, in which the preferences of one group are ignored but happen to align with the policy preferences of the dominant minority (Enns 2015). Gilens critiques this concept, stating that “democracy by coincidence is a debased and conditional form of democracy” and “if the majority of citizens must depend on their agreement with a powerful minority in order to obtain the policies they prefer, that majority will always be in a politically tentative and precarious position” (Gilens 2015, p. 1070). My interviews reflect that Black women understand their citizenship to be subdued by the identities they hold. Black women participate in politics but feel their needs are unmet. Although the authors are referring to policy preferences, the sentiment about democratic involvement

parallels this. For Black women to perceive that they buttress a system that is responsive to others' needs but not their own makes their status uncertain.

I think the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement is important here, but it is also worth noting that recent incidents are at the forefront of many minds. In their studies of youths, Hochschild et al. 2012 write, “For young adults, marches, riots, and grape boycotts are what they study in history books; their collective memories include the New Orleans' Superdome in 2005 [Hurricane Katrina], the immigrant rights march in 2006, and Barack Obama's Grant Park speech in 2008” (Hochschild, Weaver, Burch 2012). Similarly, Michener says, “Katrina is their ‘Rodney King moment,’ that visible rendering of black people and the black body as expendable, especially in the eyes and behavior of the state” (Cohen and Michener 2010). There is a generation of Americans having grown up and entering electoral that have been inundated with new images, potentially Floyd, immigrants at the border, mass shootings, and bans and criminalization of abortions, to name a few. Some of these instances may have mobilized young people to partake in various forms of political participation. Those actions are not for progress or even maintenance of their current circumstances but to reclaim the rights they thought they had. Like the constant reimagining and reproduction of systems of oppression I discussed earlier, generations keep having these moments—that contextualize their circumstances.

As previously mentioned, the voter turnout rates of Black women resemble that of white men and women (see appendix). Although the voter turnout rates of all four groups declined from 2020 to 2022, as is common with midterm elections, there is a sharper decline in the turnout rates of Black women. This could be an idiosyncrasy; however, this is concerning if it is not. This statistic is cause for alarm, as it could reflect dissatisfaction with the political system—a dissatisfaction that has interrupted a pattern of higher voting rates for twenty years. This would be

concerning if this continues. It begs the question: What happens when you can no longer rely upon them to maintain the system?

Further Research

This study has a few limitations. For one, it includes a small number of cases. Further research can be done to increase the number of participants interviewed with greater economic dispersion. Black women with higher education are overrepresented. Because we might expect that those with less income would feel unequal, it is telling that even those with higher income and educational attainment feel unequal and undervalued. This is substantiated by both the survey analysis and interview findings.

Education has taken on an interesting role in this dissertation, which was originally unexpected by the author. My formulation of education has been central to this project insofar as it is a vehicle for social mobility. However, education manages to appear in all substantive chapters, providing different insights each time. In Chapter 3, education is used as a tool to cultivate citizenship. In Chapter 4, I find that education does not influence status, as it does not make Black women more or less likely to feel equal. In Chapter 5, conversations about education are subsumed by student loans and debt. Thereby, leaving education's influence up for further exploration.

Further research is necessary to substantiate my claims that Black women's understanding of citizenship is unique to that of Black men and white women, as that would require interviews from those groups as well. My analysis, however, does reveal that race and gender are modulating factors that influence one's understanding of citizenship. While it is unclear if it changes their understanding of citizenship, it shows how they understand their positionality in this country.

Additionally, further research is necessary to understand how women of color, as a collective group, understand their positionality in this country. Earlier, I said that this project aimed to take an intersectional approach to understanding how women of color understand their positioning in society. However, this project focuses on a single group. Although Asian and Latinx women share some commonality as women of color, the experiences of Black women will not be reflective of the experiences of all women of color. I believe the experiences of Black, Asian, and Latinx women will be different, and attention should be paid to investing those nuances for each group. Therefore, it is imperative to explore this question of citizenship and status more thoroughly for women of color. Additionally, when crafting a research plan and interviewing participants, it should also include questions relevant to 2020-2022. Unfortunately, this period had salient instances that prime race for these communities as well, Covid and discrimination against Asians and the border crisis and discrimination against Latinx. Doing so would allow for scholarship that investigates the specifics of each group and examines these groups in relationship to one another. Recent studies, like Matos et al (2021), Perez (2021), and Brower (Forthcoming 2024), provide the possibility to investigate this question further.

This dissertation describes the distinctive experience of a group. However, some takeaways can be relevant for other marginalized groups. It tackles concepts like equality and political power. This project prompts research for other marginalized groups who hold intersectional identities. By applying a similar framework, in which scholars contextualize the histories and experiences of those particular groups with the state and society, we can learn more about how they understand their positionality in this country and what it means to be at the margins. It would also be relevant to see if threats to other marginalized groups (that they are not members of) impact one's

understanding of citizenship. For example, some of my data discussed immigrants' rights at the border and the LGBTQ+ community.

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APPENDICES

A. Survey Data

Data Sample Sizes

Sample sizes for participants that responded to the question:

“Generally, I feel like a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have.”

Race-Gender Group	CMPS 2020	SGIPS 2008	GenForward 2015
White Men	1357	481	192
White Women	1613	546	157
Black Men	1793	69	142
Black Women	2190	133	96
Latinx Men	1661	N/A	117
Latinx Women	2315	N/A	120
Asian Men	1729	10	90
Asian Women	2215	10	66
Total	14873	1229	980

Alternative Model

Alternatively, I modeled the race-gender groups in relation to the population in the dataset (which includes all races). The regression table below shows an alternative ordered logistic regression model where I measured the relationship between *full and equal citizen* and *race-gender*. In the first model, the outcome group is “Black women”, and the reference group is “Not Black women” (Asian, Latinx, white, and Black men). The subsequent models follow this pattern. I applied the survey sample weights to the models. Post-stratification weights were not applied and that may alter results. The results are compatible with the models included in the body of the dissertation in that they show that Black women are more likely to disagree with feeling like an equal citizen, Black men disagree to a lesser extent, and white people are more likely to agree. The impact of the control variables does differ.

Table 4. Alternative Model Ordered Logistic Regression Results

Full and Equal Citizen	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White Men
Strongly – Agree – Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.69 *** (0.08)	0.79 *** (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)	0.10 (0.08)
Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat – Disagree – Strongly	1.87 *** (0.08)	1.96 *** (0.08)	1.20 *** (0.08)	1.24 *** (0.08)
Black Women	0.67 *** (0.06)			
Education	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	-0.11 *** (0.01)	-0.09 *** (0.01)	-0.07 *** (0.01)	-0.07 *** (0.01)
Income	-0.03 *** (0.01)	-0.04 *** (0.01)	-0.04 *** (0.01)	-0.04 *** (0.01)
Democrat	0.43 *** (0.04)	0.51 *** (0.04)	0.63 *** (0.04)	0.63 *** (0.04)
Black linked fate	0.27 *** (0.02)	0.31 *** (0.02)		
Black Men		0.13 * (0.06)		
White Women			-0.44 *** (0.07)	
White linked fate			-0.04 ** (0.02)	-0.05 ** (0.02)
White Men				-0.44 *** (0.07)
nobs	10856.85	10856.85	10856.85	10856.85
edf	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
AIC	20543.97	20685.28	21045.97	21051.68
BIC	20602.31	20743.62	21104.31	21110.02
logLik	-10263.98	-10334.64	-10514.98	-10517.84
df.residual	10848.85	10848.85	10848.85	10848.85
nobs.1	10856.85	10856.85	10856.85	10856.85

I use data from the 2008 Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey (SGIPS). This survey is a nationally representative telephone survey that includes sizeable populations of Black and white respondents.¹⁴ This survey is instrumental because it offers a robust battery of questions with respect to policy-centered and political efficacy *and* asks a specific question about feeling like a citizen in the United States, which is necessary for the factor analysis. I also use the results of the factor analysis to create additional indices: (1) alienation index (2) external political efficacy and (3) internal political efficacy.

Dependent Variables

I analyze race-gender attitudes across five variables of interest.

Citizenship

My primary dependent variable is *full and equal citizen*. This variable is a measure of how the concept of citizenship people. Specifically, it asks respondents how much they agree or disagree with the following statement: “Generally, I feel like a full and equal citizen in this country with all the rights and protections that other people have.” This variable is a five-point likert scale, with 1 being the lowest, strongly disagree, and 5 the highest, strongly agree. A score of 3 is neither agree nor disagree. The table below shows how many people agree or strongly agree that they feel like a *full and equal citizen*. White men feel the most like a citizen whereas Black women feel the least like a citizen; Black men fall in between this range. There is no noticeable difference between white men and white women; both agree to the same degree.

	White Men & White Women	White Men & Black Men	White Men & Black Women	White Women & Black Men	White Women & Black Women	Black Men & Black Women
Feels like a full and equal citizen	0.0659	0.893***	1.3042***	0.827***	1.2383***	0.4112
Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey						

Vote

Secondly, I examine a series of other variables. The first is vote choice. Some would describe voting as the primary mode of democratic citizenship. However, I think citizenship can encapsulate voting but is not exclusive to it. Below shows how many people reported voting in the 2004 election. This is a dummy variable, in which respondents replied yes or no to having voted. Interestingly, these percentages follow a similar ordering to those above, showing that white men and white women are most likely to vote and Black women least likely to vote. However, the degree to which they are noteworthy. In both instances, about eighty percent of white men and white women vote/feel like a citizen, but for Black women 75 percent reported voted but only 48 percent feel like a citizen. This suggests that a higher voter participation rate does not translate into citizenship.

¹⁴ The smallest sample is that of Black men, which there are only 70 respondents.

Reported Voting in 2004 (%)	
White Men	83.81
White Women	83.53
Black Men	69.03
Black Women	74.60
Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey	

Alienation and Political Efficacy

The last three variables I analyze are indices that measure (1) how alienated one feels from government, (2) people's understanding of government responsiveness, and (3) how much they understand and feel comfortable participating in politics.

To create these indices, I conducted a factor analysis using the set of questions measuring political efficacy and other attitudes toward government and public life. (The exact question wording is listed in the appendix). The factor analysis shows that 4 factors are appropriate for this model, demonstrating that most of the variability is explained by these 4 latent factors. From my factor analysis, I made four categories of sets of items.

The **first**, groups the following items together: (1) Public officials don't care much (2) People like me don't have a say (3) Govt has imposed costly burdens (4) Govt has limited my freedom. Not only do the external efficacy variables load onto this factor but so do items that assess whether people view government as a benefit or limitation. The Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient of .68. The **second**, groups the following items together: (1) Feels like a full and equal citizen (2) Feel I owe back to country (3) Proud to be an American. The **third**, groups the internal efficacy variables together: (1) I feel I have a good understanding (2) Feels qualified to participate in politics. The **fourth**, groups the following items together: (1) Govt social programs have helped (2) Govt has given opportunities (3) Want to make society more fair. The Cronbach's alpha for the next three groups is significantly lower, with coefficients of .48, .51, and .42, respectively. However, a low score does not necessarily mean that these pairings are not substantively meaningful. The score is a measure of reliability not validity (UVA Library). In addition, I use a relatively small number of variables (twelve) for my factor analysis and increasing/decreasing the number of variables could increase/decrease the score (UVA Library).

I examine three substantively meaningful indices. The *alienation index* is the result of a factor analysis which places the four variables (shown below) as sharing the same factor, unobserved variable. This index consists of variables commonly understood to measure external efficacy, as well as an additional two variables that measure government benefit or limitation. I also analyze the actual *external efficacy* index. Lastly, I analyze the third grouping, *internal efficacy*, another well-used index in political science.

Below shows the complete list of variables included in the factor analysis:

Respondents are asked how strongly they agree/disagree (on a scale of 1-5) with the following statements.

- 5 Agree strongly
- 4 Agree somewhat
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree somewhat
1 Disagree strongly

Public officials don't care much

"Public officials don't care much what people like me think."

People like me don't have say

"People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

I feel I have a good understanding

"I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing this country."

Feels qualified to participate in politics

"I consider myself well qualified to participate in politics."

Govt social programs have helped

"Government social programs have helped me in times of need."

Govt has imposed costly burdens

"Government has imposed costly burdens on me."

Govt has given opportunities

"Government has given me opportunities to improve my standard of living."

Govt has limited freedom

"Government has greatly limited my freedom."

Proud to be an American

"Generally, I feel proud to be an American."

Feel I owe back to country

"I feel I owe a great deal back to this country."

Want to make society more fair

"I want to help make our society more fair and equitable."

**Percentage that Agree/Agree
Strongly**

Attitude	White Men	White Women	Black Men	Black Women
Alienation				
Public officials don't care much	69.97	68.86	70.89	71.84

People like me don't have a say	53.23	48.94	49.08	54.46
Govt has imposed costly burdens	56.58	49.69	48.67	59.55
Govt has limited my freedom	41.89	24.72	34.11	38.34
Internal Efficacy				
I feel I have a good understanding	92.41	85.11	85.6	76.46
Feels qualified to participate in politics	71.17	65.29	79.45	73.24
Social Progress				
Govt social programs have helped	53.22	54.63	58.95	63.16
Govt has given opportunities	59.43	53.51	59.24	52.63
Want to make society more fair	88.74	95.5	98.84	96.17
Attachment				
Feels like a full and equal citizen	80.99	79.02	61.63	47.66
Feel I owe back to country	79.29	78.77	64.77	44.16
Proud to be an American	96.37	95.87	93.99	95.34

Source: Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey 2008

Among the *Alienation* variables overall, there are small differences. White men feel the most like government has limited their freedom and white women feel the least like such; Black men and women fall in between this range. Interestingly, white men, Black men, and Black women feel that government has imposed costly burdens more than white women do. More Black men and women feel qualified to participate in politics than white men and women do, however, more white men and women feel like they have a good understanding of politics than Black men and women do.

Among the *Social Progress* variables, there are small differences. White women, Black men, and Black women respond more positively than white men when asked if they want to make society more fair. Women tend to respond more positively than men when asked if government has given them opportunities. Black women respond most positively, whereas a little over half respond of white men, white women, and Black men agree that social programs have helped.

Interestingly, the last grouping shows great commonality and divergence. All groups respond quite well when asked if they are *proud to be an American* (94-96 percent), however, when asked if they *feel like a full and equal citizen* or *feel like they owe back to the country* there are stark differences across groups. In fact, the groups respond quite similarly to these two questions. Only about 44-48 percent of Black women agree, whereas about 79 percent of white women and 80 percent of white men agree with this statement. Black men fair in between, about 10 percent higher than Black women.

Additional Variables

The table below displays the difference of means for all the individual variables of interest: *feels like a full and equal citizen*, *vote*, and the three indices: *alienation*, *external efficacy*, and *internal efficacy*. *Full and equal citizen* and *voting* hold similar patterns. The differences are statistically significant for all comparisons except gender within racial categories. This suggests that Shklar's theory emphasizing the importance of voting to ones feeling like a part of the polity holds. However, I interpret this chart to say that while it is a vital component, it is not the complete picture.

Across groups, the differences in means for *external efficacy* are not only small but also not statistically significant. Considering that Americans tend to have low external efficacy this is unsurprising. Since the external efficacy variables comprise the *alienation index*, many of the variables in the alienation index show little statistical difference. The exception, however, is the *government has limited my freedom*. There, the means of white men is about .4 points higher than that of white women, and the mean of white women is about .4 points lower than Black women. In comparison to white men, both white and Black women feel less confident participating in politics, as shown by the internal efficacy index.

Difference of the Means

	White Men & White Women	White Men & Black Men	White Men & Black Women	White Women & Black Men	White Women & Black Women	Black Men & Black Women
Feels like a full and equal citizen	0.0659	0.893***	1.3042***	0.827***	1.2383***	0.4112
Alienation Index						
Public officials don't care much	-0.1096	0.0193	0.1162	0.1289	0.2259	0.0969
People like me don't have a say	-0.08546	0.00163	0.03946	0.08709	0.12492	0.03783
Govt has limited my freedom	0.4514***	0.1	0.0253	-0.3514	-0.4262*	-0.0748
Govt has imposed costly burdens	0.2089	0.1345	-0.2286	-0.0744	-0.4375	-0.3631
External Efficacy Index						
Public officials don't care much	-0.1096	0.0193	0.1162	0.1289	0.2259	0.0969
People like me don't have a say	-0.08546	0.00163	0.03946	0.08709	0.12492	0.03783
Internal Efficacy Index						
I feel I have a good understanding	0.303***	0.171	0.452***	-0.132	0.149	0.281
Feels qualified to participate in politics	0.284**	-0.1183	0.0598	-0.4023	-0.2242	0.1781
Voting						
Voted in 2004	0.0148	0.146**	0.118**	0.1312*	0.1032*	-0.0281
Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Survey						

Full and Equal Citizen	White	Black
1 2	-0.36 (0.28)	-0.83 (0.48)
2 3	0.41 (0.27)	0.10 (0.48)
3 4	0.46 (0.27)	0.12 (0.48)
4 5	1.70 *** (0.28)	1.42 ** (0.49)
Female	0.01 (0.13)	-0.36 (0.28)
Education	0.12 *** (0.03)	-0.00 (0.08)
Age	0.19 *** (0.04)	0.03 (0.08)
Income	0.11 *** (0.03)	0.08 (0.06)
Nobs	948.00	192.00
Edf	8.00	8.00
AIC	2105.61	550.08
BIC	2144.44	576.14
logLik	-1044.80	-267.04
df.residual	940.00	184.00
nobs.1	948.00	192.00

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Vote	White	Black
(Intercept)	0.87 ***	0.73 ***
	(0.02)	(0.05)
female	0.01	0.05
	(0.02)	(0.07)
education	0.06 ***	0.03
	(0.01)	(0.04)
Age	0.06 ***	0.07 *
	(0.01)	(0.03)
income	0.04 ***	0.07
	(0.01)	(0.04)
N	917	187
R2	0.09	0.07

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

The results above show gender does not contribute to one's likelihood of voting. In the models we see that education, age, and income increase the likelihood of voting for white respondents, however, for Black respondents only age does so. If you compare the citizenship model and voting model, you will notice that in both instances, the control variables are predictive of views of citizenship among white people. For Black people, only age predicts an increase in the likelihood of voting.

Alienation Index	White	Black
(Intercept)	2.75 ***	2.69 ***
	(0.03)	(0.08)
Female	-0.09 *	0.07
	(0.04)	(0.11)
Education	0.03	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.06)
Age	-0.04	-0.00
	(0.02)	(0.05)
Income	0.02	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.06)
N	949	193
R2	0.01	0.00

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

The results above show that white people feel more alienated than Black people. In fact, white men feel more alienated from government than white women do. However, there appears to be no sizable gender difference for Black people.

External Efficacy Index	White	Black
(Intercept)	2.60 ***	2.59 ***
	(0.06)	(0.16)
Female	0.18 *	-0.02
	(0.08)	(0.20)
Education	0.26 ***	0.05
	(0.05)	(0.11)
Age	-0.00	0.16
	(0.04)	(0.09)
Income	0.10 *	0.13
	(0.05)	(0.11)
N	949	193
R2	0.06	0.03

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

People tend to believe generally believe that government is nonresponsive. There seems to be no significant difference between the responses of Black and white respondents. However, for white respondents' gender and income does influence views of government responsiveness, but education has the greatest impact. These factors have little influence on the responses of Black respondents.

Internal Efficacy Index	White	Black
(Intercept)	4.18 ***	4.12 ***
	(0.05)	(0.12)
Female	-0.26 ***	-0.23
	(0.06)	(0.15)
Education	0.24 ***	0.19 *
	(0.03)	(0.08)
Age	0.09 **	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.07)
Income	0.05	0.10
	(0.03)	(0.08)
N	950	193
R2	0.10	0.08

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

The results above that there are minimal differences in Black men or Black women on how well they understand and feel comfortable participating in politics. White women are less likely than white men to feel like this; education influences this likelihood just as much as gender does. Education is the only factor that influences Black people's views of how well they understand politics. Civic skills are typically acquired through education, so naturally the more knowledge one acquires, the more confident they may feel about that knowledge.

There are gendered differences among white people among the three indices, with the greatest differences in the internal efficacy index. For Black respondents there do not appear to be gendered differences in responses to any of the models. Overall, education, age, and income seem to be relevant factors for attitudinal shifts in white respondents but not so much for Black people.

Full and Equal Citizen	White	Black
Strongly Agree Agree	-2.38 ***	-3.21 ***
	(0.56)	(0.51)
Agree Disagree	-0.45	-1.08 *
	(0.47)	(0.44)
Disagree Strongly Disagree	1.93 ***	1.12 *
	(0.48)	(0.44)
Female	0.49 *	-0.38
	(0.21)	(0.26)
Education	0.22	-0.13
	(0.13)	(0.15)
Age	0.00	0.01
	(0.00)	(0.01)
Income	0.09 *	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.05)
nobs	347.00	232.00
edf	7.00	7.00
AIC	732.82	556.00
BIC	759.76	580.13
logLik	-359.41	-271.00
df.residual	340.00	225.00
nobs.1	347.00	232.00

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

B. Interview Questionnaire¹⁵

Date:

Start Time:

Introduction

1. Can you describe the community you grew up in?
2. Where were born? Where did you grow up?
3. How many generations of your family were born in the United States?
4. How many generations of your family live in the United States?
5. What country did you/your family immigrate from?
6. Does most of your family live in the United States? (i.e. family network)
7. Can you describe the community you live in now? Is it like the one you grew up in?
8. What is your relationship to your community like? Do you feel deeply connected to your community? How so?
9. What role does your community play in shaping how you function in society? Who do you think makes the decisions in your community?

Citizenship & Equality

Section Opening Statement: I want to ask you some questions about citizenship and equality.

10. What comes to mind when you hear the word “citizenship”?
 - a. [If legal definition]
Does having this legal status as a citizen make you feel like you are treated equally to other citizens in this country? Are there other things that contribute to your idea of what a citizen is?
11. What comes to mind when you hear “American” citizen?
12. Earlier, you said that your family has lived in this country for _____ generations.
Do you think that impacts your attachment to this country? How so?
13. Some people have described citizenship in additional ways other than legal status: being political citizen (voting), a social citizen (equal access to health care, education, food, etc.), or an economic citizen (ability to earn and have access to goods).
Are any of these descriptions of citizenship particularly meaningful to (resonate with) you?
Why?
Two options: US citizen v non-US citizen

¹⁵ This an exhaustive list of the structured interview questions. Not all questions were asked of every participant.

- [If a US citizen]:
As a US citizen, do you think that there any ‘rights and protections’ that others may have that you do not have? [If yes], like what?
 - [If not a US citizen]:
Other than voting, do think that others may have any ‘rights and protections’ that you do not have? [If yes], like what?
14. Do you think all Americans are treated equally? What makes you think that? Are there groups of people that you think are not treated equally? Who are they? Why do you think that?
15. Is there a group or group(s) of people that you perceive to be treated as “full and equal citizens” in the United States with all the rights? Why?
16. What do you think of when you hear “American Dream”?
- Do you think the “American Dream” is important to citizenship?
Do you think you’ve achieved the “American Dream”?
17. Some people have described the last few years as quite tumultuous. Are there any instances that made you re-think, alter, or question your ideas of citizenship?
18. Some people say that inequality persists in the United States, especially in the last few years. Are there any instances that made you re-think, alter, or question your ideas of equality?

Political Behavior

19. Do you vote?
- [If yes],
 - A. (Presidential): In November of 2020, Joe Biden was elected to presidential office, did you vote in that election? Why did you choose to vote/why not?
 - B. (State/Local): In the last few months, primary elections were held for congressional and state offices, did you vote during that election? Why/why not?
 - [If no], why not?
20. Do you think voting is important (or essential) to citizenship?

21. Do you think of voting as a duty? A right?

22. Are there other (political) actions Americans can do that you find equally important as or more important than voting?

[Have them list a few]

- You listed _____. Would you say these are as important than OR more important than voting?
- [For each listed] Can you think of the last time you participated in any of these acts?

Policy

Section Opening Statement: Everyone has a relationship to law and policy and so this next set of questions pertain to public policy.

23. I want you to think about immigration, social programs, and policing policies. Do you perceive any of these policy areas as having an impact on your day-to-day life?

24. The pandemic changed the way social services and provisions has been administered in this country. This includes aid to families, relief grants, stimulus checks, student loan pauses, rental assistance, eviction moratoriums, etc.

What impact (if any) do you perceive this having on your status in this country? Have you benefited from any of the pandemic relief programs? If so, which do you think was most helpful to you? Why do you feel this way?

25. I want you to think about your life before the Covid pandemic. Several social programs have been available for Americans prior to the pandemic. For example, one such program that many have found helpful are federal and state education grants and access to student loans to attend college, SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, etc.

Have you used any social programs before the pandemic began?

26. Some social programs are less apparent to Americans since they don't require much interaction with government agencies. This includes the earned income tax credit, mortgage credit, childcare credits and deductions.

Have you participated in any of these programs?

[List programs here]

27. You mentioned using _____. Of these programs, were there any that you found particularly helpful? Did you find any of these programs particularly limiting? What was your experience with those programs like? Did you feel respected?

Race/Gender

28. Racism and sexism are things that often shape people's experiences in day-to-day life. Have you? (whether small slights or larger things). Do any of these experiences impact how you think others perceive you in society? Despite these experiences, would you still consider yourself to feel like or be treated like an equal citizen?
29. In May 2020, George Floyd was murdered at the hands of police. His death and the death of others, including Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, sparked protests across the US. When you heard about this news, how did it make you feel? Does this make you think about citizenship in this country?
30. In May 2022, the draft opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States was leaked to the public ahead of the final ruling. In June, that ruling was finalized. In it, the court wrote a majority opinion criticizing abortion, and overturning Roe v Wade. When you heard about this news, how did it make you feel? Does this make you think about citizenship in this country?
31. During the 2020 election cycle, reference to Black women as "being the backbone of the Democratic party" circulated news outlets. How did this make you feel?

--and--

During the 2020 election cycle, reference to Black women as "being the backbone of the democracy" circulated news outlets. How did this make you feel?

--and—

On November 7, 2020, after Biden and Harris won the 2020 election, Kamala Harris said in her speech: "Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all. Including the Black women who are often, too often overlooked but so often proved they are the backbone of our democracy" (ABC News 2020). Many news outlets repeated similar news stories (Bolduan 2020). How does this make you feel?

32. Do you ever feel the pressure to overperform or achieve excellence? (Woods-Giscombé 2010)

Demographic Questions

33. What kind of school did you attend growing up? This might include public, charter, private, and boarding schools. Did you consider other options? Were other options available to you?
34. Do you have access to local hospitals or health clinics? How would you describe the quality of the facility/care?
35. Do you have access to reliable transportation? Do you typically travel by car, train, bus, or rideshare?
36. Economic Insecurity: Within the last year, how difficult has it been for your household to pay for usual household expenses? (US Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey).
(Food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, student loans—before the payment pause or non-federal)
37. How would you describe your income level living growing up?
(Lower income, lower-middle income, middle income, middle-high income, high income)
38. How would you describe your income level now?
(Lower income, lower-middle income, middle income, middle-high income, high income)
39. What is the highest level of education you received?
40. What is the highest level of education your parents received?

End Time:

C. Interview Data

Demographics of Research Participants

Name	Age	Residence (State)	US Born	Heritage	Highest Degree	Current Income (self-described)	Religious (self-described)	Parent 1 Highest Degree	Parent 2 Highest Degree	Childhood Income (self-described)
Loretta	69	GA	Yes	multi-generation American	master's	middle class	No mention	Middle School	Vocational/ Associates	middle class
Brittany	31	NY	Yes	multi-generation American (unsure)	high school	low income	No mention	Don't know	Don't know	lower-middle income
Jasmine	23	NY	Yes	five-generation American (Virginia); Trinidad	In college	middle class	No mention	High School	Vocational /Associates	lower-middle income
Shirley	53	NY	No	Guyana	masters	lower-middle income	No mention	Vocational/ Associates		middle income
Gabrielle	25	NJ	Yes	first-generation born in US (Jamaica)	masters	lower-middle income	No mention	Associates		lower income
Keisha	35-45	NY	Yes	first-generation born in US (Trinidad)	bachelors	lower-middle income	Yes	Some college		lower-middle income
Mia	48	NY	Yes	five-generation American (Carolinas)	some college	middle income	No mention	High School		middle income
Dominique	20	NY	No	Haiti	In college	lower-middle income	No mention	Associates	Associates	lower-middle income

Regina	42	GA	Yes	second-generation (Barbados); third-generation (Barbados)	master's	middle class	No mention	Associates	High School (unsure)	lower income
Olivia	38	NY	Yes	multi-generation American (African American, Trinidad)	high school	Lower income	No mention	High School		middle class
Yvonne	61	GA	Yes	African American; Cherokee Indian/Caucasian	Associate's	middle income	No mention	High School	High School	lower-middle income
Denise	30	CA	No	Sudan	masters	high income	Yes	Middle School		lower income
Kayla	26	NY	Yes	second-generation born in US (Grenada); first-generation born in the US (Grenada)	bachelors	lower-middle income	No mention	Associates	Bachelors	lower-middle income
Chelsea	26	DC	Yes	five-generation American	masters	low income	Yes	Masters	masters	middle income
Sharon	64	OH	Yes	multi-generation American (Missouri)	high school	lower-middle income	No mention	High School		lower-middle income
Robin	30	MI	Yes	four-generation born in US; second-generation (Jamaican)	PhD	upper middle class	Yes	Masters	some college	middle class

Aaliyah	20	NY	Yes	first-generation born in US (Jamaica)	In college	middle income	No mention	Bachelors	Bachelors	middle income
Tiffany	28	CA	Yes	first-generation born in US (Ethiopia)	bachelors	middle- high income	Yes	Some High School		lower income
Monica	28	MD	Yes	first-generation born in US (Jamaica)	masters	high- middle	Yes	Bachelors		middle income
Monique	29	DC	Yes	multi-generation born in US; second- generation (Canada)	PhD	middle- income	Yes	Masters	Bachelors	Middle income (fluctuate between lower- middle, middle, middle- high)
Simone	37	NJ	Yes	first-generation born in US	EdD	lower income	No mention	Middle School	Middle School	middle income
Whitney	27	MD	Yes	first-generation born in US (Jamaica)	bachelors	lower income	No mention	Middle School		lower income

Coding Scheme

Coding Scheme		
Topic		Definition
Government Program Usage		Mentions of use of visible government programs: SNAP, Medicaid/ACA expansion, WIC, Section 8, Unemployment, Education Assistance (student loans or grants); Foster care Participants were given some examples, though others came to mind.
Program Experience		Positive, Negative (i.e. only discusses student loans), Neutral, Mixed (grateful but limiting in some ways, i.e. student loans)
Status	Racial Hierarchy	Reference to the US and treatment people as a racial hierarchy, rigid system where race determined value, power, access to resources
	Class Hierarchy	Reference to the US and treatment people as a class based hierarchy, rigid system where money determined value, power, access to resources
	Discrimination	References to specific instances of racism or sexism (unfair/preferential treatment) in social settings that they have experienced in their own lives (workplace, school, errands)
	Undervalued	Reflections on feelings of value and worth. Discussions of being undervalued by society & government (workplace, school, errands). For example, having to work "twice as hard."
Themes	Trump	Reference to Trump (his policies), the January 6th insurrection, Trump's handling of Covid
	Covid	Reference to general concerns about Covid
	Black issues/rights	Reference to Black issues/rights, BLM, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Book bans, pay equity, Covid racial disparities, gentrification
	Women's issues/rights	Reference to women's issues/rights, abortion, pay equity
	Economic concerns	Reference to the state of the economy or neighborhood surroundings
	Note*	*Some topics can be labeled as multiple themes. For example, gentrification is labeled as both <i>Economic Concern</i> and <i>Black issues/rights</i>

Participant Response Chart

Name	Government [Visible] Program Use (at any point in their life)	Program Experience	Citizenship (Status)				Tumultuous & Inequality (mentions of black/women's issues)
			Racial Hierarchy	Class Hierarchy	Discrimination	Undervalued	
Loretta	Education Assistance	Mixed	Y	N	N	Y	No mention
Brittany	SNAP	Mixed	Y	N	Y	Y	Black issues/rights
Jasmine	Education Assistance	Mixed	Y	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights
Shirley	Education Assistance Unemployment Medicaid SNAP	Mixed Positive Positive (basic needs collectively)	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Gabrielle	Education Assistance	Positive	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Keisha	Education Assistance Unemployment	Mixed Negative	Y	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights Women's issues/rights
Mia	N/A	N/A	Y	N	Y	N	No mention
Dominique	Medicaid	Positive	Y	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights
Regina	Education Assistance	Mixed	N	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights
Olivia	SNAP Foster care	Mixed Negative	Y	Y	N	Y	N/A

Yvonne	N/A	N/A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights Women's issues/rights
Denise	Education Assistance	Positive	Y	Y	N	Y	Black issues/rights Women's issues/rights
Kayla	Medicaid	Positive	Y	Y	N	N	Black issues/rights
Chelsea	Education Assistance	Negative	N	N	N	Y	No mention
Sharon	Social Security	Positive	Y	N	Y	N	No mention
Robin	Education Assistance	Mixed	Y	Y	Y	Y	Women's issues/rights
Aaliyah	Unemployment Education Assistance	Positive Positive	Y	Y	N	Y	Black issues/rights Women's issues/rights
Tiffany	Education Assistance Unemployment* SNAP Section 8 Medicaid	N/A Negative (discusses the programs collectively)	Y	Y	N	Y	Black issues/rights
Monica	Education Assistance	Negative	Y	Y	Y	Y	Black issues/rights
Monique	Education Assistance	Negative	N	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Simone	Medicaid WIC SNAP	Positive but difficult application process	N	Y	N	N	Black issues/rights
Whitney	N/A	N/A	Y	N	N	Y	Black issues/rights

D. Voter Turnout Rates

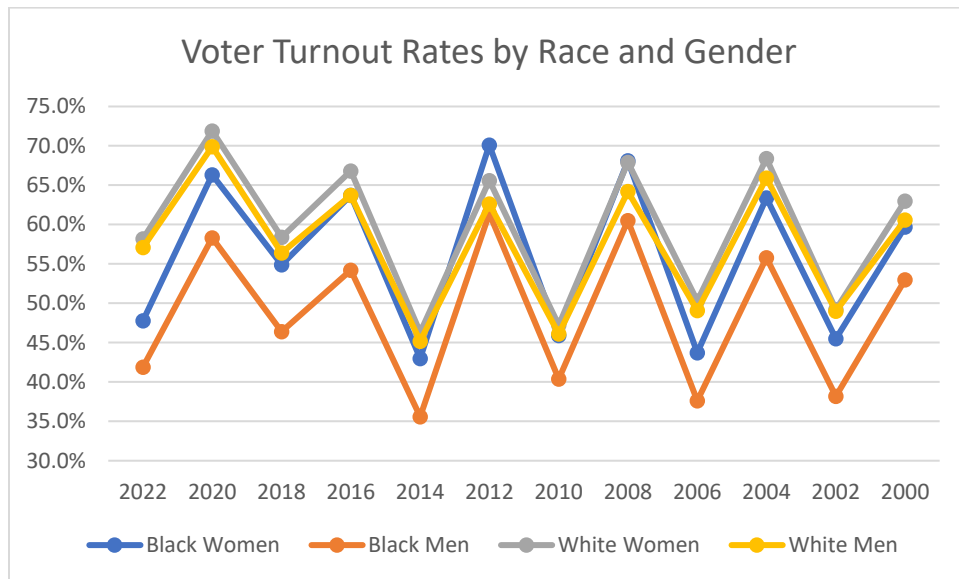


Figure 2. Voter Turnout Rates for Presidential and Midterm Elections 2000-2022, Center for American Women and Progress

Table 5. Voter Turnout Rates for Presidential and Midterm Elections 2000-2022, Center for American Women and Progress

Year	Black Women	Black Men	White Women	White Men
2022	47.8%	41.9%	58.2%	57.1%
2020	66.3%	58.3%	71.9%	69.9%
2018	54.9%	46.4%	58.4%	56.4%
2016	63.7%	54.2%	66.8%	63.7%
2014	43.0%	35.6%	46.3%	45.2%
2012	70.1%	61.4%	65.6%	62.6%
2010	45.9%	40.4%	47.2%	46.1%
2008	68.1%	60.5%	67.9%	64.2%
2006	43.7%	37.6%	50.3%	49.1%
2004	63.4%	55.8%	68.4%	65.9%
2002	45.5%	38.2%	49.2%	49.0%
2000	59.7%	53.0%	63.0%	60.6%