

Vote Overreporting While Black: Identifying the Mechanism Behind Black Vote Overreporting

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It is now a well-documented fact of survey research that African American respondents overreport turning out to vote at higher rates than many of their respondent peers of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. We bring renewed attention to this phenomenon by investigating how the ways in which the race of the interviewer might influence African Americans' propensity to overreport turning out to vote. In this paper we test two competing mechanisms for African American overreporting and race of interviewer effects: 1) racial group linked fate; and 2) conformity with norms of black political behavior. Ultimately, we find that the presence of African American interviewers may actually further bias self-reports of certain political behaviors, particularly participation in politics, due to social pressures to conform to group norms of turning out to vote. Thus, reports of turnout or other behavior in nationally representative surveys, such as the American National Election Studies may depend, in part, on the race of the interviewer. We find support that social pressure to conform to group norms is behind African American overreporting in the presence of an African American interviewer. These results have significant implications for how we view, analyze, and consider results from such studies.

Surveys have long been the most important way by which social scientists and others learn about the public's political opinions and behavior, including whether or not they've decided to turn out to vote. However, we've long known that some individuals often report that they've voted in the most recent election when, in fact, they have not – a phenomena known as overreporting (see e.g., Clausen 1968; Traugott and Katosh 1979). This is readily apparent when one compares the percentage of survey respondents in nationally representative surveys who reported voting to the actual voter turnout rates in an election, such as with the American National Election Studies, which see over-report rates ranging from 8 to 21 % (Belli, Traugott, and Beckmann 2001; Ansolabehere and Hersh 2012). Additionally, rates of overreporting vary across demographic characteristics with African American respondents, the focus of this paper, estimated as overreporting at rates 9-points higher than their white counterparts (Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy. 2001).

In this paper we revisit the phenomenon of African American overreporting and test various explanations for why blacks might overreport voting more than other racial groups. We examine the effects of racial group identification and conformity with norms of black political behavior on black overreporting. Here we find that the need to conform to norms of “black” political behavior, activated by the presence of black interviewers, appears to be the chief causal mechanism underlying black overreporting in the ANES. These results suggest that the common practice of race matching black interviewers with black respondents may greatly inflate black voter turnout in surveys.

Overreporting – Overview and Causes

Perhaps the biggest challenge for those who wish to use survey data to accurately understand the causes or effects of voter turnout is that all individuals do not over-report voting at the same rates. Instead, the likelihood that someone overreports their turnout varies across a variety of demographic and psychological factors including income, satisfaction with the status-quo (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986), education (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986), strength of partisanship (e.g., Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986), church attendance (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001), and race (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Hill and Hurley 1984), among other factors.

Overreporting, and most consequentially the fact that the likelihood an individual overreports varies over a number of factors, presents difficulties to researchers. Those attempting to test hypotheses involving voter turnout may encounter bias, leading to the potential that some hypotheses will be rejected in error and others will be erroneously accepted (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001). Early work studying the effects of overreporting concluded that there was little to be concerned about (Katosh and Traugott 1981; Sigelman 1982). However, a renewed focus on how overreporting might bias results has suggested reasons to be concerned.

Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy (2001) find that the results from various models of voting could change substantially depending on whether verified votes were used as a dependent variable or self-reports were used. Cassel (2003), like Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy (2001), find that overreporting biases the coefficients in models of voting behavior, although she documents that this occurred for less than half of the variables tested. More recently, Ansolabehere and Hersh (2012) suggest that accounting for

overreporting changes results in some voting models significantly enough that they recommend, “the dramatic effect of misreporting on models of participation demands a renewed effort at theory-building.” Thus, given the evidence of the significance of overreporting to our understanding of politics, developing a better understanding of the causes and consequences of overreporting is important to producing ways to account for overreporting in analyses of existing data and discovering ways to reduce it in future studies.

There have been a number of explanations offered as to why survey respondents might report having voted when they did not, including misremembering, the desire to appear to have participated in a socially desirable activity, and internal pressures. Misremembering is thought to lead to overreporting because respondents, often those individuals who are inconsistent voters, apply their experiences voting in earlier elections to the most recent one they are asked about, thus incorrectly “remembering” they voted (e.g., Abelson, Loftus, and Greenwald 1992; and Belli et al. 1999, who find both direct and conditional effects of memory on overreporting). Others (e.g., Bernstein et al. 2001; Silver et al. 1986), using voter validation designs from the ANES or other observational data sets, have suggested that the external pressure to appear to have participated in a socially desirable activity, voting, is what leads many people to overreport because they don’t want to admit that they didn’t do so to another individual.

Work utilizing experimental designs have confirmed the role of social desirability bias as one of the factors responsible for overreporting. Holbrook and Krosnick (2010) use list experiments to demonstrate that social desirability bias is a factor causing overreporting. Duff et al. (2007), for example, using an experimental design embedded in

the 2002 NES, demonstrate that a voter turnout question that allows respondents to give more socially desirable excuses for not voting in the last election reduces overreporting compared with older questions that do not offer such response options. Further, Duff et al. (2007) find that questions offering socially desirable excuses for not voting are most successful at reducing overreporting among those least likely to vote due to low levels of income, education, and political efficacy. Similarly, Belli, Moore, and VanHoewyk (2006) demonstrate that longer questions about turning out to vote can help overcome overreporting due to memory problems and provide additional evidence of the efficacy of providing more socially acceptable response options at reducing overreporting due to social desirability bias.

Another line of thought about the causes of overreporting has suggested that overreporting may be both a function of social desirability bias and misremembering. Much of this work suggests that not only does the desire to appear to act in socially desirable ways directly cause overreporting but this desire can also influence the ways in which people remember things, causing individuals to incorrectly remember turning out to vote in an election when they did not. Belli et al. (1999) demonstrate that revised questions that give socially acceptable response options for not voting in the past election and that encourages the respondent to think closely about the voting experience reduces overreporting by tackling social desirability bias and misremembering.

Finally, a fourth line of research suggests that there may be internal pressures within an individual that cause overreporting in addition to external pressures, such as social desirability bias (Hanmer, Banks, and White 2014). These internal pressures stem from voting being an expressive act for many people as a way to support their political

party and/or participate in democracy and fulfill their civic duty. Thus, people adopt an attachment to the identity of being a voter even in instances when they don't vote. Due to this attachment to being a voter, respondents with high intrinsic values placed on the voter identity may still be likely to report voting by interpreting the question about turnout in the recent election to be asking about more than the past election, and rather about their general voting behavior and place within the democratic system. Additionally, reporting to have voted while taking the survey, even when they didn't actually vote, may help these individuals claim a bit of their voter identity. As evidence for the role of internal pressures Hanmer, Banks, and White (2014) point to the fact that over 50% of validated non-voters in the 2008 CCES, an online only survey, reported voting. If only external pressures, such as social desirability bias, were at play this shouldn't be observed. By experimentally manipulating whether or not respondents to an internet survey are told that their turnout behavior will be verified via official records, Hanmer, Banks, and White (2014) were able to reduce overreporting and improve the accuracy of responses, suggesting that internal pressures to vote can be somewhat overcome by encouraging respondents not to misreport for fear of being discovered. Thus, overreporting is suspected to occur due to a number of different reasons including misremembering, external pressures to appear to behave in socially desirable ways, internal pressures, and a combination of the above.

Overreporting Among African Americans

Perhaps one of the most consistently documented aspects of overreporting is that African Americans over-report at higher rates than whites (e.g., Abramson Abramson and Claggett 1984, 1986, 1991; Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988; Bernstein, Chadha,

and Montjoy 2001; Hill and Hurley 1984; Katosh and Traugott 1981; Presser, Traugott, and Traugott 1990; Sigelman 1982; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986; Traugott and Katosh 1979). Considering the importance that race plays in our understanding of American politics (e.g., Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Tesler 2012; White 2007), the necessity of understanding the nature and causes of such overreporting is evident. Despite being one of the most consistent sources of vote overreporting little attention has been given to fully understanding why it is that black Americans are so much more likely to overreport their voting. Constrained by the small number of black respondents in voter validated surveys and the lack of racial group specific attitudinal measures in these surveys, researchers have been limited in their ability to elucidate the mechanism underlying black overreporting. Notwithstanding these empirical limitations many have speculated that black overreporting likely stems from, among other things, group identity and a desire to improve the standing of the group (Belli, Traugott, and Beckmann 2001; Deufel and Kedar 2010) and poor voting record keeping in majority-black districts (Abramson and Claggett 1992).

One of the more recent explanations for not just African American overreporting, but overreporting more generally, is from Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy (2001) who argue that those who feel the most pressure to vote are the most likely to overreport. They extend this to include minorities, arguing that minority respondents living in minority-dense districts should be more likely to overreport voting than minorities living in areas with a lower minority population. They demonstrate that African Americans living in more strongly African American districts are more likely to overreport than those African Americans living in areas with a smaller black population. This is evidence, they claim,

that due to both the increased salience of the minority group's needs and group institutions to place pressures on members, minorities living in large minority-populated areas feel a stronger pressure to vote and support the group, leading them to feel more guilt when they don't vote. Thus, this makes them more likely to misreport their behavior to interviewers when asked.

While previous research has offered little insight into the nature of African American overreporting we do know that blacks' psychological attachment to their racial group tends to be very important to understanding how black Americans make political decisions. Scholars of African American political behavior have demonstrated that the degree to which African Americans see what happens to the racial group as linked to what happens to them as individuals is strongly related to a number of black political behaviors including turnout (see Tate 1993 and Dawson 1994). Given all this, in this paper we examine two possible explanations of black vote overreporting. First we examine the role of racial group attachment and feelings of "linked fate" at both independently explaining black overreporting and conditioning the effects of social pressure stemming from a desire to conform to racial group norms. Secondly, we examine the effects of social pressure to conform to *racial group norms* of political engagement such as expectations that might apply specifically to individuals of a certain racial group and might be conditional on racial context.

Linked Fate

Perhaps more strongly than any other group in American politics, black Americans feel a sense of "linked fate" with one another, often expressing feelings that

their interests are the same or similar as those of the larger group (e.g., Tate 1991; Dawson 1994). Linked fate represents the idea that support for policies, candidates, or parties that benefit the group at large will also benefit the individual. As mentioned above, this has often been pointed to as an explanation for many sorts of black political behavior, including turnout (Tate 1991 and Dawson 2003). Due to the belief that the interests of the group benefits the interest of the individual, it is expected that black linked fate might lead African Americans to overreport their turnout in the most recent election. This is because feelings of black linked fate should make voting and participating in elections in support of candidates deemed beneficial to the group seem more important than it otherwise would. Thus, if this is the case we should expect feelings of black linked fate to be related to the propensity to overreport turnout to interviewers when asked about it, regardless of the race of the interviewer. Thus:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the feelings of black linked fate, the more likely an African American respondent should be to overreport having turned out in the most recent election when they have not.

Racialized Norms of Voting and Survey Context

Building off of work on group norms and social psychology, we might expect that black overreporting results from a need to conform to expectations of political behavior that result from the racial context of the survey interview. When there are clear and common understandings and expectations of behavior within a group, often referred to as norms, along with equally clearly understood punishment for defecting from those norms, we should expect members of a group to act in line with the norms when other in-group members can perceive their behavior (White, Laird and Allen 2014). Specifically, we argue that a particularly racialized context is created when a black respondent is

interviewed by a black interviewer, creating a social pressure context causing the respondent to be more likely to misreport their voting behavior so as to appear to align with the strongly held norms in the African American community of political participation.

Recently, the role of social pressure at influencing the behavior of individuals in the political realm has received interest. For example, the norm or belief in the virtue of political participation that exists within American society allows threats to make an individual's turnout record public effective at increasing turnout (e.g., Green, Geber, and Larimer 2008). This line of work often points to fear of being shamed or sanctioned for violating the norms as the reason that social pressure induces people to engage in norm-conforming behavior (e.g., Green, Gerber, and Larimer 2010).

Not all norms are equal in influencing member behavior. For norms, and the threat of sanction for deviating from them, to significantly influence an individual's behavior they must be crystalized and have intensity (e.g., Jackson 1965). Crystallization of a norm is the extent to which a norm is thought of as being understood and agreed upon by group members. The higher the level of norm crystallization the more generally the norm is agreed upon by members throughout the group. The lower the level of norm crystallization, the less enforceable it is by social pressure (Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren 1990). Norm intensity is how important a norm is to group members. When intensity of a norm is low the threat of sanctions from other members might not constrain behavior because the deviating member may think their behavior will go unnoticed due to the low importance, or salience, of that norm to group members. On the other hand, when a norm has high intensity, it is considered more important to group members and member

violations of that norm are more likely to be noticed, and thus the norm will more strongly constrain group member behavior.

Within the African American community there are a number of norms regarding political behavior that have both high intensity and crystallization. That is, they are widely held by group members and considered important to members. One of the best documented of these is the norm of black support for the Democratic party (e.g., White, Laird, and Allen 2014). We suggest that electoral participation is another norm of black political behavior that meets the above criteria. As noted earlier, African Americans' unique political history, for example Civil Rights Movement's focus on electoral rights, has led to the development of both highly crystallized and intensely held norms of political participation among the group members. Thus, we suggest that it is social pressure to appear to comply with the norm of participation and avoid social sanction that is at least partly responsible for vote overreporting among African Americans, and that this social pressure is particularly strong when in the presence of another African American.

That is, given the high intensity and crystallization of the electoral participation norm of African American political behavior, and evidence of strong sanctioning for deviation from norms of political behavior within the African American community (e.g., Chong 1991; Starkey 2012; White, Laird, and Allen 2014), we argue that overreporting by African American respondents interviewed by a member of the same race should be greater than when a black respondent is interviewed by a member of another race. Blacks who did not participate in the election by voting should be more likely to report having voted in the presence of a black interviewer, relative to an interviewer of another race,

out of a desire of acceptance from other group members and out of fear of punishment or sanctioning¹ for defecting from that group norm. If this is the case we should expect that the race of the interviewer should have a strong effect upon the rate of African American overreporting about their participation in the recent election, with African Americans overreporting at much higher rates in the presence of a black interviewer than an interviewer of a different race. Additionally, we expect that this effect should exist only for African American respondents and not those of other races or ethnicities because this norm is expected to be unique to black Americans.

Therefore, we suggest:

H2a: African Americans will be far more likely to overreport having turned out to vote when in the presence of an African American interviewer than when in the presence of a different race interviewer.

H2b: Non-African American respondents should not experience a similar race of interviewer effect with a same-race interviewer.

Conditional Effects of Race of Interviewer and Black Linked Fate

In addition to the direct relationship between feelings of black linked fate and overreporting stated by Hypothesis 1, we might also expect that the race of the interviewer might condition the effect of black linked fate on the likelihood of overreporting voting. This is expected due to the ability of racialized contexts created by being in the presence of another African American to heighten racially relevant attitudes and behaviors (e.g., White 2007; Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988), such as black linked fate. Thus, if black linked fate explains black overreporting and a same race interviewer creates a racialized context that either leads to heightened feelings of black

¹ In the context of a survey interview with trained survey interviewers we do not actually expect sanctioning to occur. However, we do expect that the respondent may be concerned about sanctioning, particularly subtle gestures that might indicate disapproval.

linked fate or at least makes black linked fate more salient to decision making at that moment, we might expect the effect of black linked fate on overreporting to be conditioned on the race of the interviewer, thus:

Hypothesis 3: The effect of feelings of black linked fate on the likelihood of overreporting voting should be stronger than in the presence of a black interviewer than an interviewer of another race.

However, if the stance taken by this paper, that social pressure to conform to African Americans norms of voting and the desire to avoid social sanctioning are much of what's driving African American overreporting, then we might expect there to be no conditional relationship between feelings of black linked fate and overreporting by interviewer race. According to the social norm-based explanation awareness of the norm and concern about possible sanctions should matter regardless of the individuals shared fate to the racial group. Indeed we believe that, because the norm of African American political participation is so strongly embedded in the community we expect basically all members of the racial group to be aware of it regardless of the extent to which they feel a linked fate with their racial group. Thus, because awareness of norms of black political behavior are so widely held, understood, and independent of feelings of linked fate we do not expect levels of black linked fate to condition the effect of interviewer race on black overreporting.

H4: Because awareness of norms of racial group behavior are so widely held, understood, and independent of feelings of linked fate with the racial group we do not expect levels of black linked fate to condition the effect of interviewer race on black overreporting.

Study Design

To test these expectations, we rely primarily on data from the 2012 ANES. The 2012 ANES is well suited for this task. First it has a relatively large sample of African American respondents. There are 511 Black respondents in the face-to-face pre-election interview and 481 in the face-to-face post-election interview. There are also relatively large samples of white and Hispanic respondents for comparison. The 2012 ANES also has a vote validation component in which self-reported turnout in the 2012 general election was validated against official turnout records. Validation was done independently by three separate vendors to ensure reliability. We consider an individual's turnout to have been validated if at least one of the three vendors validated their turnout, and consider an individual to not have voted if none of the three vendors report a validated turnout. Lastly, the number of black respondents interviewed by black and non-black interviewers in the 2012 ANES post-election interview was roughly similar (206 black interviewer, 175 non-black interviewer). This feature of the survey design allows us the ability to test the effects of racialized survey context on self-reported turnout.²

² One potential limitation of designs such as this is that interviewers are not randomly assigned to respondents, however we suggest that the potential difficulties posed by this are minimal. First, other work on race of interviewer effects regarding social norms (e.g., Laird et al. 2016) report that although interviewers may be assigned to respondents in areas proximate to where they live, neither the interviewer nor the interviewee may select one another. Second, others (e.g., Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988) have reported that the SRC and ANES do not have policies encouraging the matching of interviewers and respondents based on race. Third, even if the relationships observed in 2012 were due to the idiosyncrasies of somewhat proximate geographies of interviewer and interviewee, we would not expect similar patterns to exist across multiple years of data because the interviewers and interviewees change from survey to survey. However, this is precisely what we demonstrate - that the relationship demonstrated in 2012 is robust over multiple years of ANES data. Fourth, the controls included in our multivariate model account for most of the confounders one might expect to be related to overreporting due to geographic proximity, thus this should help control for any difficulties posed by the assignment process. Therefore, we feel confident that the effects we demonstrate are true race of interviewer effects based on social pressure and not artifacts of the interviewer assignment process.

We also use data from the 1992, 1996, and 2008 years of the ANES Time Series Cumulative File to conduct additional analyses and demonstrate that the race of interviewer effects we observe are not unique to 2012. The ANES Times Series Cumulative File is a compilation of every cross-sectional election study conducted from 1948 through 2012. The nature of this data are nationally representative, randomly sampled, repeated cross-sections of the American public for every presidential election and most congressional elections.³ These years were selected in addition to 2012 because data on the race of the interviewers is available to researchers and they each contain respondents in both the same- and different- race as interviewer categories.

In order to test our hypotheses above and demonstrate relationships between the race of the interviewer and propensity to overreport we first conduct a series of difference of proportion tests comparing the rates of overreporting among members of different racial and ethnic groups based upon the race of the interviewer. We then investigate the role played by feelings of linked fate in causing overreporting by using difference of proportion tests to compare overreporting rates among respondents at different levels of linked fate.

Next, due to the difficulty posed by controlling for confounders in univariate analyses such as difference of proportions tests, we employ logistic regression to model the propensity to overreport as a function of the race of the respondent's interviewer using the 2012 ANES data. In addition, we control for a number of other factors that prior work has suggested may lead a respondent to overreport including the respondent's gender (e.g., Hill and Hurley 1986; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986; but see

³ The American National Election Studies (www.electionstudies.org) TIME SERIES CUMULATIVE DATA FILE [dataset]. Stanford University and the University of Michigan [producers and distributors], 2012.

Traugott and Katosh 1979), age (e.g., Traugott and Katosh 1979; Hill and Hurley 1984; Sigelman 1982), education (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986), strength of partisanship (e.g., Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986), feelings of civic duty (Hill and Hurley 1984; Sigelman 1982), and feelings of linked fate with their racial in-group (Anderson, Silver, and Abramson 1988). We control for these using the standard NES measures for each, more information of which is available in the 2012 Times Series Documentation (ANES 2014). Following previous research into overreporting interested in differences across races, we estimate separate models for African Americans, Latinos, and whites separately (e.g., Bernstein, Chadha, and Montjoy 2001; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999).

Results

We begin our analysis by investigating the prevalence of overreporting in modern survey work using the 2012 American National Election Study. Table 1 demonstrates the rate of overreporting in the 2012 ANES for both the whole sample and broken down by race. Here we measure overreporting by the percentage of validated non-voters who reported voting in the 2012 ANES. As Silver, Anderson, and Abramson (1986) point out, validated non-voters are the only group at risk of overreporting. Overall, the percentage of validated non-voters who reported that they voted in the 2012 ANES was 36.9%. However, as we might expect the rates of overreporting vary dramatically by race. While 55.7% of black respondents who did not turn out to vote reported voting, only 32.7% of white voters and 27.9% of Hispanic voters who did not vote reported turning out to vote. Notably, black non-voters reported having voted at substantially higher rates than either

white or Hispanic respondents, suggesting, as prior work has, that there is something unique about the phenomena of African American overreporting. Indeed, as we can see in Table 2, black turnout in the 2012 election as measured by self-reports in the 2012 ANES goes from significantly greater than that of whites (6.8% points $p < .05$) to essentially identical to that of whites when we examine validated turnout.

-Insert Table 1 About Here-

-Insert Table 2 About Here-

As we suggest above, part of this phenomena of black overreporting may be accounted for due to internalized beliefs about doing what is best for the racial group, or social pressure to conform to norms of either generalized civic behavior or norms of black political behavior. However, simply looking at differences in the rates of overreporting across the races tells us very little about how the race of the interviewer might help account for these differences. Thus, we next look at how overreporting varies by racial group as a function of politicized racial identity as measured by linked fate with racial group and the race of the interviewer.

In Table 3 we present the percentages of validated non-voters who reported they voted by their level of racial group linked fate. As discussed in our hypotheses, we expect that because the struggle for black rights focused so centrally on securing blacks' right to vote blacks feel the need to say they voted in order to show a commitment to upholding black interests. That is, blacks who are highly racially identified may just be principally committed to the idea that voting is an essential civic duty and thus feel a need to overreport voting. Similarly, if overreporting has its origins in racial politics we would expect that blacks who are not particularly identified with the racial group would feel less

of a need to overreport their voting. Using a measure of racial in-group linked fate we see in Table 3 that there is some suggestive evidence that it may very well be the case that more racially identified African Americans are in fact more likely to overreport voting. Here we see that the percentage of validated non-voters who have high levels of linked fate are about 11 percentage points more likely to overreport having voted than those who report lower levels of linked fate with the racial group. We should note however that these differences are not statically significant (a $p > 0.23$). This may be due to the small number cases that we have once we isolate validated non-voters. The differences for whites and Hispanics are even smaller at 6-points and 1-points, respectively, both with p-values for the difference above .34, indicating no statistically meaningful difference between the groups.

-Table 3 About Here-

Our next set of expectations center on the role that norms of voting activated by the survey interview process might play in encouraging overreporting among blacks. Here we expect that if there are in fact racialized norms of voting then we should observe greater levels of overreporting behavior among blacks in the presence of a black interviewer compared to white interviewers. Looking at the results presented in Table 4 we see that this is in fact, the case. Here we see that non-voting black respondents who were interviewed by a black interviewer reported voting at a rate of 71.4%, whereas only 42.8% of black non-voters who were interviewed by a white interviewer reported voting in the election. Thus, there is a difference of 28.6 percentage points in the rate of overreporting between black respondents interviewed by an African American interviewer and those interviewed by a white interviewer, a substantively and statistically

significant difference with a p-value of .007. The substantive difference is particularly notable when compared with the differences in overreporting by race of interviewer for the next two racial groups.

-Table 4 About Here-

Looking next at the rates of overreporting among white non-voters and Hispanic non-voters by the race of their interviewers, we do not see a similar effect as we did with African Americans. White non-voters interviewed by a white interviewer reported voting at a rate of 32.0%, whereas 26.9% interviewed by a non-white interviewer reported turning out to vote. An only 5-point statistically insignificant difference. A similar pattern exists for Hispanic respondents, with 28.2% of Hispanic respondents interviewed by a Hispanic interviewer reporting turning out to vote when they did not, and 28.9% of Hispanic respondents interviewed by a white interviewer reporting turning out to vote when they did not – also hardly a significant difference. Thus, the pattern of overreporting based upon the race of the interviewer appears to only hold for African American respondents. This would also suggest that, as we hypothesized, there is a unique social norm within the African American community regarding political participation that is activated when in the presence of another African American, resulting in social pressures to conform that leads to overreporting by black respondents faced with black interviewers.

-Table 5 About Here-

These differences in overreporting resulting from black interviewers are not isolated to the 2012 election. Table 5 presents black self-reported turnout as measured by the American National Election Survey by race of interviewer for presidential elections

from 1992 to 2012. Unfortunately, for many of these surveys there were few black interviewers and sporadic efforts at vote validation. As a result, we are only able to examine self-reported rates of turnout among blacks across race of interviewer, and for only four elections. As we can see, across each of these elections black respondents interviewed by black interviewers were more likely to say they voted than black respondents interviewed by white interviewers.

As noted earlier in the review of work on overreporting, there are a number of other factors that might be related to the race of the interviewer that appear to also be related to whether or not a non-voter reports having voted when they, in fact, did not. Using the logistic regression mentioned earlier, controlling for the gender of the respondent, their age, education level, partisanship, partisan strength, and the belief in the civic duty to vote, we model whether or not a validated non-voter reports having voted in the 2012 election for African American, white, and Hispanic respondents as a function of whether or not the interviewer is of the same race, feelings of linked fate with their racial group, and the controls. Table 6 presents the results from the logistic regressions.

-Table 6 About Here-

The results of the logistic regression confirm the earlier support for our hypotheses (hypotheses H2a and H2b) about racialized social norms underlying blacks' overreporting behavior. Even after controlling for a number of other factors related to overreporting, African American non-voters are more likely to report having voted when they are interviewed by a black interviewer. Looking at Table 7, which presents the average marginal effect of each of our central independent variables, we see that the effect of interviewer race for African Americans is statistically significant and

meaningful, with a marginal effect suggesting a 32-point increase in the likelihood of overreporting voting with a same-race interviewer relative to a white interviewer. This effect of having a black interviewer has a p-value of .000. The effect of linked fate in explaining black overreporting, however, disappears in the multivariate model, suggesting that an internalized belief in black unity is likely not responsible for black overreporting. For Hispanic and white non-voters, having a same-race interviewer appears to have no effect, as the coefficient on same race interviewer variable was small and not statistically significant at traditional levels. Thus, we find additional support for the racialized norms expectation beyond the initial tabulations presented in Table 4, suggesting that African American rates of overreporting systematically differs according to the race of the interviewer.

-Table 6 About Here-

Despite the lack of an effect of linked fate on black overreporting, it seems plausible that it may be the case that rather than directly affecting the likelihood of non-voting African Americans to report voting, the effects of a belief in black linked fate are conditioned upon the race of the interviewer, and thus the race of interviewer effect that we find is really just one of conditional effects of linked fate rather than social pressure (H3). This would be the case if, for example, blacks with high levels of belief in linked fate only feel its influence in the presence of another black individual, as would happen when being interviewed by a black respondent. Thus, if this were the case, the combination of a black interviewer and a high level of feelings of linked fate should lead to a greater likelihood of overreporting. On the other hand, if as we argue this effect is truly the result of social norms we should observe equal levels of overreporting among

blacks with both high and low levels of linked fate as awareness of these norms and the expected consequences should be equal across each group (Hypothesis 4).

To test for conditional effects of black linked fate, we conduct two separate analyses. First, using the black respondent model from above, we estimate the marginal effect of having high levels of black linked fate on the likelihood of an African American respondent overreporting voting when their interviewer is black and when they are white. The results are presented in Table 8. The effect of holding high levels of black linked fate relative to minimal levels is statistically insignificant regardless of the race of interviewer. Further, the difference between the two is substantively and statistically insignificant with a difference of .02 and p-value of .384.

Second, we interact a measure of black linked fate with the variable measuring if a respondent was interviewed by a member of the same race for black respondents. The results of this analysis are in Table 9. Since the output from binary response models is not directly interpretable when using interaction terms (Ai and Norton 2003), we focus on Figure 1. Figure 1, which presents the predicted effect of linked fate on black vote overreporting conditional on the race of the interviewer demonstrates that the lines are, while not perfectly parallel, similar in slopes. The difference in the predicted effect on overreporting between high and low levels of linked fate is not statistically significantly different when respondents had a white interviewer or a black interviewer (a p of .49). Further, the difference between the effect on overreporting of the race of the interviewer is not statistically significant between individuals with high and low levels of black linked fate (a p of .49). That is, again, what we see here is clear evidence of the fact that interviewer's race matters regardless of the individual's level of linked fate to other

blacks. This suggests that linked fate doesn't explain black overreporting in the face of black interviewers, and instead it is likely that this phenomenon is the result of social pressures to comply with norms of black political behavior that occurs due to being in the presence of another member of the racial group.

-Insert Table 9 About Here-

-Insert Figure 1 About Here-

Thus, overall we demonstrate evidence in support of Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 4, which posit a social norm-based explanation for African American overreporting. Black non-voters are consistently more likely to overreport having turned out to vote when interviewed by another member of their race than when interviewed by a member of another race. Further, this effect is not conditional on the individual's levels of linked fate nor does it condition the influence of linked fate. Additionally, we don't find this effect for white or Hispanic non-voters, suggesting there is something unique about the norms of African American political participation driving this effect. In contrast, we fail to find evidence that racial group ties as measured by feelings of linked fate are responsible for higher rates of African American overreporting, thus presenting further evidence in favor of a social norm, and fear for retribution for deviation from that norm, explanation for African American overreporting when faced with a black interviewer.

Conclusion

For years, the issue of black vote overreporting has puzzled researchers. The lack of sufficient data and theoretical development around the issue of African American political decision-making has greatly impeded efforts to understand the nature of vote overreporting among African Americans. Using data with relatively large numbers of

African American respondents and African American interviewers we have been able to identify a key mechanism for understanding black vote overreporting: norms of voting among African Americans. The results presented here provide clear evidence that there exist considerable social pressure among African Americans to overreport voting in the presence of other African Americans. These norms, which were likely born out of African American's unique political history, one that is often times centered around the struggle for rights to participate equally in the political process, come with clear expectations for how blacks are to behave politically.

The results of this paper should also encourage survey researchers to think more carefully about how they design surveys of African Americans. Implied here is that one way to reduce overreporting among blacks would be to limit the use of black interviewers in surveys of African Americans. Indeed, it does seem that white interviewers elicit more accurate turnout responses from blacks than black interviewers. However, before we abandon the use of black interviewers it is important to consider why we began to race match interviewers in the first place. In the 1970's and 80 it became clear among survey researchers that black respondents were providing more racially conservative positions on racial issues when interviewed by a white interviewer, thus in designing surveys of African Americans it is important to think carefully about how racial context might affect blacks' responses.

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Tables

Table 1. Percent of Validated Non-Voters Who Reported Having Voted by Race, 2012
American National Election Study

	Overreporting Rate	95% CI	N
Black	55.65%	46.4, 64.9	115
White	32.71%	26.4, 39.0	214
Hispanic	27.94%	20.3, 35.6	136
Total	36.9%	32.5, 41.3	465

Table 2. Self-Reported and Validated Turnout Estimates by Race

	Self-Report	Validated	Difference	P-value
Black	86.6%	71.46%	15.1%	.000
White	79.82%	71.95%	7.8%	.000
Hispanic	68.75%	57.94%	10.8%	.045
Total	76.12%	68.8%	7.3%	.000

Table 3 Percent of Validated Non-Voters Who Reported Having Voted by Race and In-group Linked Fate

	DK/None/Not Very Much LF*	Some/A lot LF*	Difference	P-value	N
Blacks	51.0%	62.0%	11-points	0.23	115
Whites	30.1%	36.0%	6-points	0.34	214
Hispanics	27.4%	26.2%	1-point	0.88	134

Table 4. Percent of Validated Non-Voters Who Reported Having Voted by Race and Race of Interviewer, 2012 American National Election Study

Respondent Race	Same Race Interviewer	Different Race Interviewer+	Difference	P-value	N
Black	71.4%	42.8%	28-points*	0.007	91
White	32%	26.9%	5-points	0.6090	176
Hispanic	28.2%	28.9%	.01-points	0.940	123

Notes: Approximately 2.5% of interviewers refused to provide their racial background.

+For blacks this was a black respondent with a white interviewer; for whites this was a white respondent with a white interviewer; for Hispanics this was a Hispanic interviewer with a white interviewer.

*Indicates a statistically significant difference of .05 or better.

Table 5. Black Self-Reported Turnout by Interviewer Race, 1992-2012 ANES⁴

Year	Black Interviewer	White Interviewer	Difference (WI-BI)
1992	89.0%	66.0%	-23*
N	39	243	
1996	91.0%	66.0%	-25+
N	11	144	
2000	-	-	-
N			
2004	-	-	-
N			
2008	85.0%	81.0%	-4
N	121	360	
2012	90.0%	74.0%	-16*
N	214	176	
Total	79.0%	66.0%	-13*
N	386	1074	

+ indicates a two-tailed p-value of .10 or better; * indicates .05 or better.

⁴ The years 2000 and 2004 were dropped due to a lack of sufficient amounts of respondents in each of the cells to make meaningful comparisons.

Table 6. Predictors of Vote Overreporting by Racial Group

	White	Black	Hispanic
Female	-0.53	-0.48	0.23
	0.36	0.57	0.49
Age	0.11	.06	-0.12
	0.15	0.09	0.10
Education	0.30	0.57	* 0.64
	0.16	0.27	0.25
Strong Party Identification	0.71	1.69	* 0.42
	0.46	0.60	0.56
Voting A Duty ⁺	0.59	.81	1.35
	0.48	0.58	0.57
Same Race Interviewer	.16	1.81	* -0.29
	0.54	0.59	0.51
Linked fate with Racial Ingroup	0.12	0.70	.01
	0.38	0.56	0.49
Constant	-2.55	-3.35	-2.26
	0.82	1.15	-0.96
Pseudo R2	0.10	0.25	0.21
N	167	86	118

Note: * = statistically significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

+Effect relative to believing voting is a choice.

Table 7. Marginal Effects of Predictors of Overreporting by Race

	ME	P-value
Blacks		
Same Race Interviewer	0.32	.000
Linked fate with Racial In-group	0.12	.2
Civic Duty to Vote ⁺	0.14	.158
Whites		
Same Race Interviewer	.03	.767
Linked fate with Racial In-group	.02	.750
Civic Duty to Vote ⁺	.12	..23
Hispanics		
Same Race Interviewer	-.04	.572
Linked fate with Racial In-group	.00	.978
Civic Duty to Vote ⁺	-.27	.016

Note: Marginal effects calculated using observed values approach (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013)

+Effect of responding “voting is mainly a duty” relative to responding “voting is mainly a choice”

Table 8. Marginal Effect of Linked Fate For African American Respondents
By Interviewer Race

Linked Fate on Overreporting	ME	P-value
Same Race Interviewer	.11	.124
Difference Race Interviewer	.113	.129
Difference	.02	.384

Note: Marginal effects calculated using observed values approach (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013)

Table 9. Predictors of Black Overreporting with Linked Fate Black Interviewer Interaction, 2012 ANES

Overreport	Coef	
Female	-0.40	
	0.58	
Age	-0.06	
	0.09	
Education	0.54	*
	0.327	
Strong Party Identifier	1.63	*
	0.60	
Black Interviewer	1.43	*
	0.75	
Voting Duty+	.82	
	0.58	
Black Linked fate (BLF)	0.38	
	0.69	
Black Interviewer X BLF	0.95	
	1.21	
Constant	-3.21	
	1.16	
Pseudo R2	0.26	
N	86	

Note: * = statistically significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

Figures

Figure 1 – Overreporting as an Interaction Between Linked Fate and Race of Interviewer

