
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME: Eric L. McDaniel

eRA COMMONS USER NAME: elm377

POSITION TITLE: Associate Professor, Department of Government

EDUCATION/TRAINING

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, OH	BA	05/1998	Political Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL	MA	12/2000	Political Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL	PhD	05/2004	Political Science

A. Personal Statement

As a political scientist, I examine the linkage between political issues and health outcomes. My methodological approach primarily focuses on survey research with specific attention to behavior and attitudes. In addition to a strong comprehension of survey research methods, I have also developed skills regarding qualitative research and times-series analysis. Substantively, I am concerned with two questions in regards to the relationship between politics and health. 1) How does political empowerment influence health outcomes and health behavior? 2) How do civic organizations moderate the influence of politics on health? The first question reflects my interest in how politics and policy combine to create desired and not so desired health outcomes. Given that the United States' emphasis on popular sovereignty, there are many points of contact for democratic will to directly or indirectly influence a person's health. In addressing this connection, I believe that I can expand our understanding of how and why political policies create and maintain health disparities. To address this, I have begun a project with Rebecca Eissler and Annelise Russell that examines the link between the presence of Black elected officials and Black health outcomes. The preliminary results from the research indicate a clear positive relationship between the two, but the mechanisms driving this relationship still need to be demonstrated. The second question is tangential to the first and reflects my long-standing interest in how ordinary citizens' interaction with and within institutions influences their behaviors. My research fits within the PRC's primary research area of Population Health.

I have published several works that examine how the African American religious experience influences Black political behavior. My book manuscript, *Politics in the Pews: The Political Mobilization of Black Churches*, provides an in-depth analysis of how congregations decide to actively pursue their political interests.

In the past few years, I have begun a research project with Taeku Lee (UC Berkeley) and Alexander Street (Carrol College) that uses funds from a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to examine the policy preferences of citizens regarding various health epidemics. Using experimental methods, we examine how people process information regarding an illness and the factors that generate their response to it. I have also received funding from the National Science Foundation to examine how variations in religious contexts and belief systems promote and maintain political and social cleavages. Using survey research methods, I find that religious belief systems are politically and socially important and that both social and religious demographics play a strong role in promoting and maintaining these cleavages in American religious life.

I have served on the editorial board for the *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion* and the *Journal for Race Ethnicity and Politics*. I have also served on the executive boards for both the Midwest and Southwestern Political Science Associations. As a member of the PRC, I have been actively involved in their research workshop.

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment

2003-2004 Lecturer, Center for African and African American Studies, The University of Texas at Austin
2004-2010 Assistant Professor, Department of Government, The University of Texas at Austin

2008-2010	Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Scholar, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley
2010-present	Associate Professor, Department of Government, The University of Texas at Austin
2014-present	Faculty Research Associate, Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Other Experience and Professional Memberships

2008, 2017	Section Head for the Politics and Religion Section of the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association
2010	Nominating Committee for the Midwest Political Science Association
2010-2013	American Political Science Association Committee for the Status of Blacks in the Profession
2012	Midwest Political Science Association Nominating Committee
2012	Section Chair for Religion and Politics Section of the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association
2012-2014	Western Political Science Association Committee for the Status of Blacks in the Profession
2012-present	Editorial Board for the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
2013-2014	Midwest Political Science Association Executive Council
2013-present	Southwest Political Science Association Executive Committee
Present	Reviewer: Journal of Politics, Political Research Quarterly, American Politics Research, Political Behavior, Political Psychology, Journal of Health, Politics, Policy and Law and the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
Present	Member: American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, National Conference of Black Political Scientists, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Society for the Study of Black Religion, Southern Political Science Association

C. Contributions to Science

The Black Church and Black Political Participation. There has been a great deal of research that points to the Black church as a key resource for Black political participation. Studies of the civil rights movement along with contemporary studies of Black politics demonstrate that Black churches are a central component of Black political life. However, the Black church is not a monolithic institution, some churches chose to participate in civil rights protests, while others did not. Further, work has demonstrated that membership in a church that encourages political participation increases participation beyond normal church attendance. My work attempts to understand the variation in churches regarding their engagement in politics. I find that factors, such as member attitudes, clergy attitudes, organizational constraints, and political environment all influence the willingness of a church to become politically engaged.

- McDaniel, Eric L. 2003. "Black Clergy in the 2000 Election." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42: 533-46.
- McClerking, Harwood K., and Eric L. McDaniel. 2005. "Belonging and Doing: Political Churches and Black Political Participation." *Political Psychology* 26: 721-34.
- McDaniel, Eric L., and Harwood K. McClerking. 2005. "Who Belongs? Understanding How Socioeconomic Stratification Shapes the Characteristics of Black Political Church Members." *National Political Science Review* 10: 15-28.
- McDaniel, Eric L. 2008. *Politics in the Pews: The Political Mobilization of Black Churches*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

The Multidimensional Nature of Religious Beliefs. Religion remains a salient piece of American social and political life. Compared to other industrialized nations, the U.S. is highly religious. Scholars of American society and politics have long noted the importance of religion and have made strides to properly capture it by focusing on three key dimensions: belonging, behaving, and believing. Scholars have demonstrated how each influences a broad range of attitudes and behaviors. The most robust of these dimensions has been beliefs, specifically biblical literalism. However, biblical literalists are not a monolithic group. Several studies have shown that literalism's effect on attitudes is contingent on individual characteristics, such as race. For instance, literalism leads Whites to strongly identify with the Republican Party, while it leads Blacks to strongly identify with Democratic Party. Moreover, literalism captures just one aspect of belief; this project exposes the heterogeneity of religious beliefs by considering other beliefs organized into traditions of religious interpretation. By considering these variations of religious interpretation, this project will help us understand

differences in the political views of Blacks and Whites, as well as differences of opinion among Christians within each racial group. Part of this project was funded by the National Science Foundation.

- McDaniel, Eric L. 2007. "The Black Church in the 2004 Election." In *A Matter of Faith? Religion in the 2004 Election*, ed. David E. Campbell. Washington D.C.: Brookings.
- McDaniel, Eric L., and Christopher G. Ellison. 2008. "God's Party?: Race, Religion, and Partisanship over Time." *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 180-91.
- McDaniel, Eric L. 2016. "What Kind of Christian Are You? Religious Ideologies and Political Attitudes." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*: n/a-n/a.

The Religious Nature of American Identity. We offer an original theory of Religious American Exceptionalism (RAE), to explain pro-military attitudes. In doing so, we seek to unpack the psychological underpinnings of American exceptionalism, particularly in our focus on the role of legitimizing myths in group conflict driven opinion formation. Using a social dominance framework, we explain why groups with high status, such as the U.S., subscribe to legitimizing myths of exceptionality more than other nations, which in turn causes more Americans to be pro-military than other nations worldwide. We contend that the attempts individuals make to legitimize exceptionality draw from the famous narrative of American exceptionalism, which essentially offers religious myths of worldwide superiority that individuals use to form their attitudes. Our main argument is therefore that American exceptionalism tenets act as legitimizing myths, where individuals subscribing to them become more willing to express pro-military and immigrant policy attitudes.

- McDaniel, Eric L., Irfan Nooruddin, and Allyson F. Shortle. 2011. "Divine Boundaries: How Religion Shapes Citizens' Attitudes toward Immigrants." *American Politics Research* 39: 205-33.
- McDaniel, Eric L., Irfan Nooruddin, and Allyson F. Shortle. 2016. "Proud to Be an American?: The Changing Relationship of National Pride and Identity." *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics & Policy* 1: 145-76.

D. Research Support

Ongoing Research Support

None at present.

Completed Research Support

SES-1061245 (E.L. McDaniel, PI)

09/15/11-08/31/13

National Science Foundation

Worldviews Project

The purpose of this project was to examine the role of religious interpretation in shaping political behavior.

Role: Principal Investigator

Responsibilities: Collaborating with project team on data management, quantitative analyses, and paper-writing; and reporting.