Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Tenille-Rose Martin

M.A. in Political Science, May 2020, University of Missouri-St. Louis
B.A. in Liberal Studies, August 2005, Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville

Black Americans at a Crossroads in American Politics:
Electoral Participation, Protest, and Policy Change

Date: November 28, 2022
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
This dissertation explores Black political participation in the United States. I argue there is a relationship between Black political participation and trust in government, political efficacy, group consciousness, linked fate, political knowledge, and desire to engage in social activism. This argument draws on research on political participation, group identity, and political behavior and attitudes within the Black community.

A mixed-method approach was used in the study. Data was collected from Blacks across the country via an original survey and interviews. The data analysis chapter determined some support for the theoretical framework, albeit aspects of the model were rejected. Results determined mistrust, group consciousness, political knowledge, motivation to participate in social activism, and salience of the issues profoundly influence Black political participation. However, contrary to prior research, political efficacy and linked fate are less effective in motivating Black political participation. In addition, trust in the criminal justice system is associated with increased non-electoral participation but not with voting.

The findings suggest Black political participation is not such an enigma. Black people have a great sense of group consciousness; with increased access to teachings about the political process and how policies impact their daily lives, political participation can increase.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
David Kimball Ph.D. – Chair
Wanda McGowan, Ph.D.
Jerome E. Morris, Ph.D.
Todd Swanstrom, Ph.D.