

# Introduction to the American Political Process

## Class 23: Racial Politics

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Asya Magazinnik (Professor)

## 1. Readings

Cramer, “The Politics of Resentment”

Dawson, “Behind the Mule”

White and Laird, “Steadfast Democrats”

Tesler, “Post-Racial or Most Racial?”

# Readings

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# Black Partisanship

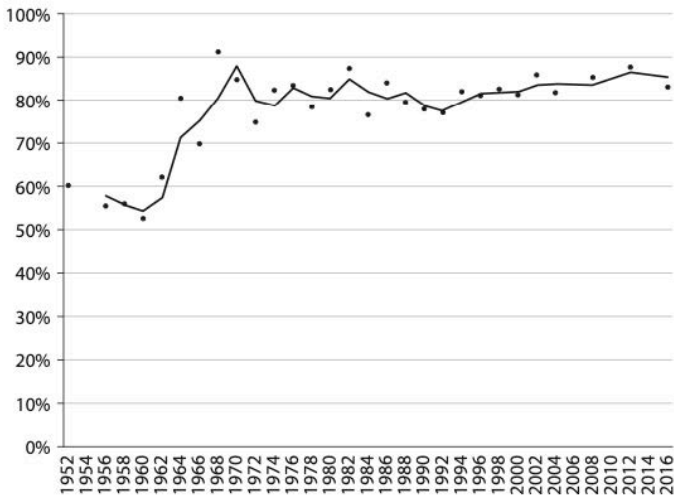


FIGURE 0.1. Percentage of self-identified black Democrats (including leaners), 1952–2016

# Black Income Distribution

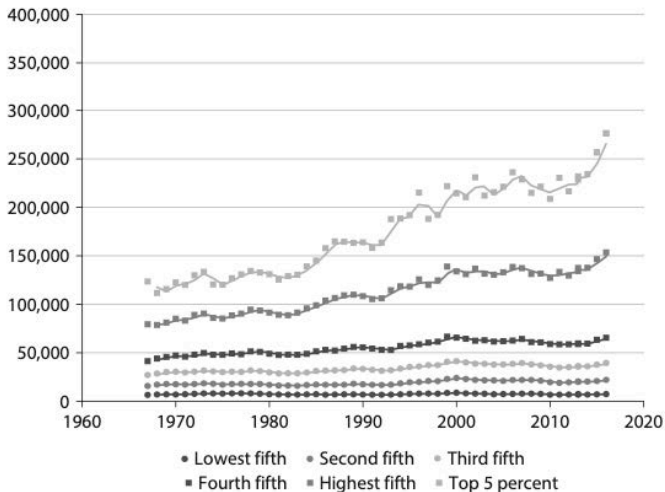
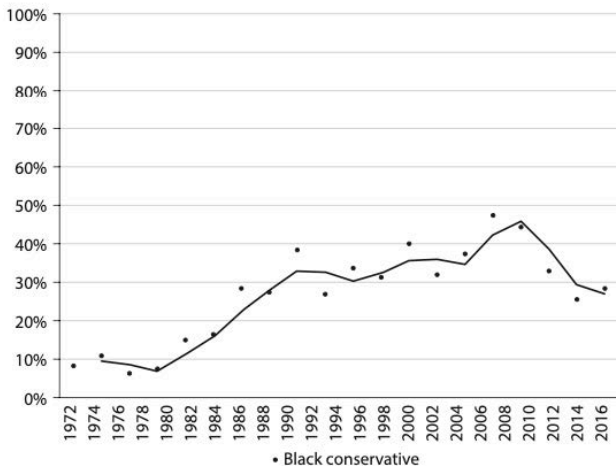


FIGURE 0.2. Mean black household income in 2016 dollars. *Source:* U.S. Census Bureau (2018).

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# Black Conservatism



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# Black Partisanship by Issue

TABLE 0.1. Percentage of Democratic Identification by Conservative Issue Position and Race, 2012 ANES

	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic
Govt. should let each person get ahead on own	77.4	21.6	35.7	45.5
No regulation of businesses to protect environment	74.1	15.9	10.0	37.9
Oppose increasing taxes on millionaires	82.2	10.0	8.3	43.6
Govt. should provide many fewer services	68.9	17.6	36.4	35.9
Govt. should make it easier for people to buy a gun	75.0	17.8	0.0	35.2
By law, abortion should never be permitted	72.8	21.8	18.2	51.3
Favor death penalty	85.2	37.1	46.8	57.2
Oppose laws to protect gays and lesbians	91.3	19.5	18.7	40.0
Oppose university affirmative action	87.9	32.3	41.5	52.1
Oppose workplace affirmative action	87.7	33.1	45.4	51.0
Blacks should help themselves (and not receive govt. assistance)	78.8	29.1	40.8	49.1

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**Question:** Why the relative homogeneity in black partisanship despite growing heterogeneity in economic circumstances?

- Race:
  - Residential segregation → schooling, property values → racial wealth gap
- Class:
  - Increasing economic diversity among black Americans (more people in poverty/unemployed, and a bigger middle class)
  - As diversity continues to grow, should get divergent interests



# Dawson, “Behind the Mule”

**Linked Fate:** The degree to which African Americans believe their own interests are linked to those of their racial group

- Informational shortcut
- But, needs to ultimately serve best interests

Measuring linked fate:

- Survey question: “Do you think that what happens generally to the black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?”
- Low linked fate → class drives vote choice; high linked fate → race drives vote choice

# What do we learn from survey research on linked fate?

Mutually reinforcing beliefs that blacks are in an economically subordinate position and in linked fate

No class-based differences in beliefs in economic subordination

Higher education → belief in black economic subordination → belief in linked fate

- Thus, opposite of prediction that ties to black community weaken as one gets wealthier

Other findings:

- Urban residency and exposure to mainstream media weaken belief in linked fate
- Regular churchgoing slightly strengthens belief in linked fate

Solidarity politics: a group has the greatest political power when it acts in unison

Collective action problem has to be overcome:

- *Racialized social constraint*
- Enforced through black social networks and institutions: churches, high schools and colleges, communities

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# Evidence 1: Interviewer Effects

**TABLE 4.2.** Percentage of Self-Identified Black Democrats (Including Leaners) by Race of Interviewer, ANES and GSS Cumulative Files

**A. ANES**

	Non-black interviewer	Black interviewer	Difference
<b>Unadjusted</b>			
95% CI	80.5 [78.4, 82.5]	93.3 [91.1, 95.5]	12.8*
<b>Adjusted</b>			
Logistic regression	81.2	91.9	10.7*
95% CI	[79.1, 83.2]	[89.2, 94.7]	
Propensity score matching (ATE)			7.3*

*Notes:* Pretreatment adjustments for year of survey, age, sex, South, married, and interviewer gender. The 95% CI is in brackets.

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## Evidence 2: Experiment

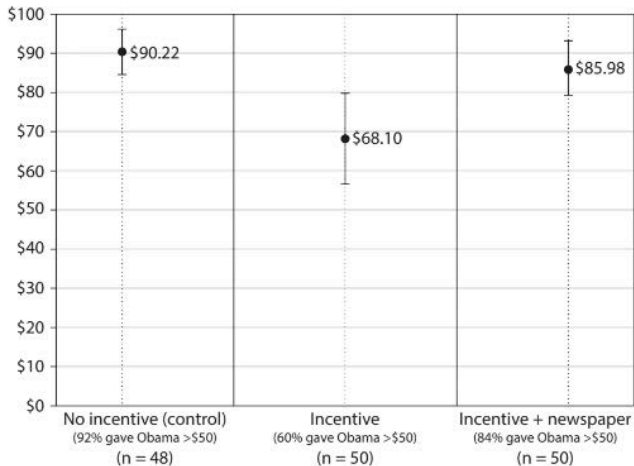


FIGURE 6.3. Obama contribution by experimental condition (95% CIs)

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# Tesler, “Post-Racial or Most Racial?”

Deepening racialization of politics under Obama:

- 50% racial gap in presidential approval for Obama: 92% of black respondents and 40% of whites
- Contrast to Clinton (high approval among black respondents, but would move in concert with white respondents—and smaller gap)
- Departure of white people into Republican party
- Immigration → sorting of Hispanics
- Asian Americans: strong Democratic allegiance despite economic motives

Increasing identification of Republican partisanship with whiteness.

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