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The impact of a candidates [sic] race on voter opinion

Yssis Patterson

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The impact of a candidates [sic] race on voter opinion

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Race has always played a significant role in politics. Identifying what degree race and/or political party identification has will help to further determine and explain the outsized significance of these factors in modern American politics.

HYPOTHESIS: We hypothesized that a candidate's race would have a significant impact on the way that a voter votes. Based on a candidate's initial appearance and biographer, a voter may prefer one candidate over another simply based on an isolated variable.

METHODS: For this study, we conducted two surveys through Amazon M Turk. We asked a series of questions based on two candidates of two racial backgrounds as well as two different political identities. These surveys ultimately tested the relationship between the voter, voter perceptions and the candidate, based on two variables, race, and political identification.

RESULTS: Our initial hypothesis was not supported. We did not find significance between voter perception and race. Race was not a significant factor among voters. However, we did find a significant relationship between political identification and voter perception. From our data, a majority of respondents were much more likely to respond to candidates that were of the same political identification, rather than race.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION: Our findings suggest that political identification is an important and overarching variable when it comes to voters and their candidates. However, voters may perceive a candidate to be a certain political identification based on their race.

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THE IMPACT OF A CANDIDATES RACE ON VOTER OPINION

By

Yssis Patterson

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in Political Science

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Abstract

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DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION: Our findings suggest that political identification is an important and overarching variable when it comes to voters and their candidates. However, voters may perceive a candidate to be a certain political identification based on their race.

KEYWORDS: voters, voting, race, politics, campaigns, candidates, political identification.

Introduction

The political campaign process is fraught with several events and factors that play out in front of the political stage. From the initial presentation of candidates to speeches, advertising, debates and so on, voters can live through the lives of the candidates as they see it. In this paper, we examined what possible factors could influence the voting process, from the initial introduction to the candidate, to placing the vote in a ballot box. When a voter decides to vote for a specific candidate, what exactly does the voter analyze in the decision-making process? While race has played a significant role in politics, we now see an increase in awareness around race in politics, an increase in activism regarding racial politics, as well as an increase of people of color participating in the political arena. While there is a significant amount of understanding around the increased role of people of color in the political arena, we wanted to focus on the voters themselves.

Significance of Attributes

Voting is a process based upon the evidence presented to the voter, as well as their personal opinions and beliefs. Voters are presented with several types of evidence when deciding to cast their ballot. Variables such as party identification, political history, performance in the government and their policy platform, as well as their social and family life. Voters are also exposed to the candidates', race, age, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, and other physical and social attributes. Are these attributes significant to the individual voting process? According to a study by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, "social factors, race, religion, region, and social class appear to be the characteristics that have most closely related to voting over the past several decades. Examining how these factors are related to the vote in particular elections not only allows us to explain the election outcome, but also can provide us

with an understanding of electoral dynamics. (Pryby, Carmine, 2005). In this paper, however, we examine how one physical attribute plays a role in voting behavior: Race.

Why Race?

The election of President Barack Obama was historic. Not only because the nation elected its first African American president, but because of the voter behavior that resulted in his victory. In this case, race was the biggest factor (aside from party identification and political ideology) when it came to the approval of President Obama. Between gender, different age groups, religions, income levels, education, geography and community type, no gap in approval was as wide as the ones between Whites and Blacks. (Race and Ethnicity, 2020)

There was a great racial divide between White and Black voters concerning President Obama. African American youth, remained largely supportive of the president, with 78 percent approving of the president's job performance, compared to 31 percent of Whites and 49 percent of Hispanics. Since we began our regular polling of the Obama administration in 2009, approval ratings among African-Americans have never been lower than 75 percent and in 9- of 11- IOP polls, they have been over 80 percent. (Race and Ethnicity, 2020)

Race was a significant factor in the support Obama received from the American citizenry in 2008 and the support he continued to get during his 2012 reelection as well as the support that followed him post-presidency. Why did Obama receive such a mass following? Many Blacks voters view and understand political representation to be a catalyst for racial equality. Thirty-eight percent of Black adults believe that more Blacks in office would be an effective strategy, however, only 24 percent of White voters were likely to view it as an effective strategy. We have seen an upward trajectory in Black political leadership in the past 50 years. In 1965, there were no Black members of the U. Senate or Black governors. There were only six Black members of

the House of Representatives. There is an increase of these numbers as of 2019, with 52 Black House members, however, areas in the governorship and the Senate remain largely unrepresentative of the Black population. (Brown, Atske 2019)

Stereotyping and Racial Prejudice

Race and racial prejudice are important aspects in the evaluation of Black candidates. Data indicates that White voters are willing to vote for Black candidates for President, however, the candidate must be deemed as qualified. (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985) Conflicting studies presented that first, neither candidate race nor the racial bias of the voter contributed to the choices made by voters. Research showed that racial prejudice reduced the support of White voters for Black candidates.

When some White voters are asked to evaluate an African American candidate, the candidate's darker skin color may signal a conscious awareness that a "Black stereotype" has been activated and allow the respondent to temporarily subdue the group categorization when expressing a vote choice.

An alternative explanation, one based on judgment cues, is also plausible. That is, when the candidate's race is obvious (dark skin), individuals who are racially intolerant and highly aware of social cues may feel compelled to misrepresent their vote intentions because they believe others are also highly cognizant of race, and, thus, the reporting of their anti-Black responses will be scrutinized. (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985)

It is a preconceived notion that Black candidates have a higher chance of winning in minority heavy districts, but it is a truth that is widely accepted. The assumption that Black voters will accept Black candidates has caused scholars to primarily focus on White voters. Little work has been done to understand the preference between Black voters and Black candidates, resulting in a gap in the literature. Black voter political orientation is perceived to be liberal,

according to the 2008 ANES, only 35% of Black respondents called themselves liberals, while about 36% identified as moderate and 29% identified as conservative. As such, while descriptive and substantive representation are by no means mutually exclusive, they are likely to conflict at times for a sizable subset of Black voters (Cameron, Epstein, & O'Halloran, 1996; Lublin, 1999; Swain, 1993)

Sharing an ideological position with a candidate of the same race can result in the voter supporting that candidate. However, if a White candidate challenged the Black candidate and was better matched to the ideology of the voter, the preference of the ideology versus the preference to the similarity of a race will conflict with one another. The predictions surrounding who the voter will decide to support will conflict with each other. An important part of learning about voter behavior is understanding whether voters, all voters, are likely to vote for Black candidates because of/ or despite political ideology.

Expected Voter Reactions To Candidates of Color

There are different reactions to candidates of color we can expect to see from voters, based on their ideological views. Based on the research hypotheses from the journal, "Black Candidates, White Voters: Understanding Racial Bias in Political Perceptions," the eight reactions are the following:

1. Simple Racism

Simple Racism, in its extreme form, states that race or ethnicity serves as the only basis for how White voters evaluate minority candidates. A White voter would be expected to vote for a candidate of their race before they voted for a candidate of color. Concerning a more modern context comparable to current society, simple racism is interpreted as voters being motivated by their ideological views as well as their views on race and racism. Voters would

support or oppose a candidate based on the compatibility between them. (Sigelman, Sigelam, Walkosz and Nitz 1995)

2. Modern or Aversive Racism

The terms “modern racism” (McConahay 1986) or “aversive racism” (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986) builds upon simple racism, incorporating social normality’s into the equation. This type of racism maintains that White voters are reluctant to discriminate against minorities on the basis that they may be branded as racists by outside society. They will only discriminate when they can socially justify their behavior. (Sigelman, Sigelam, Walkosz and Nitz 1995) In the political arena, this perspective states that White voters would reject a minority candidate only when they can point to differences between the candidates' view and their own.

3. Expectancy Violation

Expectancy violation is the theory that someone who violates stereotype-based expectations, will evoke either positive or negative evaluations/opinions, depending on the direction of the violation. (Jussim, Coleman and Lerch 1987) A person with positive characteristics, that are deemed to be unexpected, will be evaluated more positively than someone who has positive characteristics but those are deemed as expected. In a political setting,

A minority candidate who expresses conservative political views should be especially likely to violate voters' expectations. Conservative voters, pleasantly surprised at encountering such a candidate, would therefore judge the candidate more positively than an equally conservative Anglo, whereas liberal voters would reject a candidate whose conservative views negatively violate their race- or ethnicity-based expectations.

(Sigelman, Sigelam, Walkosz and Nitz 1995)

4. Extremity Effects

Research suggests that people form positive impressions of those that are deemed to be competent or attractive members that are outside the group. This stays the same and applies, even more, to those who are deemed to be incompetent or unattractive. This is called ambivalence- amplification, where it is the “tendency of group members to make extreme judgments of outsiders is more motivationally based” (e.g., Carver, Gibbons, Stephan, Glass, and Katz 1979; Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey, and Eisenstadt 1991; Katz 1981).

When understanding it in the political sense, a voter’s political orientation helps to determine whether a minority- group candidate's characteristics are perceived as desirable or undesirable, which can trigger the positive or negative extremity effects. (Sigelman, Sigelam, Walkosz and Nitz 1995)

5. Assumed Characteristics

The assumed characteristics theory focuses on the influences and prior assumptions of the characteristics of outsiders, and the characteristics of one outsider. (Jussim et al. 1987).

With this view, information about a particular person’s characteristics can “override biases that stem from stereotypes of the group in which the person belongs. (e.g., Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, and Hepburn 1980)

If individuating information about a candidate exerts sufficient influence, voters should simply favor candidates whose political views are compatible with their own, displaying no racial or ethnic bias (Insko, Nacoste, and Moe 1983). However, if individuating information is less potent, residual effects of group stereotypes might be felt. (Sigelman, Sigelam, Walkosz and Nitz 1995)

6. Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism is one of the many interpretations of the “weakening of racial prejudice,” (Schuman, Steeh and Bobo 1985) and the election of Black officials in jurisdictions where Blacks comprise a small fraction of the voters. This interpretation states, that, there may not be a tendency for Anglo voters to judge a candidate based on race or ethnic identity. The article states that while this interpretation is optimistic, the null findings among research in this area begs that this interpretation be taken seriously. However, with Egalitarianism brings into the question whether it is genuine, or whether one expresses nondiscriminatory attitudes to avoid being considered a racist. (Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkosz and Nitz 1995) Research suggests that the percentage of Whites who say they intend to vote for a Black candidate exceeds the voters that do vote for the Black candidate. (Rosenthal 1989)

7. Positive Prejudice or Reverse Discrimination

Based on extremity effects and expectancy-violation, reactions to minority candidates should be more favorable in comparison to Anglo candidates only under specific circumstances. However, to appeal to all possible theories, it has to be considered that positive prejudice can occur.

The possibility that Anglo voters consistently bend over backwards to support minority candidates may seem farfetched, but becomes more plausible when Anglo voters are motivated to do or at least to say the "right thing" (Carver, Glass, Snyder, and Katz 1977; Hass et al. 1991)

8. Ideological Egalitarianism

Ideological Egalitarianism considers the possibility that voter reaction to minority candidates is based on their political ideology. Liberals typically display more progressive racial attitudes than conservatives, including egalitarianism and positive prejudice (Dienstbier 1970; Gaertner 1973)

While we cannot be certain of each respondent's voter reaction to candidates of color, we can begin to understand why a voter may react, like or vote for a specific candidate based on their race. It is important to understand these reactions because we are then able to understand the voter's perspective. Each reaction is based upon a multitude of variables, such as in group and outgroup, deemed positive/negative characteristics, political ideology, etc. Variables we may not necessarily consider when we are looking at voters and their reaction to race allow us to look deeper than surface racism.

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout is defined as the number of eligible voters who cast their ballot in any given election. In the United States, voter turnout “fluctuates in national elections. In recent elections, about 60% of the voting-eligible population votes during presidential election years, and about 40% votes during midterm elections.” (FairVote.org, n.d.). Voter turnout, in the context of this research, is a measure of voter confidence. When a voter places a ballot, they are making the informed decision to vote for a candidate, placing and entrusting their livelihood into that candidate. Research conducted by Ebonya Washington elaborates on voter turnout among different political ideologies and races/ethnicities.

In Washington's research, it was concluded that Black and White voter turnout increased by 2 to 3 percentage points when a Black Democrat was on the ballot. Within the group,

however, the turn out for White voters was greater. There was no turnout response for the Black Republican, which suggests, “that perception of Blacks’ ideology may be a factor.” (Washington 2006)

Voter Turnout Based on Candidate- Black Republican

The Black Democrat, in this study, received high numbers of voter turnout. However the same was not said about the Republican candidate. This could be due to two reasons. The first being that Black Republicans are historically less viable than their Democratic counterparts. ' “From 1982 to 2000, in House elections, Black Democratic candidates won 88 percent of their elections, while Black Republicans succeeded only 4 percent of the time. “(Washington 2006) Polarization is another reason as to why Black Republicans fail to increase voter turnout. In-office, Black legislators are considered to be more liberal than most non-Black legislators. When a Black Democrat runs against a non-Black Republican, there is a greater polarization is perceived than when a Black Republican runs against a non-Black Democrat. (Washington 2006)

Increased Turnout Explained

Polarization was a basis for explaining voter turnout in Washington’s research. As explained before, Black candidates/legislators are deemed to be more liberal than their non-Black peers, therefore,

When voters confront a Black Democratic candidate on their ballots, they may believe that the ideological distance between the two major-party candidates is greater than if the Democrats were fielding a non-Black. Thus, voters may perceive a greater need to come out to vote because there is more at stake. The fact that a Black Republican candidate would not serve to increase such polarization may explain why Black Democratic, but not Republican, candidates increase turnout. (Washington 2006)

The Research

Based on the literature, we understand a few things. First, physical attributes, more specifically race, play a significant role in voter behavior. We see how race is significant in voter behavior when examining elections such as the election of former President Barack Obama in 2008 as well as midterm elections in 2018. We continue to see minority participation in politics continue, as many candidates of color are winning elections and steering conversations in the political arena. However, attitudes around race have yet to change and we continue to see stereotypes and prejudices play a large role in politics. These attitudes continue to play a part in the way that voters react to candidates, and many of these reactions are based on their own positive or negative characterizations, as well as their political ideology.

This research fills a large void in the area of race and politics. The research conducted around this particular area, voter opinion/perception, is quite outdated, as the research we have reviewed dates back to the 1980s. This research further analyzes voter turnout, understanding specific demographics, (age, gender, geographical location) in reaction to candidates, as well as focusing on political ideology as well as race. The research hopes to update this area of research and provide an understanding of the mind of the voter.

Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature, we understand that study of the Black vote, as well as voter perception, was largely unstudied in the modern context. Our research literature dates back to the 1980s, and there has been relatively little research pertaining to this topic. Our research hopes to address this gap. The purpose of the study is to examine voter perceptions and opinions of candidates of a certain race and political background. We hypothesized that race does play a significant role in the way that voters perceive their candidates when voting for them. Voter opinion may even change the way a voter votes based on a physical attribute, race.

Human Subjects (IRB)

To conduct this survey, it had to meet the criteria of the IRB. Survey criteria was subject to review by the Eastern Michigan Human Subjects Review Committee. The research was approved for testing in the Fall of 2018 and was reapproved for testing in the Fall of 2019.

Method I

The methods section will be split into two parts to analyze two sets of research. Method I will analyze the initial research based on the initial hypothesis. Method II will further build on Method I, with a different approach to the hypothesis, based on the data\ results for Method I

Participants

Participants in this study were located through an online survey program, Amazon M Turk. Amazon M Turk advertised the survey with the following keywords, survey, demographics, votes, voters, choices, and politics. Participants had the option to participate based on their interest in the survey. Those that participated were paid a sum of \$0.25 upon

completion of the survey. Those who did not complete the survey were not paid, and those data sets were not included in the final examination of data. The survey in total received a total of 656 participants, with a wide range of demographics including, Age, Gender, Race, Level of Education and Political Orientation. Those demographics are shown in Table 1a to 1e.

	Under 21	21 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 44	34 to 59	60 & up
Age	11	72	203	246	96	27

Table 1a

	Male	Female
Gender	360	292

Table 1b

	White	Black or AA	Hispanic or Latinx	Asian or Asian American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other
Race	396	40	35	194	14	11	

Table 1c

	Less than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Some Postgraduate	Graduate Degree
Level Of Education	0	59	156	302	48	132

Table 1d

	Strong Republican	Weak Republican	Independent Leaning Republican	Independent	Independent Leaning Democrat	Weak Democrat	Strong Democrat
Political Orientation	99	67	50	124	100	83	132

Table 1e

Each variable was based on a quantitative number in relation to the participant. However, the political orientation variable was solely based on the participant's discretion. It was up to the

participant to determine how strongly they feel about certain political ideologies/ platforms, and they then assumed the responsibility to rate themselves on the measures provided.

Stimuli

Each participant had access to an online survey which they were then randomly assigned a section of the survey. The survey was (9) pages long, and contained three sections. Section 1 was the demographics section. During this section, participants were asked to answer questions about their demographics, these demographics are displayed in the above Tables 1a to 1e.

Core Survey

The survey contained two candidates, Frank Grammer, a Republican Candidate, and Steve Wilson, a Democrat Candidate, a picture of either one of African American descent or one of Caucasian descent.



Figure A



Figure B

They were paired with two biographies and pictures, as seen above in Figure A & B, either Republican or Democrat. Each of these biographies consisted of the education of the candidate, their political experience and their political platform. These biographies were modeled after ones that voters typically read when acquiring information about a candidate during an

election. Each survey participant received one of the four candidates, a Black democrat, a Black republican, a White democrat and a White republican. The survey was electronically randomized, therefore, participants saw 1 of the 4 conditions. Each condition received 25% of the participants.

The biographies for the candidates are as follows:

Frank Grammer, Republican

Frank Grammer is a Republican candidate running for President in the 2020 election. He graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in Political Science. During college, he participated in the ROTC program and went on to join the Army. He completed two tours in the East. After the Army, Grammer worked with local shelters to support his fellow veterans returning from war. If elected, Grammer wants to help bring jobs back to America, creating a stronger middle class and economy. Grammer will join the fight against drugs and create strict no-tolerance policies. Grammer believes that marijuana should be state- and not federally-regulated. The Second Amendment is important to Grammer and he believes all Americans have the right to bear arms as stated in the second amendment. Preventing illegal immigration is vital to Grammer and he plans to create stronger immigration laws and extreme vetting for those traveling to America. Helping to protect the borders is what Grammer believes will keep Americans safe. Obamacare must be repealed and replaced with a better program that takes the government out of healthcare. Grammer wants to put America First!

Steven Wilson, Democrat

Steven Wilson is a Democrat running for President in the 2020 election. He graduated from New York University with a degree in Political Science. After school, he traveled the world, volunteering in different countries before returning to America to attend law school. After law school, he joined legal aid, working with immigration and criminal justice cases. Wilson wants to make a push to legalize marijuana, which will create an abundance of jobs, and use the revenue for a number of pressing issues such as, helping to lower the nation's debt and fixing the nation's infrastructure. Wilson wants to work with his peers in Congress and create a health care system for all so that all Americans have the opportunity to have access to health care. Wilson plans to create policies that will protect our water and endangered animal life, and create a better cleaner environment for future generations. While honoring the Second Amendment is important, ensuring that guns do not fall into the wrong hands is equally important. Wilson wants to create clear policies for handling immigration and support for those seeking asylum. Wilson will work to create a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Core Test

Once participants had read and observed the pictures and biographies of their assigned candidates, they were then asked to rate the candidates on a scale from one to four. One being

definitely not to four being definitely yes. They rated the candidate against the following questions:

1. Does this candidate appear to dress professionally?
2. Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?
3. Does this candidate appear to be able to handle stressful situations effectively?
4. Does this candidate appear intelligent?
5. Does this candidate appear to be well-educated?
6. Does this candidate appear to be confident?
7. Does this candidate appear to be a leader?
8. Does this candidate appear to be effective?
9. Would this candidate be a good representation of the country?

These questions were developed with an understanding of what the average voter may consider when supporting a candidate. Participant's ratings of the candidates against these questions further allow the comparison of the candidates both racially and politically.

Data

Our initial finding when examining the data, was that participants rated the candidates in a particularly interesting manner against the two questions, Does the candidate appear to be compassionate? And, does the candidate appear to be a good representation of the country? These two questions are deemed significant as the data revealed data gaps regarding these two questions in comparison to other questions. Therefore, compassion and good representation of the country are the only two variables we will be analyzing

What Candidate did the Respondent See?	N=Number of Responses	Does the candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does the candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
Black Republican	N= 139	2.5	2.3
White Republican	N=154	2.0	2.1
Black Democrat	N=157	2.8	3.0

White Democrat	N=175	3.0	3.0
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Table 2

In an overall rating of the candidates, we understand that the White Democrat receives the highest rating among both variables. The White Democrat receives a 3.0 compassion rating and a 3.0 good representation rating on a 1-4 scale, where 4 is the highest rating. The Black Democrat follows with a 2.8 compassion rating and a 3.0 good representation rating. The Republican candidates fall behind in both categories, the Black republican in the lead with a 2.5 compassion rating and a 2.3 good representation rating. The White Republican falls behind with a 2.0 compassion rating and a 2.1 good representation rating.

What is your age?	What Candidate did the Respondent see?	N= Number of responses	Does this Candidate appear to be compassionate?	Would this Candidate be a good representation of the country?
30-44	Black Republican	N=57	2.3	2.1
	White Republican	N=56	2.7	2.2
	Black Democrat	N=55	3.1	3.1
	White Democrat	N=66	3.1	3.0

To further assess the data, it was broken down and compared against three demographics, age, gender, and political orientation. Compared against these variables, the data will show how these three demographics rate and view the four candidates.

Age

Table 3

The survey was divided into four age sections, Under 21, 21 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 44, 45-59 and 60 or older. In reference to Table 1a, as the largest demographic was ages 30-44, this is where the most significant data was represented, in comparison to our other age sets, which did not result in significant data.

Among the ages of 30-44, we see a preference for the Democrat candidates over the Republican candidates. Among Democrats, they receive the same rating when the compassion variable is added, with only a 0.1, difference when the good representation variable is added. The

What is your gender?	What Candidate did the Respondent see?	N= Number of responses	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Would this Candidate be a good representation of the country?
Female	Black Republican	N= 68	2.6	2.4
	White Republican	N=64	1.9	1.7
	Black Democrat	N=78	3.3	3.0
	White Democrat	N=75	3.1	3.1

Democrats had a combined average rating of 3.1 out of 4. Republicans are rated lower than the Democrats with a combined average rating of 2.1 out of 4. The data does show us, that the White republican is viewed to be more compassionate in comparison to the Black Republican with a 0.05 lead.

Gender

Table 4

The survey comprised of 360 who identified as men and 292 who identified as women. Our most significant data yielded among the female participants. Female participants ranked the Democrat Candidates higher, with the Black Democrat in the lead overall. The Democrats averaged a combined 3.1 out of 4 ratings. The Republican candidates are rated lower than the Democrats. The White Republican ranking significantly lower than the Black Republican. The Republican candidates received an average combined rating of 2.2 out of 4.

Political Orientation

Democrat

In politics, today, which of the following descriptions best described you?	What Candidate did the Respondent see?	N = Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Would this Candidate be a good representation of the country?
Strong Democrat	Black Republican	N= 57	1.3	1.6
	White Republican	N=56	1.3	1.4
	Black Democrat	N=55	3.2	3.1
	White Democrat	N=66	3.4	3.0

Table 5

Among those identified as Democrats, participants responded to candidates of their party strongly compared to candidates of the opposite party. Democrats favored their candidates with a combined rating of 3.1 out of 4. Democrats did not favor either Republican candidate, with a combined rating 1.4 out of 4. The White Democrat is favored slightly higher than the Black Democrat; however, the numbers are not significantly different and therefore conclusions based on these numbers would not be strong enough. What is interesting in this data set is the difference in ratings between the two candidate sets. Democrats favor their party candidates and rate the Republican candidates significantly lower than their own.

Republican

In politics today, which of the following descriptions best defines you?	What Candidate did the Respondent see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Would this Candidate be a good representation of the country?
Strong Republican	Black Republican	N= 21	3.5	3.5
	White Republican	N=21	2.8	3.4
	Black Democrat	N=25	2.6	2.8
	White Democrat	N=30	2.5	2.2

Table 6

The data set here is significantly different from the Democrat data set. Participants that identified as Republican did rate their party candidates higher. The Republican candidates have a

combined rating of 3.3 out of 4, while the Democrat candidates have a combined rating of 2.6 out of 4. Republicans, however, did rate the Black Republican as being more compassionate compared to his White counterpart. What is interesting with this data set is that there was not a large difference between the overall rating of Republican and Democrat candidates compared to the Democrat participants. Democrat participants rated the Republican candidates harsher. Republican participants rated the Democrat candidates lower than their candidates, however, the numbers were not drastically different.

Results/ Discussion

The data from Method I of this research interprets two ideas. The first is that when it comes to voting for a candidate, one will vote for their party regardless. A voter's loyalty is to their party; voters are considering party more than race. The data exhibited party loyalty when we looked at Strong Republicans and Strong Democrats, (Table 2) who rated their party candidates higher than their counterparts. When we look at the overarching analysis of the candidates and how each candidate was rated, we see that the Black and White Democrat were rated significantly higher than their Republican counterparts. While each candidate received an average amount of respondents, the White Democrat saw the largest respondent number (N=175). This higher rating is no surprise, as the majority of the respondents that took the Method I version of the survey, were Democrats, with (N=315) identifying as Independent Leaning Democrat to a strong Democrat.

Secondly, the data shows us that race plays an integral, qualitative role. What this research suggests is that when we look at the candidate, depending on our demographic, race may contribute to our preconceived notions of the candidates. For example, in the data, women rate the Black Democrat higher than the White Democrat, and rated the Black Republican higher

than the White Republican (Table 4), in both categories of compassion and good representation. As they rated the candidates to be more compassionate, an inference can be made that they assume Black candidates to be more progressive than their White counterparts, and thus more inclined to support policies pertaining to women's rights. The Democrat candidates were overall rated higher than the Republicans, and therefore the same can be said for both of the Democrat candidates, regardless of race.

However, when analyzing the age demographics (Table 3), within the age group of 30-44, the largest age pool in our survey, they rate the Black and White Democrat with a higher rating, and the Black and White Republican with a lower rating. While this data is a trend we see in most of our demographic cases, what is significant in this data set, is that the Black Republican is rated lower than the White Republican, which goes against the idea that participants may view the Black candidate to be more compassionate. Within this age group, a Black Republican is viewed as less compassionate.

The data also showed us that among the general surveyors, women and strong republicans, the Black Republican candidate was rated higher than the White Republican when examining the compassion variable. Meaning that race is/ can be looked at as a political cue for understanding candidates. Voters care about political orientation, and race may be another way in determining inclinations into political opinion. The baseline vote may be driven by party, but race is an indication of how people will vote.

Ideological egalitarianism, as discussed previously, may also play a role in the results of this survey. Ideological egalitarianism is the theory that voter reactions to minority candidates are based upon their political ideology. As the survey received a high number of Democrat

respondents, it is safe to assume that the democrat candidates fared higher and the Republican candidates received lower scores as a result of our respondent's political orientation.

Research conducted by Amy E. Lerman and Meredith L. Sadin validates and further explains the results of this research. Black and White voters employ different processes when evaluating candidates of other races. White voters stereotype Black candidates as being more liberal than a White candidate. "Black liberals perceive a Black candidate to be significantly more liberal than a comparable White candidate, while Black conservatives perceive a Black candidate as more conservative than his White counterpart. These findings have important electoral implications, as we find that perceived ideological similarity strongly mediates vote choice for both Black and White Americans." (Lerman, Sadin 2016)

Method II

Our initial test validated our hypotheses to a certain degree. Race did play a role when determining how one perceives the candidate, but not necessarily due to racist attitudes of the voter. Voters perceive a candidate to be a certain political orientation based on the race of the candidate. Voters perceive White candidates to be conservative-leaning, and Black candidates more liberal-leaning, based on the demographic variable we exposed the candidates too. With these results in mind, we wanted to further explore this notion of voter perception.

The second set of research follows similar to the first study design with a few changes. The candidates remain the same and so do the test questions, however, we separate the political orientations of the participants. Republican identified participants receive their survey, and Democrat identified participants receive an entirely separate survey. By isolating the two political groups, we can further understand whether there are differences based on political orientation. We then will compare how Republicans and Democrats rate their candidates of

different races, as well as candidates of the opposite party of different races. As Method I resulted in participants that prioritized political orientation over race, we then focused our data to revolve around race in order to understand the way the voter views it.

The survey will also measure for geographical location. Measuring for geographical location within the United States will determine whether areas within the United States are prone to view a candidate more positively or negatively based on their physical appearance, based on the ratings they give them on the 1 to 4 scale.

The questions participants were asked to rate the candidates against are the same questions asked from Method I of the survey. Compassion and great representation of the country were once again variables that were deemed to be significant, as participants rated the candidates harshly against these variables. The demographics of the survey are as follows.

The survey overall had (N=599) active participants. Active participants are determined by the participants that answered all questions and completed the survey in its entirety. Due to some participants failing to do so, we had to remove them from the data set, their responses would skew the data and the response would not accurately represent the data in its entirety.

Demographics

	Male	Female
Gender	265	332

Table 6a

	Under 21-24	25-29	30-44	45-59	60-older
Age	27	90	257	143	82

Table 6b

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian American	Native American	Pacific Islander

Race	484	38	38	61	51	2
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Table 6c

	Less than High school	High school Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Some post-Graduate Education	Completed Graduate Education
Level of Education	2	50	134	277	27	89

Table 6d

	Republican	Democrat
Political Orientation	301	298

Table 6e

	Pacific	West	Southwest	Midwest	South	Northeast	Does not live in US.
Region	67	55	69	135	121	129	23

Table 6f

Unified Rating v. Demographics

To further understand whether political ideology or race plays a significant role in a voter's opinion, we isolated the candidates into two sections, a unified rating, and an ideology rating. The unified category stripped candidates of their political ideologies, basing the rating completely on race. The White Democrat and Republican data were combined and the same applied to the Black Democrat and Republican. The candidates will be described as the Black Candidate, encompassing the Black Republican and the Black Democrat, and the White Candidate, encompassing the White Republican and White Democrat. The scale rating of 1-4 was still used to rate the candidates against the ten questions. With this unified rating, the only variable that changed was race. We applied demographic variables of participants to test whether ratings based on race changed against different demographics

Geography

*Not from the US was not applied as this research is focused on US voters only.

Table 7

Understanding the geography was important to the study. Each region of the United States carries particular cultures and way of life. This may also apply to the political attitudes of the regions. The Table below demonstrates the attitudes each region had based on both candidates, regardless of political orientation.

From the data above, we can see that participants from each region gave fairly average ratings to each candidate, the lowest ratings from the Northeast and the highest ratings from the West and the Southwest. Comparing both candidates, there are not any significant changes among the candidates, however, we see change across the region.

Gender

What candidates did you see?	Pacific N=67	West N=55	Southwest N=69	Midwest N= 135	South N=121	Northeast N=129
Black Candidates	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.2
White Candidates	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.3

What is your gender?	What Candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Rating of Unified (D+R)Candidates
Male	Black Candidates	N= 265	2.5
	White Candidates	N=265	2.5

Table 8

What is your gender?	What Candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Rating of Unified (D+R)Candidates
Female	Black Candidates	N= 332	2.5
	White Candidates	N=332	2.5

Table 8a

Against the gender demographic, we see again that participants gave an average rating of 2.5. The data shows no significance when trying to understand whether race plays a role in how men and women view a candidate. Men and women view the Black and White Candidates equally. As we received similar data in regards to other demographics, such as age, race and political orientation, we decided not to include the data. However, the data did remain relatively the same regarding the rating of the candidates.

Political Orientation

What is your Political Orientation	What Candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Rating of Unified (D+R) Candidates
Republican	Black Candidates	N= 301	3.5
	White Candidates	N=301	3.5

Table 9

What is your Political Orientation	What Candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Rating of Unified (D+R) Candidates
Democrat	Black Candidates	N= 298	1.4
	White Candidates	N= 298	1.5

Table 9a

Examining Political orientation against the unified candidates yields interesting results. Republicans rate the unified candidates with an average rating of 3.5 out of 4, a significantly high rating in comparison to the Democrats. Those that identify as Democrats rate the unified candidates with an average of 1.5 out of 4, one of the lowest ratings among various data sets.

The following demographics, age, and race were not used in this data set as significant data was not present. Across all age groups, participants rated the candidates with an average of

2.5 out of 4 for both Black and White unified candidates. While the race of the participants was an important factor in determining voter opinion, the survey received 484 White participants, who made up 80% of the survey. The numbers and the conclusions we would come to base on these numbers would not accurately reflect voter opinion, as the majority would greatly overlook the opinion of the minority.

What is your political orientation?	What candidate did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does the candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
Republican	Unified White Candidates	N=301	2.8	2.6
Democrat	Unified White Candidates	N=298	2.1	2.0

Isolated Candidate

The ratings the candidates received within the unified data set were fairly neutral, with the expectation of political orientation. In order to analyze the data to find more significant numbers, adding our question variables, compassion and great representation could produce more significant data, as the analysis is more individualistic, compared to our unified candidates. We used these variables/questions, compassion, and great representation, as they tended to garner the most attention and significant numbers. We isolated each candidate by race.

The Rating of White Candidates

Table 10

From the data above, we can see that Democrats rate White candidates lower overall with a combined average rating of 2. Republicans on the other hand rate White candidates higher overall with a combined average rating of 2.7. Democrats rated White candidates significantly lower in comparison to Republicans. While the participants rated the candidates lower regarding good representation, the numbers were not far enough on the 1-4 scale to call it significant, however, the numbers are different enough for observations to be made.

The Rating of Black Candidates

What is your political orientation?	What candidate did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does the candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
Republican	Unified Black Candidates	N=301	3	2.7
Democrat	Unified Black Candidates	N=298	2.7	2.4

Table 11

The data above, we can see that Democrats rate the Black candidates with a combined average rating of 2.5, while Republicans rate the Black candidates with a combined average rating of a 2.8. Compared to the White candidates, Democrats rate them higher and Republicans rate them both relatively the same. Republicans are neutral regarding race.

We then, with the isolated candidates, compared them with each demographic to determine whether we see any significant data. We compared them against, age, gender, and level of education. We did not use Race as it was not a diverse enough demographic, with those that identified as White held the majority with 484, which would not false significance. The Tables below show age, gender and level of education against the compassion and great representation variables.

Gender v. White Candidates

What is your gender?	What candidate did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
Male	Unified White Candidates	N=265	2.4	2.3
Female	Unified White Candidates	N=332	2.5	2.3

Table 12

When asking participants to rate the candidates solely based on race against gender, see here that men and women rate the White candidates lower on the scale. Men rated the White

candidate with a combined rating of 2.3. Women rated the candidate with an average rating of 2.4.

Gender v. Black Candidates

What is your gender?	What candidate did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
Male	Unified Black Candidates	N=265	2.6	2.4
Female	Unified Black Candidates	N=332	3.0	2.7

Table 12a

In reference to the Black candidate, men and women rate him slightly higher than the White candidate, women rating him higher overall in both categories, and men rate him higher in just one category. Men rate the Black candidate with an average rating of 2.4, while women rate in higher, with an average rating of 2.8. Men rate the Black and White candidates relatively the same, while we see a slight increase with women participants.

Age v. White Candidate

What is your age?	What candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
25-29	Unified White Candidate	N= 90	2.7	2.4
30-44	Unified White Candidate	N= 257	2.3	2.3
45-49	Unified White Candidate	N=143	2.7	2.3

Table 13

For this survey, under 21-24 was not included as it only had 27 participants, and 60 and older only received 82 participants. In the set of data, we see some interesting numbers. When analyzing the categories, good representation does not receive high ratings, the average rating is 2.3. This rating is across the age group of 25-49. However, the compassion category does receive

higher ratings, only within the age groups of 25-29 and 45-49. The age group of 30-44 does not rate the White candidate as compassionate, compared to the other age groups

Age v. Black Candidate

What is your age?	What candidates did you see?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
25-29	Unified Black Candidate	N= 90	2.5	2.6
30-44	Unified Black Candidate	N= 257	2.7	2.5
45-49	Unified Black Candidate	N=143	3.0	2.7

Table 13a

This data set shows us that in compassion to the White candidates, the Black candidates do receive a higher rating in both categories. The compassion category receives an average rating of 2.7 and the Good representation category receives an average rating of a 2.6. The highest rating is from the age group 45-49, where they score the, a 3.0 in compassion and the lowest score is from the age group 25-29, where they score him a 2.5.

Level of Education v. White Candidates

What is your level of education?	N= Number of Responses	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
High School	N= 50	2.4	2.0
Some College	N= 134	2.7	2.3
College Graduate	N= 277	2.4	2.4
Some Post Graduate	N= 27	2.5	2.4
Complete Post Graduate	N=89	2.3	1.8

Table 14

*Less than high school was not included as it only received two responses.

Within this data set, analyzing the participant's level of education against the White Candidate, we see many varying numbers. This candidate receives relatively low ratings, the lowest from those that completed their Graduate education with a rating of 1.8 in the good representation variable. The highest rating 2.7, comes from those who have completed some college education. The average rating given in the compassion category is 2.4 while the average rating given in the good representation variable is 2.1. The good representation variable does not receive high ratings from this demographic.

Level of Education v. Black Candidates

What is your level of education?	N= Number of Respondents	Does this candidate appear to be compassionate?	Does this candidate appear to be a good representation of the country?
High School	N= 50	2.8	2.6
Some College	N=134	2.7	2.6
College Graduate	N=277	2.9	2.6
Some Post Graduate	N=27	2.8	2.6
Complete Post Graduate	N=89	2.8	2.6

Table 14a

The Black candidates once again scored slightly higher scores in comparison to the White Candidates. In the compassion category, he receives a low rating of 2.7, the highest being a 2.9, which averages out to be a 2.8. The good representation category received an average rating of 2.6. This number is lower than the compassion variable, a pattern we are seeing within the data, however much higher than the White candidate. Among this demographic, the Black candidate is preferred based on the ratings.

Results/Discussion

Method II of the survey attempted to further analyze voter opinion by focusing exclusively on the Political orientation of the participants, as well as the race of the candidates. The data was divided into two sections, unified candidates and isolated candidates. The isolated candidates had both their race and political ideologies and were rated against the compassion and good representation variables.

The Political orientation of the participants yielded significant results. Republicans (Table 9) rated both Black candidates and White candidates with the highest rating in the unified data set. Republicans approved of these candidates regardless of race and political orientation. Those that identified as Democrats did not approve of either the Black Candidates or the White candidates. These participants gave these the lowest rating in the unified data set. What is unusual within this data set, is how low the Democrats rated the candidates, as their candidates, White and Black Democrats, were included in the data. An observation that can be made that while the Republican participants were approving of both candidates, those that identified as Democrats disapproved of their own candidates as well as Republican candidates, rating them significantly lower.

In order to understand the data further, we broke down the data by isolating the candidates. We isolated the candidates based on their Race, still using the unified rating. By doing this, we can see how each political orientation rates these candidates. Isolating the White candidate, Republicans rate the candidate higher than the Democrats. (Table 10) Again we see Democrats rating the candidate lower than the Republican. This pattern appears again when rating the Black candidate. (Table 11) This slight increase, compared to the low rating Democrats give the White candidates, may relate to Democrats perceiving Black candidates as

being more liberal than White candidates, as discussed in Method I. However, while rating the Black candidate higher against the compassion variable, neither candidate is deemed to be a good representation of the country. (Table 11) The data does continue to reflect, as we saw in Method I, that across age, gender and then Level of Education, that the Black Democrat is rated slightly higher in the compassion and good representation variables.

What is unusual and alarming in this data, is the Democrat participants who gave low ratings to their own candidates. Comparing the biographies of the candidates, the two are drastically different with separate platforms, backgrounds, and policies. While the Democratic candidate is representative of Democratic ideals, was the candidate strong enough to win over our Democratic participants? While the candidates themselves are different politically, are we seeing different political stances among our Democrat participants? In the first survey, we ask participants to identify themselves as strong, weak, independent-leaning or independent, based on either Democrat or Republican orientations. If participants in our survey identified as Democrat, however, they were Independent, Progressive, weak leaning, etc., it could explain why they are not rating the Democrat candidate higher. In-party polarization begins to take place within this data set.

We see party polarization reflected in the upcoming 2020 primary election, between front runners Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden. These candidates reflect two different platforms and inspire two different kinds of groups under the Democratic umbrella. The polarization of their supporters goes as far as some supporters have threatened to abstain from voting in the general election if their candidate of choice is not on the ballot. While this data set is relatively small in comparison to the American voting population, it is not unfair to conclude that in-party polarization will be one of the biggest challenges facing American politics.

The data from both research methods reflects two different conclusions about the American voter, and what research going forward should look like when examining race, political orientation, and voting. We were unable to examine the race of the voter as the majority of our respondents were White. Moving forward, research should focus on minority voters, and their attitudes in the voting process, as the assumption that Black voters will accept Black candidates has caused scholars to primarily focus on White voters. With the focus primarily on White voters, “scholars of race politics have been innovating new techniques for studying the complex ways in which White racial attitudes shape national politics and public policy.” (Harris-Lacewell 2003) This, unfortunately, leads to the consensus, “that Black people don’t matter.” (Harris-Lacewell 2003)

The omission of Black agency from the study of races causes researchers to ask the wrong questions, and fail to interrogate the assumptions on which their empirical work and conclusions are based.

Ignoring the voices of people of color results in a severe underestimation of the role of group interests in the politics of affirmative action. (Harris-Lacewell 2003)

We need a more inclusive research process of both the researcher and participants to properly reflect the American voter population.

As Black candidates are perceived to being more liberal, research should also be done to understand the implications of what this has on candidates of color in the future as well as those candidates who do not represent liberal values. Polarization among those that identify as Democrat calls for research into understanding what this means for American politics. With a thorough understanding of voter attitudes, attention paid to minority voters, being inclusive of race and varying degrees of political orientation, researchers can begin to capture a true knowledge of the voter opinion, as well the politics of race.

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