

Conservatism And Fairness In Contemporary Politics:

Unpacking The Psychological Underpinnings Of Modern Racism

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Talk Today

- 1 Separating intergroup attitudes from other political attitudes is important, but difficult.
- 2 Widely used racial attitude scales do not measure what they are commonly thought to measure.
- 3 Racial attitudes in American politics may be characterized by broad resentment, perhaps underpinned by Just World Belief.

Does this measure anti-Black racism?

- 1 Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- 2 Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- 3 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.
- 4 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

Four question Racial Resentment Scale (Kinder and Sanders, 1996), ANES, CCAP, CCES.

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Modern Racism

a “blend” of anti-Black affect and traditional values. . .

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Racial Resentment: *Mean of 5 item Likert Agree–Disagree scale (items 1 and 4 reverse coded).*

Old-fashioned Racism

(1) desire for social distance between the races, (2) beliefs in the biological inferiority of blacks, and (3) support public policies insuring racial segregation and formalized discrimination.

- 1 How much would you favor or oppose a close relative or family member marrying a black person?
- 2 On the average, blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these difference are because most blacks have less inborn ability to learn?
- 3 Do people in these groups tend to be unintelligent of intelligent?

Virtanen and Huddy (1995)

Why nature of Modern Racism is important. . .

In the literature. . .

- Related to host of behavioral outcomes, including voting and policy support—especially during the Obama (and Trump) era.
- Since 2004, nearly 70% of the articles in *APSR*, *AJPS*, *JOP*, and *BJPS* measuring attitudes towards African Americans use Modern Racism Scales.
- “Symbolic racism and racial resentment have become **the focal constructs** for explaining the role of racial attitudes in contemporary American politics.” (Tesler, 2012)

Theoretically (especially in 2018). . .

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- Or do they reflect a broader belief system that motivates attitudes toward outgroups in general?

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In the popular press. . .

Monkey Cage | Analysis

Views about race mattered more in electing Trump than in electing Obama

(Washington Post)

Did racism Trump economic anxiety in US election?

Mehdi Hasan demonstrates how racial resentment played a bigger role in electing Donald Trump than economic concerns.

(Al Jazeera)

Yep, race really did Trump economics: A data dive on his supporters reveals deep racial animosity

Still think economic anxiety and trade policy were the big factors in Trump's win? Data suggests otherwise

(Salon)

Why this is tricky...

- 1 Measuring racial attitudes is a central sociopolitical concern in the United States (and elsewhere).
- 2 Separating conservatism from anti-Black affect is a very old problem and a debate around these questions has been active for, at least, 30 years.
- 3 Simple solution is to separate conservatism from racism by varying one of the components: the target group.
- 4 But group must be varied many times, not just substituted, because otherwise it might just capture attitudes about another group.
- 5 Still tricky because need to understand what these attitudes mean if they don't mean something specific to Blacks.

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Classic debate. . .

Do Modern Racism scales measure a

- a “blend” of anti-Black affect and traditional values (Kinder and Sears, 1981)?

or

- non-affective conservative ideology (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986)?

Our intervention. . .

- If respondents will respond the same to racial resentment questions, *regardless of the target group*, these scales are not a reliable measure of specific anti-Black affect.
- Modern racism and conservatism may both spring from common “Belief in a Just World.”

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Why might responses to Modern Racism scales *not* change, regardless of the target group?

- 1 Motivation for “Belief in a Just World,” or belief that people get what they deserve (Jost, et Al, 2003) (“If blacks would only try harder. . .”).
- 2 The attribution of stereotypes of inadequate work-ethics to low-status groups can be seen across time and place (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999).

Empirical Demonstrations

- 1 Do modern racism scales measure attitudes specifically targeted at African Americans?
 - 1 Do modern racism scales yield different responses when other groups are used?
 - 2 Do modern racism scales explain policy preferences when other groups are used?
- 2 Do modern racism scales capture racial animus or racial sympathy?
- 3 Racial attitudes in Trump era: what might explain conservatives' non-specific attitudes toward African Americans?

Design

- 1 Two sets of questions (set ordering randomized):
 - 1 Anti-Black Racial Resentment Questions
 - Standard 4-Question Scale
 - Modified 3-Question Scale (no slavery question)
 - 2 Non-Standard Questions using *another target group* (Albanian, Angolan, Hispanic, Jordanian, Surinamese, Taiwanese, Bahraini, Bhutanese, Lithuanian, Mauritanian, Uruguayan, American, Guyanese, Ivoirian, Guyanese, Maltese, Niuean, and White)
- 2 Questions about attitudes toward racialized policies and Just World Belief scale.

Compare the distribution of responses, between subjects, across the two conditions.

Sample

6,699 total subjects from 12 trials (Amazon Mechanical Turk and the Harvard Digital Lab for the Social Sciences (DLABSS), with a nationally representative sample from Time-sharing Experiments in the Social Sciences (TESS)).

	Total	mTurk	DLABSS	TESS
N	6699	4488	1478	733
White	0.70	0.72	0.66	0.70
Black	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.11
Hispanic	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.10
Male	0.48	0.54	0.31	0.49
College Degree	0.49	0.49	0.59	0.28
Average Age	36.02	32.59	39.89	48.52
Conservative	0.22	0.21	0.19	0.37

Following Tesler and Sears (2010), we test all subjects, regardless of their race.

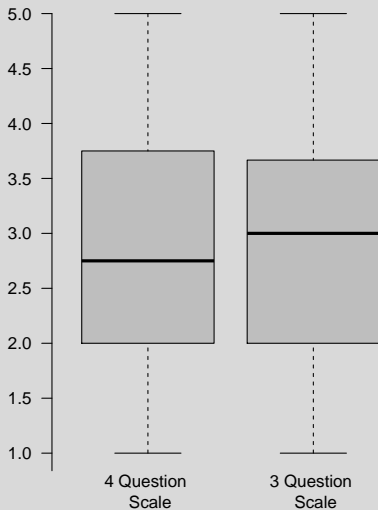
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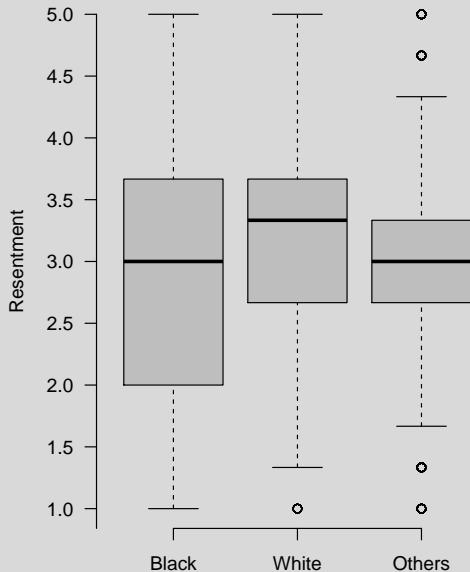
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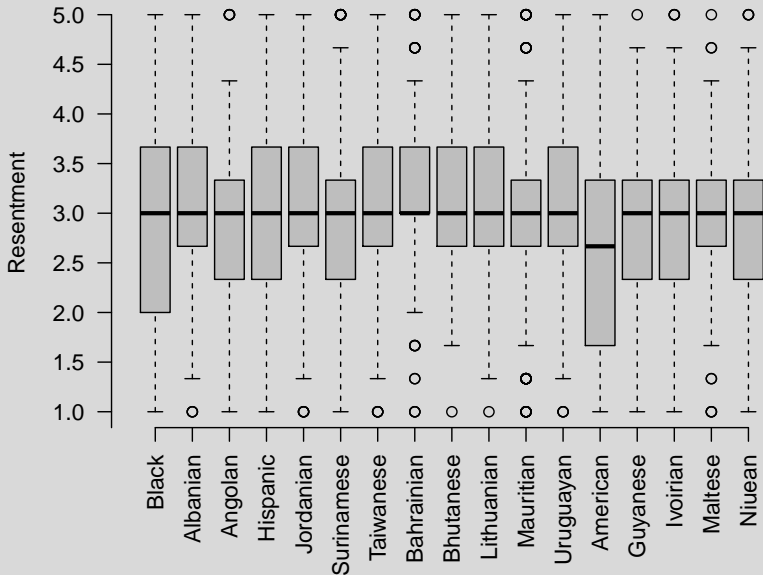
Anti-Black Racial Resentment by Three and Four Question Scales



Distribution of Resentment by Target Group



Distribution of Resentment by Target Group



All Subjects

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.82	1.05			2643
White	3.16	0.77	-0.33	0.00	1189
Other	2.98	0.76	-0.16	0.00	3233

Modern Racism and Racial Policy Attitudes

	Affirmative Action		Death Penalty	
Black Resentment	0.46 *		0.35 *	
	(0.05)		(0.07)	
Non-Black Resentment		0.51 *		0.35 *
		(0.08)		(0.09)
<i>N</i>	251	444	254	446
<i>R</i> ²	0.35	0.22	0.15	0.09

(TESS sample, OLS regressions, controlling for ideology and party ID)

Then why is Modern Racism correlated with everything?

The Spillover of Racialization into Health Care: How President Obama Polarized Public Opinion by Racial Attitudes and Race

Michael Tesler Brown University

This study argues that President Obama's strong association with an issue like health care should polarize public opinion by racial attitudes and race. Consistent with that hypothesis, racial attitudes had a significantly larger impact on health care opinions in fall 2009 than they had in cross-sectional surveys from the past two decades and in panel data collected before Obama became the face of the policy. Moreover, the experiments embedded in one of those reinterview surveys found health care policies were significantly more racialized when attributed to President Obama than they were when these same proposals were framed as President Clinton's 1993 reform efforts. Dozens of media polls from 1993 to 1994 and from 2009 to 2010 are also pooled together to show that with African Americans overwhelmingly supportive of Obama's legislative proposals, the racial divide in health care opinions was 20 percentage points greater in 2009–10 than it was over President Clinton's plan back in 1993–94.

AJPS 56(3):609–704 (2012).

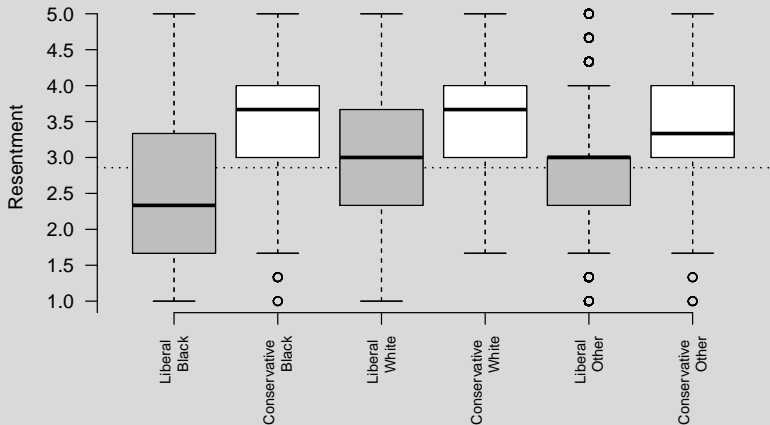


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Modern racism scales appear to measure primarily specific **racial sympathy** rather than specific racial animus. *It is liberals who are driving the relationship with Obama's policies.*

- “two sides of racialization” (Tesler and Sears, 2010)
- “[racial resentment scales] distinguish between those whites who are generally sympathetic toward blacks and those who are generally unsympathetic” (Kinder and Sanders, 1996)

Distribution of Resentment by Target Group, by Ideology



Liberals

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.45	1.01			1397
White	3.01	0.79	-0.56	0.00	680
Other	2.73	0.74	-0.28	0.00	1681

Conservatives

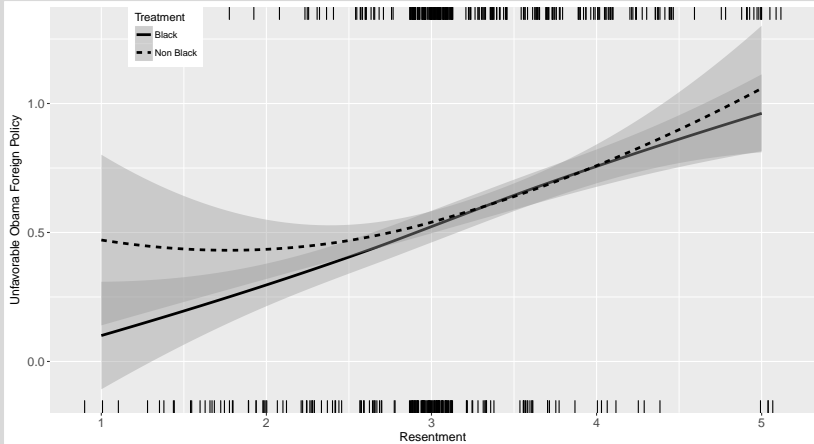
	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	3.50	0.87			617
White	3.52	0.63	-0.03	0.61	233
Other	3.39	0.69	0.11	0.14	743

Disapproval of Obama Foreign Policy

	Obama Foreign Policy	
Black Resentment	0.15 *	
	(0.03)	
Non-Black Resentment		0.04
		(0.03)
N	253	445
R^2	0.35	0.32

(TESS sample, OLS regressions, controlling for ideology and party ID)

Disapproval of Obama Foreign Policy by Resentment



(TESS Sample. 3 question, mean of approve/disapprove (0/1) on Obama foreign policy)

Why are attitudes so consistent among conservatives?

Just World Theory (Lerner, 1980)

- “the core ideology of conservatism stresses resistance to change and **justification of inequality.**” (Jost et al., 2003)
- People with high just world belief are motivated to believe that “people get what they deserve.”

Belief in a Just World Scale (Lipkus, 1991)

- 1 I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.
- 2 I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.
- 3 I feel that people earn the rewards and the punishments they get.
- 4 I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.
- 5 I feel that people get what they deserve.
- 6 I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.
- 7 I basically feel that the world is a fair place.

Just World Belief and Modern Racism

	Liberals		Conservatives	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Just World Belief	0.29*		0.18*	
	(0.05)		(0.05)	
Black Target Group				
Black Target Group × Just World Belief				
	<i>N</i>	194	249	
	<i>R</i> ²	0.15	0.04	

(TESS Sample. OLS regressions. Dependent variable is Racial Resentment.)

Just World Belief and Modern Racism

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Just World Belief	0.29*	0.12*	0.18*	0.14*
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Black Target Group		-2.05*		-0.05
		(0.33)		(0.41)
Black Target Group x Just World Belief		0.57*		0.10
		(0.10)		(0.11)
<i>N</i>	194	194	249	249
<i>R</i> ²	0.15	0.30	0.04	0.11

(TESS Sample. OLS regressions. Dependent variable is Racial Resentment)

Takeaway

- Liberals: belief in Just World and resentment toward African Americans are strongly related.
- Conservatives: belief in Just World correlated with resentment toward all groups.

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Summary

- 1 Modern Racism scales are not capturing an attitude specifically targeted at African Americans.
- 2 Modern Racism is closely tied to attitudes about Obama, not because of conservatives, but because of liberals.
- 3 Conservatives resent a broad range of outgroups, possibly because of Just World Belief.

What does this say about racial attitudes?

- 1 Arguably, failing to recognize unique historical hardship of African Americans is racism.
- 2 However, there is also a risk if scholars arriving at the same conclusion, no matter what the question.

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How can this be true?

Monkey Cage | Analysis

Views about race mattered more in electing Trump than in electing Obama

(Washington Post)

- 1 Trump is especially disliked by liberals.
- 2 Trump has primed resentment against a wide range of groups *and* emphasized just-world attitudes.

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Bringing Just World to bear on other groups. . .

- 1 A broadening of the set of salient outgroups due to the changing nature of diversity, conflict, and immigration.
- 2 An embrace of populist rhetoric by conservatives.

Populism and Outgroups (1976)

“In Chicago, they found a woman who holds the record, She used 80 names, 30 addresses, 15 telephone numbers to collect food stamps, Social Security, veterans’ benefits for four nonexistent deceased veteran husbands, as well as welfare. Her tax-free cash income alone has been running \$150,000 a year.”

—Ronald Reagan, January 1976



DEMOCRATS

We feel that your right to illegally run across our border when you're 8 1/2 months pregnant, give birth in a U.S. hospital, and then immediately start collecting welfare is exactly what our forefathers had in mind.

**This is Karen Batts. Her
landlord kicked her out for
being \$328 behind on rent.
So she died in the cold.**



**\$3,500 PER MONTH AND
FOOD STAMPS AND DAILY
ALLOWANCE IS GIVEN TO
EVERY MUSLIM IN THIS COUNTRY**

Politics today...

- “These are the forgotten men and women of our country...**people who work hard** but no longer have a voice.”
– *August 2016*
- “What can be simpler or more accurately stated? The Mexican Government is forcing **their most unwanted people** into the United States. They are, in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc.” – *July 2015*
- “If you were a Muslim you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible...I thought it was **very, very unfair**. So we’re going to help them.” – *January 2017*



Questions

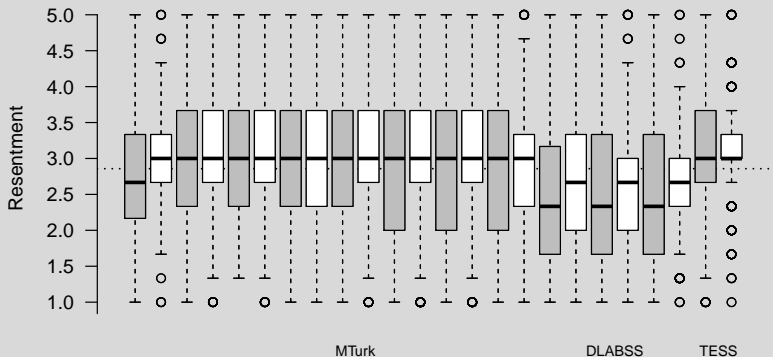
- 1 Why is Just World rhetoric so prominent today?
 - 1 Inequality?
 - 2 Hyper-partisanship means populist rhetoric is acceptable in Republican Party.
 - 3 It's not.
- 2 How should we conceptualize and measure intergroup attitudes moving forward?

THANK YOU

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Racial Resentment with Black and Other Target Group by Platform



What if conservative attitudes are a result of anti-Black attitudes?

We also measure conservatism by Modern Sexism (Swim et Al, 1995) and foreign policy beliefs and find the same relationship.

Racial Resentment by Modern Sexism (All)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.86	1.04			780
White	3.16	0.77	-0.30	0.00	1075
Other	3.05	0.78	-0.19	0.00	1310

Modern Sexism (Liberals)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.46	0.99			446
White	3.03	0.80	-0.57	0.00	608
Other	2.83	0.78	-0.37	0.00	750

Modern Sexism (Conservatives)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	3.40	0.85			334
White	3.34	0.70	0.07	0.20	467
Other	3.34	0.68	0.06	0.24	560

Racial Resentment by Conservative Foreign Policy Attitudes (All)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.86	1.04			780
White	3.16	0.77	-0.30	0.00	1075
Other	3.05	0.78	-0.19	0.00	1310

Foreign Policy Attitudes (Liberals)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	2.73	1.02			550
White	3.12	0.76	-0.39	0.00	747
Other	2.97	0.75	-0.23	0.00	931

Foreign Policy Attitudes (Conservatives)

	Mean	SD	Diff	p	N
Black	3.18	1.04			230
White	3.26	0.79	-0.08	0.05	328
Other	3.26	0.81	-0.09	0.20	379

Difference in Means by Question Wording

	In US	Original
Black Mean	2.80	2.85
Black SD	1.06	1.04
Other Mean	3.02	2.92
Other SD	0.80	0.68
N	4175	2524

Does this represent a cohort effect or time effect?

- 1 Modern racism scales have roots in Symbolic Attitudes (e.g., Sears (1980)) and should be socialized early in life.
- 2 But, there is no apparent relationship between age and differences in resentment.
 - 1 Conservatives have never had specific attitudes about Blacks?
 - 2 Conservatives once had specific attitudes about Blacks but recent political climate has brought Just World Beliefs to bear on other groups?

Resentment by Age

