



Association Between Racial Identity, Political Affiliation, and Confidence in the American Government

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Introduction

- When it comes to the confidence that American constituency has in the functioning of our government bodies (legislative, judicial, executive), it seems as though both party identity and racial identity influence one's inherent opinion of the three.
- Research shows that there is greater discontent with government and society from Black constituencies than white ones because of stronger racial group consciousness (Avery, 2006).
- Party and racial identity are one in the same; both are "social identities" (Miller and Conover, 2015), which inherently creates in groups and out groups. Therefore, both facets of identity have an implication how much, at an individual level, someone trusts the government.
- The typical trend is that whichever party is in office, their constituency will be more content with the governing bodies, while the minority party members and voters will feel cynicism towards the government's performance. This sentiment can be tied back to partisan competitiveness, which is at the heart of American politics.
- There is a recorded correlation between white constituencies and greater confidence in our government and the opposite relationship happening in Black constituencies

Research Questions

- Is there an association between one's racial and political identity?
- Does one's racial and/or partisan identity influence their confidence in the running of American governing bodies?
- Is there a significant difference in trust between branches of American Government?

Method

Sample

- Respondents (n=5,215) were drawn from the 2016-2018 pool of the General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative sample of English-speaking, non-institutionalized adults in the U.S.

Measures

- Confidence in each branch of government (Congress, SCOTUS, and Executive) were coded on a three-level scale, with "Hardly Trusts" being coded as 0 and "Trusts Greatly" being coded as 2.
- Racial Identity (Black & White) was coded dichotomously.
- Political Party was coded on a three-level scale; with dummy codes 0 being Democrat, 1 being Independent, and 2 being Republican

Results

Univariate

- 32.4% of participants identify as a Democrat, 41.2% as an independent, and 25.1% identify as a Republican
- 72.3% of participants identify as White, while only 18.8% identified as Black
- Only 3.7% of participants highly trusts Congress, 8.1% highly trusts the executive branch (aka. the president's administration), and 18.2% highly trusts the SCOTUS.

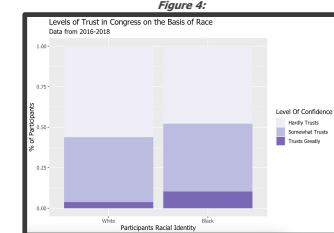
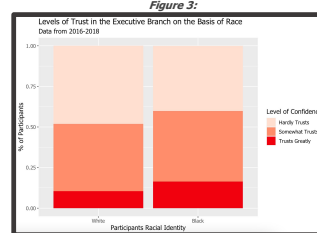
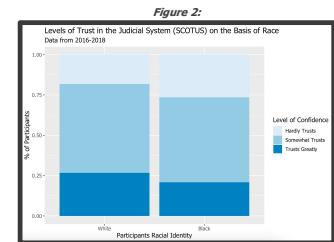
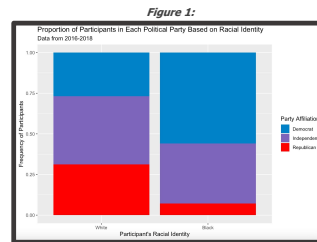
Discussion

- As previous studies suggested, there a significant association between Black Americans identifying with the modern Democratic Party and White Americans identifying with the Republican party.
- After comparing the three branches of government, Confidence in the Supreme Court (Judicial System) was the only one of the the three branches of government that held a significantly positive correlation with white participants.
- There is a significant and positive correlation between Black participants and trust in Congress and the Executive Branch (the President), which are the two "visible" branches of our government in terms of media coverage and transparency.
- NOTE: Data used in this study was collected during the Trump years, which may explain the significant associations with Republicans and Independents.
- Further research needs to be done to explore the longitudinal relationship between racial identity, political identity, and trust in American government.

Results (continued)

Bivariate

- A Chi-square test of independence showed that **white participants** were significantly and positively associated with **the Republican Party** while **Black participants** were significantly and positively associated with **the Democratic Party** ($X^2 = 223.21$, $df=2$, $p<0.001$).
- A Chi-square test of independence showed that **Black participants** are significantly and positively associated with trusting **the Executive Branch (aka. The President)** more than their white counterparts, ($X^2=9.97$, $df=2$, $p=0.06$).
- Additionally, **Black participants** are significantly and positively associated with trusting **Congress** more than their white counterparts ($X^2=25$, $df=2$, $p<0.001$).
- The difference in confidence can be found with the **SCOTUS**, where there is a significant and positive association between **White participants** and having greater trust in the Judicial Branch ($X^2=40.25$, $df=2$, $p<0.001$).



Multivariate

- Black-identifying participants (O.R. 1.34, CI 1.11-1.62) and Republicans (O.R. 1.22, CI 1.01-1.49) were significantly and positively associated with Confidence in Congress.
- Black-identifying participants (O.R. 1.29, CI 1.06-1.37) are the only variable that is significantly and positively associated with Confidence in the Executive Branch.
- Black-identifying participants (O.R. 0.48, CI 0.37-0.60), Republicans (O.R. 0.57, CI 0.45-0.72), and Independents (O.R. 0.59, CI 0.45-0.78) are significantly and negatively associated with Confidence in the SCOTUS.

