

The significance of mixed-race: Public perceptions of Barack Obama's race and its effect on his favorability

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This research paper seeks to understand white, black, and mixed-race Americans' perceptions of President Barack Obama's racial identity and the influence that those perceptions have on favorability towards the President. While political pundits and academic researchers tend to emphasize Obama's status as the first black President, this research finds that the Americans generally conceptualize Obama as mixed-race. A majority of whites and mixed-race Americans, and a third of blacks, conceptualize Obama as mixed-race. These Americans identify Obama as mixed-race to distinguish him from black people, interests, and values. Moreover, Obama's perceived race has political significance; whites generally respond more favorably to a perceived mixed-race Obama while blacks respond more favorably to a perceived black Obama. Mixed-race Americans are more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race and also more likely to support Obama, presumably because of group commonalities they share. The group closest to Obama's identity, mixed-race Americans who self-identify as black, respond most favorably towards Obama. These findings indicate that mixed-race Americans are actively supporting mixed-race public officials who share distinct commonalities with them. More importantly, the way most Americans conceptualize race appears to be changing dramatically to accommodate this emerging mixed-race population.

Introduction

Americans often treat race as a given, pre-assigned quality that defines an individual's identity. The meanings assigned to individuals with certain phenotypes and skin-tone shape how these individuals are treated in society. Contrary to popular notions, racial theorists Omi and Winant (1994) demonstrated that these racial meanings are not static; they are constantly evolving.¹ Some argue that the racial hierarchy is undergoing one of the most prominent changes since the birth of the nation; a transition from a hierarchy based on race to a tri-racial "pigmentocracy" that differentiates whites, lighter-skinned individuals, and darker-skinned individuals.² As the fastest growing youth population in the United States, "mixed-race" Americans are poised to play a significant role in challenging or reinforcing America's existing racial hierarchy.³

As one of the most prominent mixed-race individuals in the world, President Barack Obama provides a unique opportunity to gauge Americans' reactions to mixed-race public officials. I hope to

gauge how perceptions of President Barack Obama's race affect Americans' support for him to better understand whether, and under what conditions, perceived mixed-race public officials are advantaged or disadvantaged relative to perceived black public officials.

Determinants of White Support for Black Public Officials

There is extensive research examining the role of race on American public opinion and political behavior, particularly concerning white support for black political candidates. Race is an important predictor of white voting behavior; whites generally do not support black political candidates or officeholders.^{4,5,6,7,8} Researchers have found two distinct dimensions of prejudice against blacks: implicit prejudice and explicit prejudice.^{9,10,11} Explicitly prejudiced whites consciously view any candidate with nonwhite skin-tone or nonwhite phenotypes as inherently inferior to a white candidate.^{1,12,13}

Though some whites still express

explicit racist opinions, most whites today consciously conceal or reject these beliefs because they violate the prevailing post-Civil Rights "norm of equality."^{11,10,14} Instead, most whites have been found to hold unconscious, implicit anti-black attitudes that often diverge from more socially acceptable explicit attitudes.^{14,15,16,17,18,19} These attitudes have been found to disproportionately affect individuals who most resemble anti-black stereotypes; whites have been found to attribute more negative qualities to people with more prototypically "black" features and to penalize candidates with more prototypically "black" features.^{11,14,20,21,22,23,24}

The Complexities of Obama's Race: How do Whites Respond to Racial Ambiguity?

While researchers have found that white voters penalized Obama because of his race in 2008, they have not investigated how Obama's racial ambiguity shapes this discrimination.^{13,25,26,27,28} Born to a black father and white mother, Barack Obama could conceivably be viewed as black, mixed-race, or even white.

Since traditional phenotypical racial cues are more ambiguous for mixed-race individuals, there is evidence that other stereotypical cues become more meaningful in defining these individuals. Studies have shown that stereotypical emotional expressions, hairstyles, and even dress disproportionately affect the race categorization of the racially-ambiguous.^{21,29,30,31,32}

Experiments have found that partisan identifiers also help whites define racially-ambiguous candidates. Whites have been shown to "lighten" mixed-race candidates, including Barack Obama, that share their partisan affiliation and "darken" mixed-race candidates that identify with the other political party.³³

While many whites attempt to categorize black-white biracials as either black or white, some have a more complicated language and perception of race that includes a mixed-race category (or categories). This continuous race perception develops from exposure to this population's racial, genetic and behavioral diversity.³⁴ While Malahy et al. (2010) have found these individuals to be more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race, it is unclear how Obama's perceived race relates to his perceived political identity or how it affects favorability towards him.³⁴

Determinants of Black Support for Obama

Compared to research on white attitudes towards black public officials, research on black attitudes towards black officials, particularly Barack Obama, is thin. Black public opinion is distinct from white public opinion in America, reflecting these groups' starkly different sociohistorical experiences.³⁵ While black skin may be viewed as a stigma to many whites, blacks uniquely embrace a black identity and generally favor black representatives.^{8,36} Most blacks perceive other blacks as members of a common group identity with a common political interest in overcoming the persistent racial and economic inequality that affects the group (black utility heuristic).^{8,35} The more a candidate or representative is viewed as sharing this common black identity or interest, the more likely blacks are to support them. While blacks overwhelmingly approve of President Obama and believe he shares their group interests, it is unclear whether perceptions of Obama's race as either mixed-race or black affect blacks' perceptions of his group loyalties. Since traditional racial norms would suggest that blacks should view Obama as black, members of the black community classifying Obama as mixed-race may be an indication of otherness, inauthenticity, or group difference.

Theory

The purpose of this research is to investigate how different racial groups perceive President Obama's race. I will then evaluate whether, and under what conditions, President Obama's perceived racial identity as either black or mixed-race affects favorability towards him.

Perceptions of Obama's Race

A. Individuals who perceive Obama to differ from the political interests and cultural values of blacks will be more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2004) theorizes that the American society is approximating a three-tiered "pigmentocracy" defined by color rather than race.² In this tri-racial hierarchy, most mixed-race Americans form a privileged "honorary white" racial class between whites and the "collective black."² According to this theory, black-white biracials differentiate themselves from blacks and the stigma

associated with black identity.² In this light, I expect whites, blacks, and mixed-race individuals to distinguish Obama as mixed-race to the extent that they perceive Obama to differ from their conception of black group identity. Since black identity contains political and cultural dimensions, people who perceive Obama to share common racial identity with blacks should be more likely to assume that he shares black political interests and cultural values. Conversely, people who differentiate Obama from blacks by identifying him as mixed-race should be more likely to differentiate his interests and values from those common to the black community.

B. Mixed-race Americans will be more likely than monoracial respondents to identify Obama as mixed-race.

The tri-racial hierarchy theory presumes that black-white biracials will become part of an "honorary white" group identity that includes other mixed-race Americans.⁴ As such, black-white biracials and other mixed-race Americans should conceptualize each other as members of the same group. Indeed, there are important distinctions between mixed-race Americans and other racial groups. Mixed-race Americans have been found to differ socioeconomically, politically, and culturally from individuals who identify monoracially.^{2,3,34,37} In this light, mixed-race individuals should be more likely to distinguish Obama as mixed-race because they recognize distinct group commonalities they share with him.

C. Individuals in more diverse contexts will be more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race.

Perceptions of Obama's race may also be influenced by race contact.³⁸ Individuals who live in more racially diverse contexts should be more likely to develop a language and understanding of the racial diversity around them. These individuals should be more likely to perceive potential distinctions between most blacks and Obama. Therefore, I expect individuals in more diverse contexts to be more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race.

Favorability towards Obama

A. Whites will generally favor a perceived mixed-race Obama.

The tri-racial hierarchy theory assumes that black-white biracials will differentiate from the negative stigma associated with black identity, joining a more privileged "honorary white" racial stratum with other mixed-race Americans.² White reactions to Obama's perceived race should therefore depend on the stigma they associate with black identity. In this light, whites with more anti-black prejudice should respond more favorably to a perceived mixed-race Obama because they are less likely to associate him with these negative stereotypes.

B. Whites who are less likely to perceive anti-black discrimination in society will be more likely to favor a perceived mixed-race Obama.

Whites that recognize the racial disadvantages that blacks face should be more likely to reject anti-black stereotypes because these stereotypes attribute blacks' economic disadvantage to cultural or biological deficiencies.¹ As such, this subset of whites should be less likely to stigmatize a black Obama relative to a mixed-race Obama.

C. Blacks will generally favor a perceived black Obama.

The tri-racial hierarchy presumes that blacks will remain supportive of public officials that conform to the interests and norms of their group.² Since blacks who perceive Obama to be mixed-race are expected to be less likely to believe he shares these interests, blacks should be less likely to support a mixed-race Obama.

D. Mixed-race respondents will favor a perceived mixed-race Obama.

Since mixed-race respondents are expected to distinguish Obama as mixed-race because they perceive him to share distinct group commonalities with them, mixed-race respondents should respond more favorably to a perceived mixed-race Obama.

Data and Measures

This research has two stages: a logistic regression model to predict cross-racial perceptions of Obama's race and then linear regression to predict the determinants of respondents' favorability towards Obama. For the purposes of this research, I used

survey data from the Pew Research Center’s Racial Attitudes in America II Survey (N=2884, Whites N=1447; Blacks N=812; Hispanics N=376; Mixed N=484).³⁹ The survey was conducted between October 28 and November 30, 2009, during the end of President Barack Obama’s first year in office. These data are useful because they explore sizeable samples of whites, blacks and mixed-race Americans’ racial and political attitudes towards President Obama. Most importantly, these data uniquely measure respondents’ perceptions of Obama’s racial identity.¹ This Pew survey is the only survey publically available that combines all of these features, making this research possible.

Unlike most surveys that omit a mixed-race option, the Pew survey includes two measures of mixed-race self-identification. First, respondents were asked, “Do you consider yourself to be of mixed race?” Second, respondents were asked to choose between one or more traditional racial categories, making it possible to locate respondents who generally identify as monoracial but also identify as mixed-race when prompted. In the absence of a parental ancestry measure, however, mixed-race responses will remain relatively imperfect. Nevertheless, mixed-race respondents’ decision to identify themselves as mixed-race should affect how this group conceptualizes a racially-ambiguous President’s race and should make their evaluations of him informative both of how mixed-race Americans evaluate Obama and also how they view themselves.

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables are perceptions of Obama’s race as either mixed-race or black and favorability towards Obama.

Independent Variables

To determine whether feelings of group difference influenced respondents’ views of Obama, I constructed a variable measuring to what extent respondents felt that Obama “shared the values and interests of black people.” I also included the interaction of Obama’s shared interests and values with blacks and perceptions of Obama’s race to examine whether Obama’s perceived race shapes how his connections to black interests and values are weighed in respondents’ calculations of favorability.

To gauge racial attitudes, I mea-

sured respondents’ perceptions of anti-black discrimination in society. I then constructed an interaction of Obama’s perceived race and perceived anti-black discrimination to determine how respondents’ racial attitudes condition reactions to Obama’s perceived race. Next, I measured whether respondents considered themselves to be mixed-race and whether respondents lived in diverse contexts.

Finally, I included controls for age, gender, education, income, Republican, Independent, South, political knowledge, and political ideology. Each variable was included because it reflected an important potential driver of respondents’ attitudes towards Obama. All relevant question wording is included in Appendix A.

Results and Analysis

Table 1 Distribution of respondents’ per-

Perceived Race	Whites (N=1,122)	Mixed-Race (N=381)	Blacks (N=623)
Mixed-Race	66.8%	64.3%	37.6%
Black	33.2%	35.7%	62.4%

ceptions of Obama’s race

Intergroup differences among respondents

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	1.913*** (0.233)	2.187*** (0.306)	2.327*** (0.475)
Obama.shares.black.interests	-0.470*** (0.069)	-0.357*** (0.072)	-0.328*** (0.080)
respondent.mixedrace		0.176* (0.068)	0.204** (0.078)
respondent.black		-0.783*** (0.141)	-0.984*** (0.180)
perceive.antiblack.discrimination		-0.218* (0.085)	-0.188* (0.094)
diverse.context		-0.076 (0.213)	0.076 (0.233)
Republican			-0.095 (0.210)
Independent			0.122 (0.173)
education			-0.074 (0.051)
age			-0.002 (0.004)
South			0.001 (0.151)
N	1181	1135	949
AIC	1542.309	1430.625	1213.063
BIC	1582.902	1571.587	1504.387
log L	-763.155	-687.312	-546.531

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

*Some variables were included in Model 3 but were not significant and are not displayed here: see Appendix B for full table

Table 2 Factors that predict cross-racial perceptions of Obama as mixed-race

are clearly noticeable in Table 1; mixed-race and white Americans were much more likely to perceive Obama to be mixed-race compared to blacks. The proportions of groups’ responses are almost perfectly polarized; about two-thirds of whites and mixed-race Americans conceptualized Obama as mixed-race, while 62% of black respondents conceptualized him as black.

Next, I estimated a logistic regression predicting perceptions of Obama’s race. The most important finding was that respondents’ perceptions of Obama’s race were strongly related to their perceptions of Obama’s racial interests and allegiances. Groups’ perceptions that Obama shared common interests and values with black people were the strongest predictors of how those groups conceptualized Obama’s racial identity; individuals and groups that were less likely to believe that Obama shared the values and interests of blacks were significantly more likely to identify Obama as mixed-race. Conversely, Obama’s perceived race best predicted his perceived connection to black interests and values for all three groups (See Appendix C).

Compared to monoracial respondents, mixed-race respondents were generally more likely to distinguish Obama’s mixed-race identity just as they have ac-

	Blacks	Whites	Mixed-Race
(Intercept)	3.151*** (0.183)	3.530*** (0.197)	3.708*** (0.286)
mixedrace.obama	0.341 (0.209)	0.533* (0.236)	0.129 (0.360)
Obama.shares.black.interests	0.153*** (0.045)		
Obama.shares.black x mixedrace.obama	-0.123* (0.058)		
perceive.antiblack.discrimination		0.224** (0.068)	0.103 (0.094)
perceive.antiblack x mixedrace.obama		-0.180* (0.081)	-0.097 (0.115)
respondent.mixedrace	0.069** (0.025)	0.097* (0.038)	
Republican	-0.404*** (0.109)	-1.103*** (0.079)	-1.029*** (0.146)
Independent	-0.299*** (0.060)	-0.544*** (0.072)	-0.406*** (0.105)
conservatism		-0.299*** (0.031)	-0.056 (0.047)
education	-0.035* (0.017)	0.018 (0.020)	0.006 (0.032)
female	0.186*** (0.050)	0.149** (0.056)	0.092 (0.090)
N	344	969	297
R ²	0.207	0.390	0.288
adj. R ²	0.181	0.382	0.258
Resid. sd	0.444	0.853	0.762

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

*Some variables were included but were not significant and are not displayed here; see Appendix B for full table

Table 3 Factors that predict favorability towards Obama

knowledge their own. There were important differences between the perceptions of respondents who identified as black (N=164) and those who did not (N=240). Compared to mixed-race respondents who did not identify as black, mixed-race respondents who identified primarily as black were more likely to identify Obama as black just as they have chosen to identify themselves.

At the same time, mixed-race respondents who identified as black were about 18% more likely than blacks to consider Obama mixed-race. By being more likely to acknowledge mixed-race identity, these mixed-race respondents are challenging the more traditional racial categorization norms of their minority half.

In addition to mixed-race self-identification, groups' perceptions of anti-black discrimination in society shaped perceptions of Obama's race. Black, white, and mixed-race respondents who perceived higher levels of anti-black discrimination in society were more likely to perceive Obama to be black. These race-conscious individuals perceive the force that continues to define many black-white biracials as black: being subjected to anti-black discrimination in society.³⁷ Even Barack

Obama himself attributes his decision to identify as black to his experience of being treated as a black man in America. Without understanding this important component of Obama's "black" experience, it may be more intuitive to identify Obama as mixed-race.

Contrary to my hypothesis, respondents who lived in more diverse contexts were not more likely to distinguish Obama as mixed-race. Though these respondents likely have more contact with blacks and mixed-race individuals, contact theorists point out that contact with an out-group can either encourage opinion change or reinforce existing preconceptions depending on a number of contextual factors.⁴⁰ White respondents in poorer contexts, for example, may encounter heavy competition for resources from both blacks and mixed-race individuals, discouraging these respondents from distinguishing between groups.

Interestingly, partisanship shaped perceptions of Obama's race among whites.² Though white Democrats were significantly more likely than white Republicans to believe that Obama shared the values and interests of blacks, they were about 4% less likely than white Re-

publicans (32%) to perceive Obama to be black. Obama's perceived racial interests predicted white Republicans' perceptions of Obama's race but did not predict white Democrats' perceptions (See Appendix C). In other words, white Democrats tended to depict Obama as mixed-race, whether or not they believed Obama to share black interests and values.

Similarly, while white Republicans were significantly less likely than mixed-race Americans to believe that Obama shared the values and interests of blacks, they were still about equally as likely (36%) to perceive Obama to be black (see Appendix C). These findings indicate that there are factors in addition to the perception of Obama's racial interests that influence white Republicans to perceive Obama to be black and influence white Democrats to perceive Obama to be mixed-race.

There are three possible explanations for these interparty differences in Obama's perceived racial identity. White Democrats could call Obama mixed-race because they want to promote a "post-racial" ideal that rejects traditional racial categorization while white Republicans hold more traditional notions of racial categorization (i.e., the one-drop rule).^{3,41} It is also possible that party identification itself influences whites to view greater racial commonality between co-partisans (the in-group) and greater racial difference between members of the other party (the out-group).

Alternatively, the way that Obama's race and racial interests are communicated to whites could differ by party in an era of polarized politics. There is evidence that conservative media outlets and political figures, on the one hand, exaggerate Obama's "black" attributes and, on the other hand, frame Obama as a socialist or radical outside the mainstream American political consensus, black or white¹. This could conceivably lead white Republicans to conceptualize Obama as both black and too extreme to share most blacks' interests and values.

I estimated a linear regression predicting favorability towards Obama. As hypothesized, white respondents generally favored a perceived mixed-race Obama. Whites' racial attitudes conditioned responses to Obama's race: whites that perceived the most anti-black discrimination in society favored a perceived black Obama. By recognizing the racial disad-

vantages that blacks face, this small subset of whites likely rejects anti-black stereotypes and supports black public officials as a means to address racial inequality.

Among blacks, Obama's perceived race appears to act on favorability indirectly by affecting the salience of Obama's racial credentials. Specifically, blacks are less likely to translate Obama's perceived commonalities with blacks into support for the President when they perceive him to be mixed-race. In other words, Obama's perceived connection to black interests may become more consequential to blacks' political evaluations of Obama when they also perceive him to be black. Mixed-race respondents, by contrast, generally responded favorably towards Obama. Interestingly, mixed-race favorability was not contingent on Obama's perceived race. There are two plausible explanations for this finding. Mixed-race individuals could value aspects of Obama's personality, politics, or ancestry that are particularly relevant to the mixed-race experience without attributing these factors to Obama's mixed-race identity. Alternatively, mixed-race respondents might be favorable towards Obama whether they identify him as black or mixed-race because they do not conceptualize mixed-race identity exclusively. Rather, this group might believe that Obama can identify as both mixed-race and black without compromising either identity, a view that creates critical space for mixed-race individuals to embrace both sides of their heritage as they see fit.

Favorability towards Obama differed by racial combination or subgroup of mixed-race respondents. Mixed-race respondents who self-identified as more than one race responded more favorably than those who self-identified as white, while mixed-race respondents who self-identified as black responded more favorably to Obama than other mixed-race respondents. These findings support past research on mixed-race attitudes that has found mixed-race individuals who identify as black to exhibit more liberal preferences than other mixed-race individuals.^{37,42} It also suggests that the decision to identify as more than one race is associated with political opinions that are in-between white and black.

Given extraordinarily high support for Obama among blacks, it was particularly significant that mixed-race respondents self-identified as black responded more favorably towards Obama than blacks. Mixed-race respondents who

self-identify as black may be more likely to support Obama because they perceive Obama, who is also a mixed-race individual self-identified as black, to share commonalities with them. Though mixed-race Americans broadly support Obama, this finding demonstrates that mixed-race individuals also feel a particular group connection to those who share their racial background.

Conclusion

This research sought to explain cross-racial perceptions of Barack Obama's race and the influence that those perceptions have on favorability towards the President. Contrary to those who still conceptualize race in terms of black and white, this research establishes that a majority of whites and mixed-race Americans, and a third of blacks, conceptualize President Barack Obama as mixed-race. These Americans distinguish Obama as mixed-race to express his perceived difference from black identity, interests, and values.

This perceived racial difference clearly mattered to respondents. Consistent with the tri-racial hierarchy theory, this research finds that the dominant white population privileges Obama's mixed-race identity while the minority black population stigmatizes it. This research also finds that mixed-race individuals are embracing mixed-race identity and a mixed-race President. While these developments indicate that the American racial hierarchy has become more complex, they do not necessarily imply the preservation of white dominance. While mixed-race individuals generally supported Obama, those who were closest to Obama's identity (those who self-identified as black) responded most favorably towards him. This indicates that there remain important divisions within the mixed-race population based on racial background and identification that challenge the formation of a cohesive mixed-race or "honorary white" political identity and interest. Furthermore, mixed-race Americans are not merely conforming to white norms or rejecting black norms by supporting a mixed-race President. Instead, mixed-race Americans are challenging America's dominant racial paradigm with a new, multiracial conception of race that allows individuals to choose to embrace the particular political or cultural aspects of one racial identity without compromising other identities.

There are several areas where this

research can be further developed. More precise measures of race perception (i.e., Implicit Categorization Task), implicit prejudice (i.e., Implicit Association Test), and explicit prejudice (i.e., Modern Racism Scale) would improve this research. Subsequent research should also explore the effect of Obama's perceived race on perceptions of Obama's political priorities and on vote choice. Given the finding that partisanship shapes white perceptions of Obama's race, further research and experimentation should explore the relationship between party identification, perceptions of Obama's race, and political support from all racial groups.

Since Obama's connection to black interests and his race were so closely related across racial groups, future experiments should be done to disentangle the relationship between them. It could be that Obama's perceived race drives how Americans perceive his racial interests or, alternatively, Obama's perceived racial interests could determine his race. In addition to experiments, one way to explore this relationship would be to track Obama's perceived racial identity over time as perceptions of Obama's support or opposition to black priorities change.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Question Wording

Dependent Variable: mixedrace.obama

Do you mostly think of Obama as?

1. A black person [OR mostly as]
2. A person of mixed race

Dependent Variable: favorability towards Obama

"Now I'd like your views on some people.

As I read some names, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each person. First, Barack Obama would you say your overall opinion of Barack Obama is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very

unfavorable?"

Independent Variable: Obama.shares.black.interests

"How much would you say Barack Obama shares the values and interests of black people in this country?"

Independent Variable: perceive.antiblack.discrimination

Please tell me how much discrimination there is against each of these groups in our society today. How about Blacks? Would you say there is a lot of discrimination, some, only a little, or none at all?

Independent Variable: racial.progressivism
 "Which of these two statements comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right.

1. Our country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites
2. Our country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites"

Independent Variable: diverse.context

"Thinking about the neighborhood where you live, are all, most, some, or only a few people (if respondent white, then black; if respondent black or more than one race, then white)?"

Independent Variable: political.knowledge
 Index ranging from 0-2, combining three questions:

1. And thinking about the news...do you or not? Next, do you regularly read a daily newspaper or not?
2. And thinking about the news...do you or not? Next, do you regularly watch the local television news about your area or not?
3. And thinking about the news...do you or not? Next, do you regularly watch the national news on major network or cable channels or not?

Appendix B: Full tables of Statistical Analyses

Table 4: Logistic regression predicting perceptions of Obama as mixed-race

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	1.913*** (0.233)	2.187*** (0.306)	2.370** (0.484)
Obama.shares.black.interests	-0.470*** (0.069)	-0.357*** (0.072)	-0.348** (0.081)
respondent.mixedrace		0.176* (0.068)	0.205** (0.078)
respondent.black		-0.783*** (0.141)	-0.996** (0.181)
respondent.other.minority		0.278 (0.196)	-0.029 (0.226)
perceive.antiblack.discrimination		-0.218* (0.085)	-0.192* (0.094)
diverse.context		-0.076 (0.213)	0.067 (0.234)
Republican			-0.114 (0.211)
Independent			0.112 (0.173)
conservatism			0.113 (0.074)
education			-0.073 (0.051)
income			-0.082† (0.047)
age			-0.002 (0.004)
female			0.104 (0.143)
South			0.016 (0.151)
political.knowledge			0.020 (0.078)
N	1181	1135	946
AIC	1542.309	1430.625	1208.721
BIC	1582.902	1571.587	1519.265
log L	-763.155	-687.312	-540.361

Standard errors in parentheses
† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix C: Additional Statistical Analyses

Table 6: Linear regression predicting the perception that Obama shares the values and interests of blacks

Table 7: Mixed-race respondents who self-identify as black are more likely to perceive Obama to be black

Table 8: The effect of partisanship on white perceptions that Obama shares black interests and values

Table 9: Logistic regression predicting perceptions that Obama is mixed-race among whites

Table 10: Connection between partisanship and race perception among whites

	Blacks1	Blacks2	Whites1	Whites2	Mixed-Race1	Mixed-Race2
(Intercept)	3.796*** (0.026)	3.151*** (0.183)	2.553*** (0.057)	3.530*** (0.197)	3.221*** (0.090)	3.708*** (0.286)
mixedrace.obama	-0.099* (0.042)	0.341 (0.209)	0.136* (0.070)	0.533* (0.236)	-0.163† (0.097)	0.129 (0.360)
respondent.mixedrace		0.069** (0.025)		0.097* (0.038)		
perceive.antiblack.discrimination				0.224** (0.068)		0.103 (0.094)
perceive.antiblack x mixedrace.obama				-0.180* (0.081)		-0.097 (0.115)
obama.shares.black.interests		0.153*** (0.045)				
obama.shares.black x mixedrace.obama		-0.123* (0.058)				
Republican		-0.404*** (0.109)		-1.103*** (0.079)		-1.029*** (0.146)
Independent		-0.299*** (0.060)		-0.544*** (0.072)		-0.406*** (0.105)
conservatism				-0.299*** (0.031)		-0.056 (0.047)
education		-0.035* (0.017)		0.018 (0.020)		0.006 (0.032)
income		0.028† (0.016)		-0.033† (0.018)		-0.025 (0.029)
age		0.001 (0.001)		-0.001 (0.002)		-0.004 (0.003)
female		0.186*** (0.050)		0.149** (0.056)		0.092 (0.090)
South		0.087† (0.050)		-0.108† (0.060)		0.017 (0.099)
self-identified.black					0.599*** (0.096)	0.365*** (0.101)
N	614	344	1084	969	365	297
R ²	0.009	0.207	0.003	0.390	0.119	0.288
adj. R ²	0.007	0.181	0.003	0.382	0.114	0.258
Resid. sd	0.506	0.444	1.088	0.853	0.866	0.762

Standard errors in parentheses
† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 4

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	3.400*** (0.044)	3.246*** (0.053)	3.078*** (0.172)
mixedrace.obama	-0.406*** (0.057)	-0.308*** (0.058)	-0.259*** (0.063)
respondent.mixedrace		-0.053† (0.028)	-0.037 (0.032)
respondent.black		0.356*** (0.060)	0.228** (0.076)
perceive.antiblack.discrimination			0.030 (0.039)
diverse.context			0.038 (0.099)
Republican			-0.382*** (0.089)
Independent			-0.205** (0.073)
conservatism			0.012 (0.032)
education			-0.010 (0.021)
income			0.032 (0.020)
age			0.002 (0.002)
female			0.038 (0.061)
South			0.049 (0.064)
N	1181	1161	951
R ²	0.041	0.070	0.090
adj. R ²	0.041	0.067	0.078
Resid. sd	0.959	0.943	0.919

Standard errors in parentheses
† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 6

Mixed-Race	
(Intercept)	3.046*** (0.664)
obama.shares.black.interests	-0.578** (0.190)
self-identified.black	-0.782* (0.347)
more.than.one.race	-0.650 (0.540)
<i>N</i>	196
AIC	230.867
BIC	283.317
log <i>L</i>	-99.434

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 7

Model 1	
(Intercept)	3.227** (0.072)
Republican	-0.395** (0.099)
Independent	-0.275** (0.095)
<i>N</i>	675
R^2	0.024
adj. R^2	0.021
Resid. sd	1.012

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 8

	White Democrats	White Republicans
(Intercept)	3.189* (1.430)	3.823** (1.409)
Obama.shares.black.interests	-0.290 (0.264)	-0.461* (0.183)
diverse.context	-0.605 (0.799)	-0.767 (0.720)
perceive.antiblack.discrimination	0.049 (0.307)	-0.026 (0.255)
conservatism	0.139 (0.225)	0.100 (0.253)
education	-0.312† (0.189)	0.103 (0.132)
income	0.015 (0.129)	-0.320* (0.139)
age	0.009 (0.012)	-0.021† (0.011)
female	-0.535 (0.446)	0.516 (0.368)
South	-0.799† (0.435)	-0.458 (0.371)
<i>N</i>	127	156
AIC	166.637	206.084
BIC	280.405	328.079
log <i>L</i>	-43.319	-63.042

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 9

White Respondents	
(Intercept)	0.814*** (0.080)
Republican	-0.337* (0.134)
<i>N</i>	1099
AIC	1394.965
BIC	1434.982
log <i>L</i>	-689.483

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 10



Samuel Sinyangwe is a senior political science major with a concentration in American Government. Sam is fascinated by the way race shapes our lives and our politics. A multiracial person himself, he finds it particularly interesting to examine how other multiracial people negotiate racial identity in the midst of social pressure to ‘pick a side.’ Sam is currently studying abroad in Cape Town, South Africa, where he works with disadvantaged young men to help them create opportunities to overcome the barriers they face. After graduation, he hopes to continue complicating what he sees to be an outdated, binary racial discourse to more closely reflect the racial complexity of 21st century America.