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## Explaining White Opposition to Black Political Leadership: The Role of Fear of Racial Favoritism

Seth K. Goldman  
*University of Massachusetts - Amherst*

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## **Explaining White Opposition to Black Political Leadership:**

### **The Role of Fear of Racial Favoritism**

Despite the election of America's first black president, most non-Hispanic whites continue to oppose black political leadership. The conventional explanation for white opposition is sheer racial prejudice, yet the available empirical evidence for this theory is inconsistent. I test an alternative theory that whites perceive black political leaders as a threat to their group's interests. Using a new survey measure and nationally representative panel data covering the 2008, 2010, and 2012 U.S. elections, I find that a majority of whites perceive black elected officials as likely to favor blacks over whites. Moreover, fear of racial favoritism predicts support for Barack Obama in both cross-sectional models and fixed effects models of within-person change, controlling for negative racial stereotypes. I replicate these findings using a separate cross-sectional survey fielded after the 2014 election that controls for racial resentment. Collectively, these results suggest that perceptions of conflicting group interests—and not just prejudice—drive white opposition to black political leadership.

Running head: White Fear of Racial Favoritism

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Despite the re-election of America's first black president, many white Americans continue to withhold their support from black candidates. Indeed, both in 2008 and 2012 a majority of non-Hispanic whites did not vote for President Obama (Ansolabehere & Stewart, 2009; Cillizza & Cohen, 2012). The primary explanation, according to the conventional wisdom, is racial prejudice—that is, whites' negative attitudes toward blacks as a group. And indeed, whites with greater racial prejudice were less likely to support Obama (e.g., Hutchings, 2009; Pasek et al., 2009; Pasek et al., 2014; Piston, 2010; Tesler, 2013). Yet in prior studies of biracial elections the evidence that prejudice reduced support for black candidates is mixed (Citrin et al., 1990; Knuckley & Orey, 2000; Sears et al., 1997). Experimental studies randomly varying the race of fictional candidates have also failed to conclusively answer this question (Hutchings & Valentino, 2004; Reeves, 1997; Sigelman et al., 1995; Terkildsen, 1993). Given these inconsistent findings, it remains unclear why many whites oppose black candidates.

An alternative explanation based on group conflict theory suggests that whites may oppose black candidates because they are perceived as a threat to their group's interests (e.g., Levine & Campbell, 1972; Blumer, 1958; Bobo & Tuan, 2006). Social psychologists and sociologists have long distinguished between prejudice and group conflict (for a review, see Esses et al., 2010), but public opinion scholars have rarely tested these theories head-to-head. This is especially true in the case of biracial elections, despite the many anecdotal accounts of whites expressing fears of racial favoritism (e.g., Broh, 1987; Gillespie, 2010; Hajnal, 2001). During the 2008 campaign, for instance, one white woman at an Ohio rally for John McCain said, "I'm afraid if he wins, the blacks will take over" (Schwartz, 2008). Another white voter, a union organizer from Pittsburgh, said he would not vote for Obama because "white people look out for white people, and black people look out for black people" (Merida, 2008). Anecdotes

notwithstanding, systematic evidence has been lacking due to the absence of a survey measure of this key concept (for an exception, see Baek & Landau, 2011).

Thus, in this study I propose a new measure of white fear of racial favoritism that assesses the extent to which whites perceive black elected officials as likely to favor blacks over whites and include it on a nationally representative panel survey covering the 2008, 2010, and 2012 U.S. elections. I show, for the first time, that a majority of white Americans expects black elected officials to favor blacks over whites. Moreover, white fear of racial favoritism is consequential. In all cross-sectional models fear of racial favoritism had large negative effects on support for Obama, controlling for derogatory racial stereotypes. Additionally, fixed effects models of within-person change show that fear of racial favoritism – but not racial stereotypes – predicted declines over time in support for Obama from 2008 to 2012 *at the individual level*. A separate survey fielded after the 2014 election further demonstrates that the cross-sectional results hold controlling for racial resentment. Collectively, these many findings strongly suggest that fear of racial favoritism – and not just racial prejudice – undercuts white support for black candidates.

### **Group Conflict in Biracial Elections**

Prejudice and realistic group conflict are two of the dominant theories employed to explain intergroup discrimination. In an early definition, Allport described prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization” (1954: 9) – that is, as a negative attitude toward an “out-group” that is based on false information and resists change. In recent years, most scholars now define prejudice more expansively, including cases where, even lacking hostility, people nonetheless view their own “in-group” as having more desirable traits

than the out-group (i.e., ingroup favoritism) (e.g., Brown & Zagefka, 2005; Brewer, 1999). This definition has the benefit of encapsulating the many current approaches to studying prejudice – from stereotypes to emotional responses, old-fashioned to modern expressions of bias, and explicit to implicit attitudes (see Dovidio et al., 2010 for a review). All of these approaches predict that individuals with more positive attitudes toward their own in-group than the out-group are likely to engage in discrimination against the out-group.

Group conflict theory offers a different perspective by highlighting the role of intergroup competition. Initially known as realistic group conflict theory, this approach suggests that “the inherently competitive elements in [a] situation can be set off from the accompanying prejudice” (Allport, 1954: 230-31). Rather than simple dislike or unfavorable stereotypes, discrimination may result from “a genuine clash of interests” (Allport, 1954: 233). Importantly, this clash can occur due to the perception of either material *or* symbolic threats. Conflicts over scarce material and economic resources produce intergroup bias (e.g., Sherif et al., 1961), but so do symbolic threats, such as those stemming from conflicting value systems (Allport, 1954). And contrary to characterizations of this theory as focused only on objective threats, even early proponents emphasized individuals’ *perceptions* of competing group interests as the driving force of group conflict (e.g., Allport, 1954; Levine & Campbell, 1972). As a recent review concluded, “research in this area has shifted from a focus on trying to understand true conflicts of interest between groups to an acknowledgment that *perceptions* of conflicts of interest are of utmost importance” (Esses et al., 2010: 225, original emphasis).

A related vein of scholarship in sociology has focused on the impact of group conflict on racial attitudes. Drawing on Blumer’s (1958: 4) account of bias as steeped in “a positional arrangement of racial groups,” group position theory emphasizes “an intrinsically collective or

group-based dimension to issues of racial politics” (Bobo & Tuan, 2006: 31). Whites who believe “that blacks are a threat to real resources and accepted practices” (Bobo, 1983: 1197) respond by opposing public policies that would benefit them (Bobo, 1999). In other words, this theory suggests that whites who see racial politics as a zero-sum game for material or symbolic resources are more likely to oppose policies that would benefit blacks. Conceptualized in this way, perceptions of racial group threat have been shown to reduce support for race-related public policies even after controlling for the impact of traditional measures of racial prejudice (e.g., Bobo, 1983, 1988, 1999, 2000; Bobo & Tuan, 2006; Kinder & Sanders, 1996).

Nevertheless, scholars have rarely applied theories of group conflict to biracial election contests; yet to the extent that whites see race relations as a zero-sum game, they should perceive black candidates as particularly threatening to their group interests (Bobo & Tuan, 2006). Hajnal (2007: 3) further suggests that “many whites fear that a black leader will favor the black community over the white community” especially lacking much, if any, prior experience with black political leadership. One potential consequence is white uncertainty and fear about what black representation will mean for white interests: “heightened uncertainty in black challenger elections leads most whites to believe they are facing an anti-white candidate and to vote to prevent a black takeover” (Hajnal, 2007: 17).

Despite having a clear theoretical basis, systematic evidence of widespread fear of racial favoritism is extremely limited. For example, several studies of white voting behavior in biracial mayoral elections used only *indirect* measures. One study found less support for black candidates in cities with larger black populations and where black candidates explicitly targeted black voters (Hajnal, 2007). Another study used measures of perceptions of race relations (Kaufmann, 1998), and a third study operationalized this concept narrowly with items measuring

material threats to whites' self-interests (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Two additional studies, on the other hand, measured beliefs about racial favoritism by Obama specifically, and thus confounded fear of racial favoritism and dislike of Obama (Lewis-Beck, Tien, & Nadeau, 2010; Tien, Nadeau, & Lewis-Beck, 2012).<sup>1</sup> Finally, one prior study employs my new measures of fear of racial favoritism to explain cross-party voting in a single cross-sectional analysis from the 2008 election (Baek & Landau, 2011), though without controlling for racial prejudice. This study, on the other hand, tests the impact of fear of racial favoritism against two different measures of racial prejudice, encompasses four election cycles, and assesses not only cross-sectional associations but also within-person change over time.

### **Fear of Racial Favoritism and Racial Prejudice**

To underscore the theoretical distinctiveness of fear of racial favoritism, consider three of the most widely employed conceptualizations of racial prejudice: old-fashioned racism, derogatory racial stereotypes, and racial resentment (Huddy & Feldman, 2009). As indicators of racial prejudice, each of these approaches posits that whites view blacks as inferior to whites, though the motivation and expression of these attitudes vary considerably. Old-fashioned racism, for instance, involves beliefs that blacks are not only inferior to whites, but *inherently* so (Virtanen & Huddy, 1998). While such views have certainly declined over time, they have not disappeared (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997; Tesler, 2013). In fact, in one recent survey about 4-in-10 whites attributed blacks' lower levels of educational or economic achievement at least in part to genetic differences between whites and blacks (Huddy & Feldman, 2009). The belief that blacks lack the same innate ability as whites epitomizes blatant

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<sup>1</sup> For example, one question asked whites "which of the following groups in society do you think will be favored if Barack Obama is elected president?" (Lewis-Beck, Tien, & Nadeau, 2010).

racial prejudice, thus it provides the starkest contrast with fear of racial favoritism, which involves neither beliefs about racial inferiority nor a biological basis for group differences. Instead, fear of racial favoritism is about perceptions of competing group interests, in particular that blacks will use electoral victories to advance the interests of blacks at the expense of whites.

Unlike old-fashioned racism, agreement with racial stereotypes does not necessarily involve believing that blacks are inherently inferior to whites (e.g., Bobo & Kleugel, 1993; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Levine, Carmines, & Sniderman, 1999; Piston, 2010; Virtanen & Huddy, 1998). Here racial inferiority is expressed through whites' more positive assessments of the traits of whites than blacks—that is, through in-group favoritism (Brewer, 1999). The key difference between this approach and old-fashioned racism is that whites may concur that blacks are less hardworking, trustworthy, honest, law-abiding, and intelligent without attributing these differences to biological origins. The expression of racial inferiority is also indirect: “stereotype questions are formatted so that people can express favoritism for their own group without flagrantly violating norms of fairness. Thus, for example, white Americans who believe that blacks are less intelligent than whites can do so indirectly, in a sequence of separated judgments, without ever having to subscribe to the invidious comparison” (Kinder & Kam, 2009: 46-47).

Measures of racial resentment – known variously as “symbolic,” “modern,” and “new” racism – place a similar emphasis on indirect measurement of anti-black attitudes and the stereotype of blacks as lazy. But according to this framework, prejudice is now “expressed in the language of individualism” (Kinder & Sanders, 1996: 106), as whites view blacks as overly demanding and simultaneously undeserving of special government support (Sears & Henry, 2003). The twin supports of this viewpoint are a denial of ongoing racial discrimination and the perception that blacks' lower socioeconomic status is due primarily to a failure of willpower and



hard work. Racial resentment thus overlaps considerably with racial stereotypes (Virtanen & Huddy, 1998). At the same time, racial resentment has been hypothesized to include a strong emotional component as well, and thus overall encapsulates “a blend of anti-black affect and the kind of traditional American moral values embodied in the Protestant ethic” (Kinder & Sears, 1981: 416).

To what extent is fear of racial favoritism theoretically distinctive from racial stereotypes and racial resentment? On the one hand, fear of racial favoritism is not, on its face, concerned with the stereotypical character traits ascribed to blacks in general nor to black elected officials in particular (for an approach that does the latter, see Schneider & Bos, 2011). Racial resentment, for its part, has been described as a “subtle prejudice” and strongly contrasted with perceptions of competing group interests as predictors of opposition to a variety of race-related policy attitudes (Kinder & Sanders, 1996: 93). On the other hand, fear of racial favoritism may be linked in the minds of some whites to the belief that blacks demand government support that they do not deserve. It is certainly plausible that fear of racial favoritism, racial stereotypes, and racial resentment are all part of the same constellation of beliefs, though even if this were the case it would still be important to measure and assess the unique impact of fear of racial favoritism. Whites may, of course, perceive that black elected officials favor blacks over whites without holding negative attitudes about blacks more broadly, whether in the form of derogatory stereotypes or racial resentment. Ultimately these are important empirical questions – ones that have not been directly tested before – so to resolve them we must turn to real-world data on white support for black political leadership. For this purpose, I carry out a variety of analyses of white support for America’s first black president, Barack Obama.

## Methods

To examine whether fear of racial favoritism is not only conceptually, but also empirically, distinctive in its effects on white public opinion, this study employs an eight-wave nationally representative panel survey that began in fall 2007 and ended in winter 2013. The first five waves were collected as part of the 2008 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES), fielded between fall 2007 and winter 2009. Wave 1 began with approximately 20,000 respondents, with fresh samples added to each subsequent wave. For wave 6, fielded in 2010, I reinterviewed a random sub-set of 3,263 non-Hispanic whites from the 2008 NAES.<sup>2</sup> Finally, for waves 7 and 8, fielded immediately before and after the 2012 election, I recontacted a representative sub-sample of 2,606 respondents from the 2008 NAES.<sup>3</sup> All waves were fielded over the Internet by GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks), which recruits nationally representative samples of adults using address-based sampling, and supplies free Internet access to those who need it. The dates of each wave are: wave 1: Oct. 2, 2007—Jan. 1, 2008; wave 2: Jan. 1—March 31, 2008; wave 3: April 2—Aug. 29, 2008; wave 4: Aug. 29—Nov. 4, 2008; wave 5: Nov. 5, 2008—Jan. 31, 2009; wave 6: Sept. 21, 2010—Oct. 6, 2010; wave 7: Oct. 20—Oct. 29, 2012; and wave 8: Nov. 14, 2012—Jan. 29, 2013.

These panel data provide an unprecedented opportunity to examine the impact of racial considerations over time, though as with all panels there are concerns about attrition and conditioning. Fortunately, further investigation revealed that neither issue posed a serious problem for this study. Although some attrition occurred, the 2008, 2010, and 2012 samples are broadly representative of the American adult population.<sup>4</sup> Additional analyses also revealed no

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<sup>2</sup> The 2010 wave was funded by [source name blinded].

<sup>3</sup> Waves 7 and 8 were fielded as part of the [survey name blinded].

<sup>4</sup> Consistent with prior studies of GfK samples (Chang & Krosnick, 2009), Table B1 in Appendix B shows that the panel compares favorably with census data, though as with national surveys more

evidence of conditioning: answering the racial attitude measures on one wave had no effect on responses to the same measures on future waves.<sup>5</sup>

To measure fear of racial favoritism, I designed four survey items to assess whites' perceptions of the frequency of favoritism and one item to assess their attitudes about favoritism. On waves 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, respondents were asked whether black elected officials are more likely to favor blacks over whites in various aspects of government activities. Starting in wave 3, a single item then asked whether such favoritism was good or bad. As shown in Table 1, which includes the full wording and response frequencies of the items on wave 8, a majority of whites perceived racial favoritism on three of the four items: 54 percent concurred that black elected officials are more likely to give special favors to the black community; 55 percent believed that they favor blacks for government jobs; and fully 61 percent believed that they support government spending that favors blacks. Even 36 percent believed that they could cost whites jobs. Unsurprisingly, most whites—81 percent—evaluated racial favoritism negatively.

[Table 1 about Here]

To produce a measure of *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism*, I averaged the four perception items into a reliable scale; the cronbach's alphas are .94 (wave 3), .92 (wave 5), .93 (wave 6), .94 (wave 7), and .94 (wave 8). Consistent with the items capturing a single concept, a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation showed that in all waves these items load onto a single factor. The measure is coded to range from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates

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generally younger and lower-educated individuals were somewhat underrepresented. For the 2012 sample, lower-educated and minority respondents from the 2008 NAES were targeted for recruitment. Using panel weights to correct for demographic representativeness does not change the results.

<sup>5</sup> OLS regression analyses revealed that the number of prior waves in which respondents received the favoritism items had no effect on responses to these items on wave 8, controlling for demographic and political variables (Coeff. = .01,  $p = .31$ ,  $N = 1,613$ ). The number of prior waves in which respondents received the stereotype items also had no effect on responses to these items on wave 8 (Coeff. = -.003,  $p = .24$ ,  $N = 1,677$ ).

perceiving little favoritism and one a great deal of favoritism. *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* is a single-item measure, also coded to range from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates a very positive evaluation of favoritism and one a very negative evaluation. The Pearson's correlations between these measures are close to zero in all waves.<sup>6</sup> Although Baek and Landau (2011) combined these measures into a single index, I instead test this assumption by modeling the interaction.

To measure racial prejudice, I rely on a standard indicator used on the General Social Surveys and American National Election Studies since 1990 and 1992, respectively. Starting in the latter part of wave 3, a battery of items indirectly assessed the extent to which whites have more positive attitudes toward whites than blacks. In a series of six questions posed at different points in the surveys—with the order randomized and separated by nonracial items—whites rated both whites and blacks on scales ranging from hardworking to lazy, intelligent to unintelligent, and trustworthy to untrustworthy. For each dimension, I subtracted ratings of blacks from ratings of whites and averaged the difference scores. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale on each wave is .90 or higher.<sup>7</sup> *Racial Stereotypes*, assessed in this way, has long been employed as a measure of prejudice, one that consistently predicts opposition to racial policies and black candidates, including Obama (e.g., Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Hutchings, 2009; Kinder & Kam, 2009; Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Levine, Carmines, & Sniderman, 1999; Peffley, Hurwitz, & Sniderman, 1997; Piston, 2010). The Pearson's correlations between *Racial Stereotypes* and *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* are modest: .20 (wave 3), .30 (wave 5), .29 (wave 6), .27 (wave 7), and .23 (wave 8). The same is true of the correlations between *Racial Stereotypes* and

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<sup>6</sup> The Pearson's correlations in waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are: -.004 ( $p > .10$ ,  $N = 15,435$ ), .03 ( $p < .001$ ,  $N = 14,889$ ), .06 ( $p < .01$ ,  $N = 3,177$ ), .08 ( $p < .01$ ,  $N = 1,743$ ), and .05 ( $p < .10$ ,  $N = 1,659$ ).

<sup>7</sup> Cronbach's alphas for waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are .91, .90, .92, .91, and .93.

*Attitudes about Racial Favoritism*: .21 (wave 3), .21 (wave 5), .28 (wave 6), .26 (wave 7), and .23 (wave 8).

In addition to measures of racial attitudes, the following analyses also include the standard predictors of candidate support, including economic perceptions, party identification, political ideology, education, age, income, gender, and residence in the South. Details of each variable are included in Appendix A. Each variable was coded to range from 0 to 1.

The outcome in this study is support for Barack Obama. I operationalize this concept in two ways, first with a measure of *Obama Favorability*, assessed with the standard 0-to-100 feeling thermometer, where larger values indicate more positive feelings toward Obama. The second measure is *Vote Choice*, where 1 indicates support for Obama and 0 indicates support for his Republican opponent (John McCain in 2008, Mitt Romney in 2012) (see Appendix A for full question wording). Prior to each election, respondents were asked who they would vote for “if the presidential election were held today.” After each election, respondents were first asked whether they voted and, if they answered yes, for whom they voted.

## **Results**

To explain white opposition to black political leadership, and Obama in particular, prior research has focused almost exclusively on one potential explanation: racial prejudice. Here I provide the first direct test of an alternative theory that whites expect black leaders to favor blacks at the expense of whites. The first set of models is shown in Table 2, with each column representing a separate OLS regression for each wave predicting *Obama Favorability*. As shown in Table 2, support for Obama was driven by many of the same factors found in prior research: racial stereotypes, economic perceptions, political predispositions, and demographics

(Hutchings, 2009; Piston, 2010). But even in the presence these variables, both *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* had significant negative effects on *Obama Favorability* in all five waves. Moreover, the effects are substantively large. The difference between whites who perceived a lot of favoritism and those who perceived little favoritism ranged from 14 to 25 points on the 99-point feeling thermometer. And the difference between whites who held very negative attitudes about favoritism and those who held very positive attitudes about favoritism ranged from 11 to 16 points. To further clarify the magnitude of the effects, Figure 1 shows the impact of the favoritism variables during the critical 2008 and 2012 election periods (waves 5 and 8), holding all other variables at their means.

[Table 2 about Here]

[Figure 1 about Here]

In a past study (Baek & Landau, 2011), *Perceptions* and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* were combined into a single measure using a multiplicative function. But is there, in fact, a significant interaction between these variables? As shown in Table D1 in Appendix D, I only find a significant interaction in one of five tests (wave 5: -9.79, SE=2.91), in a wave with an unusually large sample size (N=13,860). The interaction added only a trivial amount of explanatory power to the model (R-squared change=.0004).<sup>8</sup>

Fear of racial favoritism reduced favorability toward Obama, but the more politically relevant question is whether this translated into a reduced likelihood of voting for him. As shown in Table 3, which includes logistic regression models predicting *Vote Choice* for each wave, it did. Despite the much reduced variance of the dichotomous vote choice measure compared to the 99-point feeling thermometer, on all four waves *Perceptions of Racial*

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<sup>8</sup> The results are extremely similar if I model Obama favorability across all five panel waves simultaneously using linear multilevel regression models with individual random effects (see Table D2 in Appendix D).

*Favoritism* had a negative and significant impact on self-reported preference for Obama over his Republican opponent. *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* had significant effects on white vote choice in waves 3 and 5 during the 2008 campaign, but not in waves 7 and 8 during the 2012 campaign.

[Table 3 about Here]

To ease interpretation of these results, I calculated the predicted probability of expressing an Obama vote preference at different levels of the racial favoritism variables, while holding all other variables at their means. *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* had a sizeable impact on all four waves: on wave 3, the probability of an Obama vote ranged from 21% among those who perceived a lot of favoritism to 55% among those who perceived little favoritism; for wave 5, the probabilities ranged from 19% to 74%; for wave 7, 13% to 60%; and for wave 8, 19% to 57%. The impact of *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism*, on the other hand, varied between the 2008 and 2012 elections: on wave 3, the probability of an Obama vote ranged from 29% among those held very negative attitudes about favoritism to 65% among those who held very positive attitudes about favoritism; for wave 5, the probabilities ranged from 36% to 69%; for wave 7, 34% to 30%; and for wave 8, 35% to 39%. Because waves 5 and 8 capture whites' ultimate vote choice in each election, Figure 2 presents graphs of the full range of probabilities in those waves.

[Figure 2 about Here]

As in the prior analysis of Obama feeling thermometer ratings, I also assessed the interaction between *Perceptions* and *Attitudes about Racial favoritism*. As shown in Table D3 in Appendix D, I again only found a significant interaction on wave 5, and surprisingly the interaction coefficient was positive (2.01, SE=.63). But as in the last analysis, the interaction

added little explanatory power to the model, increasing the pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> by only .0005; it is only significant due the unusually large sample size in wave 5 (N=12,062).<sup>9</sup>

Taken together, the analyses presented thus far strongly suggest that white fear of racial favoritism played an important role in driving opposition to Obama throughout his campaigns and first term in office. The findings show consistently large differences in Obama support between whites who fear racial favoritism and whites who do not. With panel data, we can now take this logic a step further by examining whether these racial fears help to explain why whites *changed* in their support *over time*. After the 2008 election, Obama’s support declined substantially during his first term. Between wave 5, fielded immediately after the 2008 election, and wave 7, fielded immediately before the 2012 election, whites’ average ratings of Obama dropped from 51.32 to 42.26.

Only with panel data is it possible to examine individual-level change. But importantly, panel data alone are not enough; they require special statistical techniques, such as fixed effects regression (Allison, 1990, 2009; Halaby, 2004). Fixed effects models are unique in that they use only *within-person* variance *over time*. By contrast, other observational designs, including other panel designs, use *between-person* variance, and as a result spuriousness remains a major concern. This is because between-person analyses rely on the dubious assumption that one has controlled for *all* individual differences. With fixed effects, however, individuals are compared to themselves at an earlier point in time, so the main effects of *all* stable factors—such as education, income, age, gender, and political predispositions—drop out of the models, as do all *other* variables (whether observable or unobservable) that are constant over time. Because each person is his or her own control, only variables that change over time within-persons can produce

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<sup>9</sup> Table D4 in Appendix D shows the same pattern of results using multilevel logistic regression models with respondent random effects.



spurious associations. And by including a dummy variable for survey wave I can efficiently capture the average total effects of all other time-varying influences (Halaby, 2004).

In Table 4, I use a linear fixed effects regression model to examine the impact of within-person *change* in perceptions and attitudes about racial favoritism on within-person *change* in *Obama Favorability* from wave 5 to wave 7. Note that only variables that change over time can be included in the models; stable characteristics like gender *automatically* drop out and cannot influence the results. Further, the *Wave* variable (0=wave 5, 1=wave 8) captures the average total change of all other time-varying influences, such as factors that change uniformly like age. To capture differential changes, I include indicators of within-person change in racial stereotypes, economic perceptions, party identification, ideology, education, and income.

As hypothesized, the fixed effects model in Table 4 shows a significant negative impact of within-person change in *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* on within-person change in whites' feeling thermometer ratings of Obama. In other words, the *same exact individuals* who increased over time in their perceptions of racial favoritism also became more negative in their feelings toward Obama. Whites who became more negative in their *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* or more likely to engage in racial stereotyping also exhibited declines in Obama support, though neither effect was significant. (In results not shown, I find that the interaction between change in *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* and change in *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* is not significant (-.99, SE=7.11)). Of the non-racial predictors, only two showed significant effects. Whites who increasingly viewed the national economy in negative terms became more likely to evaluate Obama negatively, and whites who increasingly self-identified as Republicans also showed substantial declines in *Obama Favorability*.

[Table 4 about Here]

The analysis in Table 4 examines the impact of *change* in various predictors on *change* in support for Obama. But an alternative approach is to model the time-varying impact of *initial levels* of the predictors (Allison, 2009). Methodologically, analyses of *change* on *change* may provide more conservative and/or unreliable estimates of effect size (Allison, 2009). And theoretically, whites' increasingly negative views about Obama may have been influenced not only by over-time changes in their racial attitudes, but also by the changing impact of their stable components. That is, whites with more negative racial attitudes *initially* may have been more likely to decline in their support for Obama during this time period.

Although in fixed effects models the *constant* effects of stable characteristics automatically drop out, one can model their *time-varying* effects by including interactions between each characteristic and *Wave* (Allison, 2009). Using this method, I examine the time-varying impact of *2008 levels* of the predictors on within-person *change* in feelings toward Obama from wave 5 to wave 7. I also control for the time-varying impact of initial levels of the dependent variable, in light of its association with the initial values of the predictors (see Table 2, Column 2). Note that I only model the *interactions* between each stable characteristic and *Wave* because the main effects of stable characteristics automatically drop out with fixed effects.

As shown in Table 5, 2008 levels of *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* significantly predicted declines over time in *Obama Favorability* from 2008 to 2012. (Again, I found no evidence of an interaction.<sup>10</sup>) Initial levels of *Racial Stereotypes* also had a negative effect on over-time change in *Obama Favorability*, though the effect was not significant. In addition, whites who identified as more Republican or conservative in 2008 became more negative in their assessments of Obama during his first term. By contrast,

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<sup>10</sup> The three-way interaction between *Wave*, *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism*, and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* was not significant (9.55, SE=8.36).

initial economic perceptions had no effect, consistent with voters paying more attention to *change* in, rather than levels of, economic output. Most importantly, the findings in Table 5 provide even more support for a causal impact of fear of racial favoritism. The results are especially powerful because they undercut the alternative explanation of reverse causality given that change in support for Obama could not have influenced prior levels of racial attitudes.<sup>11</sup>

[Table 5 about Here]

### ***CCES 2014 Replication Controlling for Racial Resentment***

In all of the preceding analyses, fear of racial favoritism influenced support for Obama even after controlling for racial stereotypes. Nonetheless, the measurement of racial prejudice remains a matter of scholarly debate (for a review, see Huddy & Feldman, 2009). So, to assess the robustness of my findings, I present an analysis of a separate survey executed after the 2014 election that included another widely-used indicator, racial resentment. The data come from the 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The CCES was fielded over the Internet by YouGov, which uses matched random sampling methodology (for more information and evidence of validity, see Ansolabehere & Rivers, 2013). The 2014 CCES included pre-election and post-election waves. This analysis uses the 1,590 non-Hispanic whites who were asked the resentment, favoritism, and Obama feeling thermometer items on the post-election wave fielded between November 5 and December 6, 2014.

The CCES included the same Obama feeling thermometer as the 2008-2013 panel, as well as three of the items tapping perceptions of racial favoritism (Cronbach's alpha = .94), and the one item assessing attitudes about racial favoritism. Respondents were also asked three

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<sup>11</sup> For an additional test, I also replicated the cross-sectional models predicting Obama favorability in Table 2 using lagged measures of the independent variables. As shown in Table D5 in Appendix D, the effects of perceptions and attitudes about racial favoritism remained large and statistically significant.

standard racial resentment questions, which were combined to form a reliable scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ) (Tarman & Sears, 2005). For control variables, additional items assessed economic perceptions, party identification, ideology, and standard demographics. Full wording of all of these items are provided in Appendix C. As in the prior analyses, *Obama Favorability* ranges from 0 to 100 and all of the independent variables range from 0 to 1.

Table 6 presents the results of an OLS regression predicting *Obama Favorability* in fall 2014 from the CCES data. As expected, *Racial Resentment* is strongly and negatively related to support for Obama. Negative perceptions of the economy, Republican Party identification, and conservative ideology also had sizable negative effects on *Obama Favorability*. But even after taking all of those factors into account, both *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* still had strong negative effects on *Obama Favorability*. (In analyses not shown, I find that the interaction between *Perceptions of Racial Favoritism* and *Attitudes about Racial Favoritism* was not significant (-9.97, SE=6.65)). These results, using a separate survey and a different measure of racial prejudice, further demonstrate the robustness of the effects of white fear of racial favoritism. Moreover, the size of the effects is strikingly similar to the previous analyses. Whether controlling for racial resentment or racial stereotypes, fear of racial favoritism had a substantial negative impact on whites' support for Obama.

[Table 6 about Here]

## **DISCUSSION**

Explaining white opposition to black political leadership is a central question in political science, and the overwhelming focus to-date has been on racial prejudice. However, observers of political campaigns have long noticed the biased assumptions made about black candidates.

Why do blacks running for office have to go out of their way to prove that they will represent the interests of all, rather than blacks alone? The answer, this study suggests, is fear of racial favoritism, a concept previously hypothesized to exist but never systematically measured until recently. Using a new measure, my findings show that a majority of whites do indeed fear that black elected officials will engage in racial favoritism, aiding blacks at the expense of whites.

Moreover, fear of racial favoritism had substantial effects on white political behavior. With panel data and a separate survey collectively covering a seven-year timespan, I find consistent evidence that such fears reduced support for Obama – whether using a standard 0-to-100 feeling thermometer or a dichotomous measure of vote choice. Further, these beliefs not only influenced support for Obama in traditional cross-sectional models, but also in particularly challenging tests using fixed effects models of within-person change. Finally and perhaps most importantly, these effects held when controlling for racial stereotypes or racial resentment, two of the most widely-used indicators of racial prejudice. In sum, the conclusion from these many analyses is clear: white fear of racial favoritism matters.

The significant impact of fear of racial favoritism contributes to ongoing efforts to understand white opposition to black political leadership. With rare exception, political scientists have primarily focused on racial prejudice to the neglect of perceptions of group competition. Biracial election contests represent an clear context in which whites may feel threatened by black political power, yet prior evidence has been indirect and open to alternative explanations. The present study provides the strongest evidence yet that perceived threats to group interests help to explain why whites vote against black candidates.

The existence of widespread fear of racial favoritism also furthers understanding of so-called “deracialized” campaigning (e.g., Gillespie, 2010). Obama, for instance, rarely talked

about race explicitly, even after repeated racist attacks on his campaign offices during the 2008 campaign (Goldman & Mutz, 2014). That whites expect black political leaders to favor blacks over whites makes for a troubling double-standard: either promote policies explicitly aimed at aiding blacks and reinforce racial fears, or limit those efforts to purportedly non-racial policies and make more limited strides (Hajnal, 2007). For better or worse, Obama, along with the new wave of black politicians, have chosen the latter strategy, and many scholars suggest that this in part explains their recent successes among white voters (Gillespie, 2010). At the same time, the strong negative impact of fear of racial favoritism on support for Obama points to the limits of the deracialization strategy, perhaps owing to the chronic accessibility of race among many whites (Tesler & Sears, 2010).

These same troubling dynamics may also affect election contests involving other stigmatized social groups, such as Latinos, women, and LGBT Americans. For example, prior research provides many anecdotes of gay candidates putting forth incredible effort to minimize the salience of their sexuality and assuage voters that they are not single-issue candidates (Haider-Markel, 2010). In light of Hillary Clinton's failed presidential bid in 2008 and her entry into the 2016 race, the question of whether men fear gender favoritism is particularly timely, especially given evidence suggesting that traditional gender stereotypes have limited effects on support for female candidates (Brooks, 2013; Dolan, 2014; Kinder & Dale-Riddle, 2012). Left unknown is whether Americans fear group favoritism from other minority candidates to the same degree as whites fear racial favoritism from black candidates.

Future research is clearly needed to more fully understand the depth and breadth of fear of group favoritism, including the origins of these beliefs. Why do some whites see black elected officials through the prism of group competition, while others do not? On the one hand,

some people are likely predisposed to see others as a threat to their group's dominance in the social order (e.g., Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle 1994). But, perhaps more importantly, situational conditions may provoke or lessen group threat reactions (Esses, Jackson, Dovidio, and Hodson 2005). The voluminous literature on "racial threat," for instance, suggests that whites who live in the vicinity of larger black populations may be more likely to view black political leaders as threatening to their group's interests (Enos 2015). Yet as Allport (1954) emphasized more than half a century ago, even objectively small minority groups are often *perceived* as highly threatening to the dominant group's interests, especially during periods of social change. Indeed, recent years of have included substantial economic instability that may have heightened a sense of group competition. Of course, the most salient change to have occurred is the election (and re-election) of Barack Obama, and this may have stoked racial fears, at least initially (Hardy, 2012). The next question, then, is whether sustained exposure to Obama has stoked or alleviated whites' fears about black political leadership.

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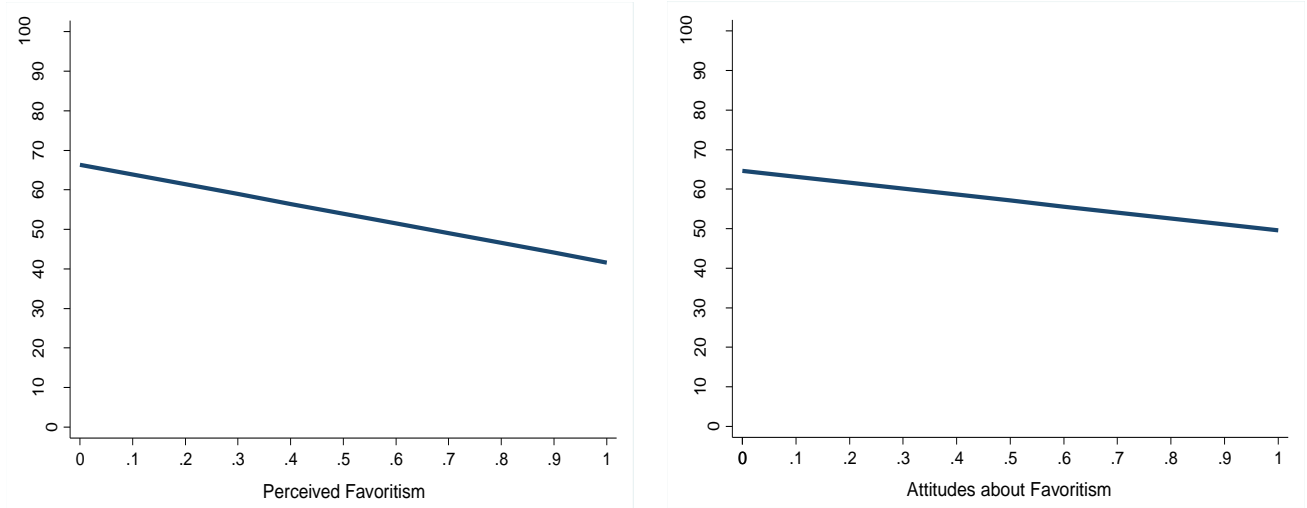
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Figure 1. The Impact of Fear of Racial Favoritism on Obama Favorability during the 2008 and 2012 Elections

1a) During the 2008 Election (wave 5: Fall 2008/Winter 2009):



1b) During the 2012 Election (wave 8: Fall 2012/Winter 2013):

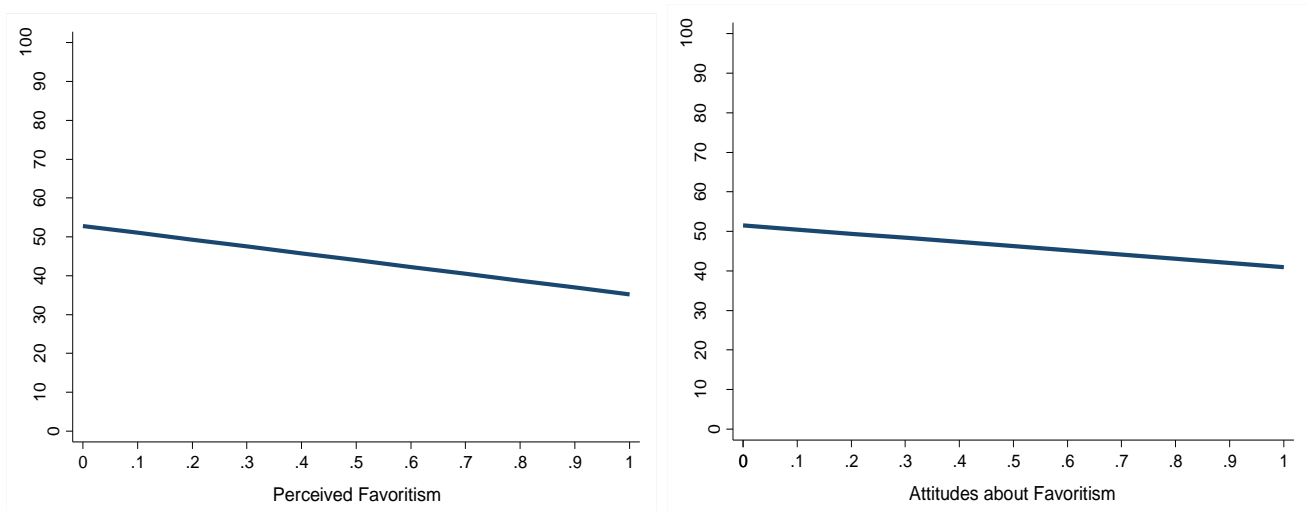
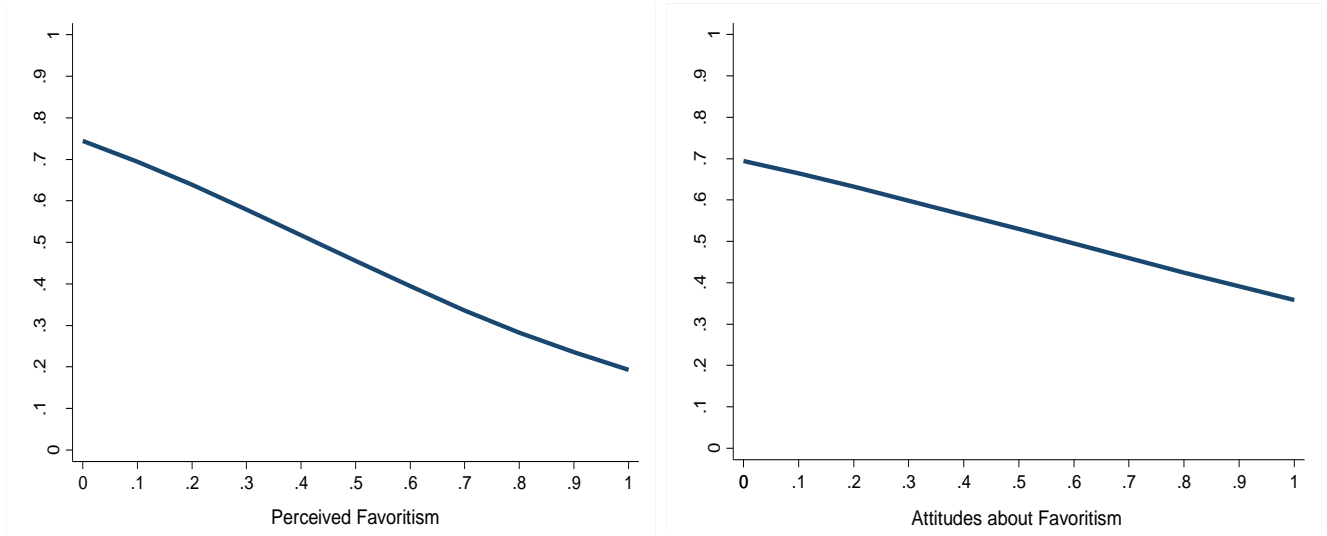




Figure 2. The Impact of Fear of Racial Favoritism on Obama Vote Choice during the 2008 and 2012 Elections

2a) During the 2008 Election (wave 5: Fall 2008/Winter 2009):



2a) During the 2012 Election (wave 8: Fall 2012/Winter 2013):

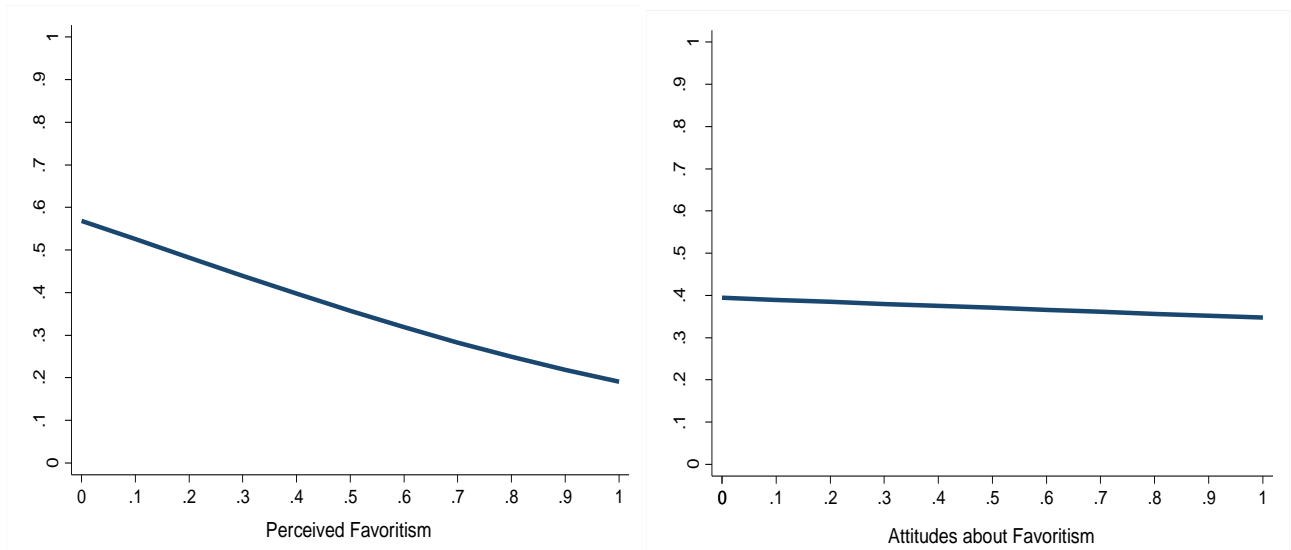


Table 1. White Americans' Perceptions and Attitudes about Racial Favoritism

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**Perceptions of Racial Favoritism**

Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Black elected officials are more likely to . . .

1. Favor blacks for government jobs over white applicants.	
Strongly agree	16.0%
Somewhat agree	38.5%
Somewhat disagree	30.7%
Strongly disagree	14.8%
2. Support government spending that favors blacks.	
Strongly agree	18.1%
Somewhat agree	42.4%
Somewhat disagree	26.0%
Strongly disagree	13.5%
3. Support policies that could cost whites jobs.	
Strongly agree	9.5%
Somewhat agree	26.7%
Somewhat disagree	43.0%
Strongly disagree	20.8%
4. Give special favors to the black community.	
Strongly agree	16.0%
Somewhat agree	37.7%
Somewhat disagree	29.2%
Strongly disagree	17.1%

**Attitudes about Racial Favoritism**

Thinking about the statements you just read, would it be good or bad if black elected officials favored blacks?

Very good	1.4%
Somewhat good	17.7%
Somewhat bad	48.3%
Very bad	32.6%

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*Note:* Includes non-Hispanic whites from wave 8 (N = 1,627). Excludes those who declined to answer—about 4% of the sample.

Table 2. OLS Regression Models Predicting Obama Favorability from 2008 to 2013

	Wave 3 Summer 2008	Wave 5 Fall 2008/ Winter 2009	Wave 6 Fall 2010	Wave 7 Fall 2012	Wave 8 Fall 2012/ Winter 2013
Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-14.18*** (1.41)	-24.71*** (.80)	-15.04*** (1.37)	-14.62*** (1.81)	-17.63*** (1.83)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-15.67*** (1.71)	-15.08*** (.79)	-14.51*** (1.45)	-3.78 (2.03)	-10.64*** (2.08)
Racial Stereotypes	-30.69*** (4.58)	-19.97*** (2.55)	-11.23** (4.30)	-13.40* (5.72)	-15.28* (5.92)
Perceptions of Family Finances (worse)	-1.06 (1.69)	3.25*** (.76)	-2.08 (1.43)	-1.80 (2.14)	-7.37** (2.28)
Perceptions of National Economy (worse)	14.92*** (2.38)	11.53*** (1.36)	-23.09*** (1.27)	-34.90*** (2.08)	-28.61*** (2.04)
Party ID (Republican)	-30.53*** (1.48)	-32.59*** (.69)	-32.89*** (1.31)	-39.02*** (1.89)	-41.24*** (1.99)
Ideology (Conservative)	-31.20*** (2.12)	-25.78*** (1.00)	-29.10*** (1.86)	-19.36*** (2.57)	-17.22*** (2.79)
Education	28.20*** (3.72)	8.21*** (1.66)	4.52 (2.98)	-4.19 (4.80)	-3.56 (5.09)
Income	4.69* (1.91)	5.52*** (.89)	-.89 (1.57)	4.12 (2.49)	.62 (2.64)
Age	3.00 (2.96)	9.57*** (1.33)	4.62* (2.05)	1.10 (3.23)	6.75* (3.39)
Gender (female)	.52 (.80)	.91* (.36)	1.93** (.66)	1.82* (.91)	2.37* (.96)
South	-4.23*** (.85)	-1.66*** (.40)	-1.03 (.71)	.01 (1.02)	-1.00 (1.07)
Constant	12.86** (4.84)	34.07*** (2.44)	46.22*** (4.01)	54.70*** (6.19)	62.58*** (6.72)
Sample Size	3,524	13,860	3,110	1,685	1,606
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.49	.55	.66	.70	.68

*Note.* Presents unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 3. Logistic Regression Models Predicting Vote Choice from 2008 to 2013

	Wave 3 Summer 2008	Wave 5 Fall 2008/ Winter 2009	Wave 7 Fall 2012	Wave 8 Fall 2012/ Winter 2013
Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-1.53*** (.23)	-2.50*** (.15)	-2.36*** (.49)	-1.72*** (.47)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-1.48*** (.28)	-1.41*** (.15)	.18 (.55)	-.20 (.49)
Racial Stereotypes	-1.95* (.81)	-2.65*** (.52)	-.78 (1.47)	-2.99 (1.64)
Perceptions of Family Finances (worse)	.86** (.27)	.76*** (.14)	-.05 (.58)	-1.03 (.56)
Perceptions of National Economy (worse)	1.75*** (.42)	1.76*** (.26)	-5.15*** (.54)	-3.40*** (.48)
Party ID (Republican)	-4.74*** (.23)	-5.13*** (.12)	-6.00*** (.46)	-6.04*** (.47)
Ideology (Conservative)	-4.03*** (.35)	-3.95*** (.19)	-3.68*** (.68)	-3.69*** (.68)
Education	2.23*** (.60)	1.94*** (.32)	-.75 (1.34)	.13 (1.36)
Income	.50 (.31)	.18 (.17)	-.23 (.68)	.24 (.66)
Age	-.59 (.48)	-.40 (.26)	-.78 (.88)	.44 (.87)
Gender (female)	-.09 (.13)	-.27*** (.07)	-.27 (.25)	-.29 (.24)
South	-.72*** (.14)	-.40*** (.08)	-.16 (.28)	-.36 (.28)
Constant	-5.47*** (.81)	-4.68*** (.48)	.94 (1.65)	-.02 (1.73)
Sample Size	3,014	12,062	1,458	1,287
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.73	.77	.86	.84

*Note.* Presents unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Vote choice ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 equals support for Obama and 0 equals support for his Republican opponent. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 4. Effects of Within-Person *Change* in Fear of Racial Favoritism on Within-Person *Change* in Obama Favorability from 2008 to 2012 (Fixed Effects Panel Analysis)

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Change in Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-12.52***
	(2.08)
Change in Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-4.04
	(2.20)
Change in Racial Stereotypes	-2.74
	(7.44)
Change in Perceptions of Family Finances (worse)	-2.41
	(1.97)
Change in Perceptions of the National Economy (worse)	-11.21***
	(1.85)
Change in Party ID (Republican)	-22.81***
	(3.11)
Change in Ideology (Conservative)	-6.88
	(3.83)
Change in Education	5.36
	(10.82)
Change in Income	6.40
	(3.68)
Wave	-13.55***
	(.80)
Constant	54.71***
	(9.23)
Sample Size	1,646
Within-Person R <sup>2</sup>	.23

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*Note.* Presents unstandardized fixed effects regression coefficients and standard errors. The model predicts within-person change in Obama Favorability from wave 5 to 7. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table 5. Effects of *Initial Levels* of Fear of Racial Favoritism on Within-Person *Change* in Obama Favorability from 2008 to 2012 (Fixed Effects Panel Analysis)

2008 Perceptions of Racial Favoritism X Wave	-9.73*** (2.38)
2008 Attitudes about Racial Favoritism X Wave	-5.66* (2.30)
2008 Racial Stereotypes X Wave	-3.34 (6.78)
2008 Perceptions of Family Finances (worse) X Wave	-.83 (2.18)
2008 Perceptions of National Economy (worse) X Wave	3.04 (3.68)
2008 Party ID (Republican) X Wave	-26.23*** (2.05)
2008 Ideology (Conservative) X Wave	-13.75*** (2.83)
2008 Education X Wave	9.49 (5.54)
2008 Income X Wave	1.08 (3.08)
2008 Age X Wave	-10.95** (4.13)
2008 Gender (female) X Wave	1.13 (1.03)
2008 South X Waves	-1.62 (1.14)
2008 Obama Favorability X Wave	-.54*** (.02)
Wave	6.41 (7.42)
Constant	51.42*** (.36)
Sample Size	1,584
Within-Person R <sup>2</sup>	.37

*Note.* Presents unstandardized fixed effects regression coefficients and standard errors. The model predicts within-person change in Obama Favorability from wave 5 to 7. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05, #p<.10

Table 6. *CCES 2014*: The Impact of Fear of Racial Favoritism on Obama Favorability, *Controlling for Racial Resentment* (OLS)

Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-12.38*** (2.16)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-7.94** (2.33)
Racial Resentment	-17.54*** (2.78)
Perceptions of Family Finances (worse)	.53 (2.41)
Perceptions of National Economy (worse)	-37.73*** (2.73)
Party ID (Republican)	-38.62*** (2.13)
Ideology (Conservative)	-11.72*** (2.70)
Education	-3.95 (2.02)
Income	-6.78 (5.42)
Age	-2.27 (2.75)
Gender (female)	3.62** (1.13)
South	-1.93 (1.17)
Constant	109.66*** (2.85)
Sample Size	1,318
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.68

*Note.* Presents unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

## Online Appendix A: Wording of the 2008-2013 Panel Survey Items

*Perceptions of Racial Favoritism.* On waves 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, respondents were asked to: “Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Black elected officials are more likely to. . . Favor blacks for government jobs over white applicants. Support government spending that favors blacks. Support policies that could cost whites jobs. Give special favors to the black community.” (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). I combined the four perception items into a reliable scale (Cronbach’s alphas for waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are .94, .92, .93, .94, and .94), and coded it to range from zero to one.

*Attitudes about Racial Favoritism.* On waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, immediately following the perceptions of racial favoritism questions respondent were asked, “Thinking about the statements you just read, would it be good or bad if black elected officials favored blacks?” (very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, very bad). The measure was coded to range from zero to one, where higher scores indicating having a more negative attitude about favoritism.

*Racial Stereotypes.* Starting on the latter part of wave 3, and continuing through waves 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, whites rated whites and blacks on three scales, ranging from hardworking to lazy, intelligent to unintelligent, and trustworthy to untrustworthy. For each dimension, respondent’s ratings of blacks were subtracted from ratings of whites, and then these difference scores were averaged to create a reliable scale (Cronbach’s alphas for waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are .91 ( $N = 3,831$ ), .90 ( $N = 15,232$ ), .92 ( $N = 3,263$ ), .91 ( $N = 1,826$ ), and .93 ( $N = 1,738$ )). This process initially produced values ranging from -100 to 100, where negative values indicate having more positive attitudes toward blacks than whites and positive values indicate having more positive attitudes toward whites than blacks. I then recoded the measure to range from zero to one.



"Next are some questions about various groups in our society. Below are left-right scales on which you can rate characteristics of people in different groups. For the first item below, the far left side of the scale means that you think most of the people in that group are extremely "hard working." Placing the slider on the far right side means that you think most of the people in that group are extremely "lazy." The middle means that you think the people in this group are not particularly towards one end or the other." As practice, respondents were first asked, "Where would you rate physicians in general on this scale?" Immediately after, respondents were asked to rate either Whites or Blacks, and later in the survey asked about the other group (with the order randomized). "Where would you rate Whites in general on these scales?" "Where would you rate Blacks in general on these scales?" Below is an example of one the scales.



**Obama Favorability.** On all eight waves, respondents were asked to rate Barack Obama on a standard feeling 0-to-100 thermometer: "Please rate Barack Obama on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. Rating above 50 means that you feel favorable and warm toward him, and rating below 50 means that feel unfavorable and cool." Respondents were also given two other options: "Don't know who person is" and "Don't know enough about him." Those who checked either of the latter two boxes were excluded from the analyses.

**Obama Vote Choice:** Prior to the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, respondents were asked who they would vote for "if the presidential election were held today." After each election, respondents were first asked if they voted, and then if so, for whom they chose to vote. The latter part of wave 2, wave 3, wave 4, and wave 7 included the vote intention question;

waves 5 and 8 included the self-reported vote question. The 2008 vote intention question was as follows (with the order of the Democratic and Republican candidates randomized): “If the presidential election were held today and John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Republicans, were running against Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats, who would you vote for?” The question was then followed by a list of candidates (also in randomized order): “John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Republicans; Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats; Ralph Nader and Matt Gonzalez, the Independents; Bob Barr and Wayne Allyn Root, the Libertarians, Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente, the Green Party candidates; Other [specify]; Don’t know.” The 2008 vote choice question was as follows: “In the 2008 presidential election who did you vote for:” followed by a list of candidates (with the order randomized): “John McCain and Sarah Palin, the Republicans; Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats; Ralph Nader and Matt Gonzalez, the Independents; Bob Barr and Wayne Allyn Root, the Libertarians; Other, please specify.” The 2012 vote intention question was as follows (with candidate order randomized): “If the presidential election were held today between Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, the Republicans, against Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats, who would you vote for?” The question was then followed by a list of candidates (with the order randomized): “Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, the Republicans; Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats; Other [specify]; Don’t know.” The 2012 vote choice question was as follows: “In the 2012 presidential election who did you vote for:” followed by a list of candidates (with the order randomized): “Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, the Republicans; Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the Democrats; Other, please specify.” Responses to these items were coded so that one indicates support for Obama and zero indicates support for his Republican opponent (John McCain in 2008, Mitt

Romney in 2012). Those who said they would/did support another candidate were excluded from the analyses.

***Economic Perceptions.*** On waves 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, respondents were asked two questions about their economic perceptions. One question assessed *Perceptions of Family Finances*: "We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living here are better off, worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?" (a lot better off, a little better off, a little worse off, a lot worse off, just about the same). Responses were re-coded to range from zero to one (where 0=a lot better off, .25=a little better off, .5=just about the same, .75=a little worse off, and 1=a lot worse off). A second question assessed *Perceptions of the National Economy*: "Thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?" (gotten a lot better, gotten a little better, gotten a little worse, gotten a lot worse, stayed about the same). Responses to this question were also re-coded to range from zero to one (where 0=gotten a lot better, .25=gotten a little better, .5=stayed about the same, .75=gotten a little worse, and 1=gotten a lot worse).

***Party Identification.*** On the GfK profile survey and waves 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, party identification was measured using the standard set of branching questions, which produced a seven-point scale (where 0=strong Republican, .17= weak Republican, .33=leaning Republican, .50=Independent/undecided/other, .67=leaning Democrat, .83=weak Democrat, and 1=strong Democrat).

***Ideology.*** On the GfK profile survey and waves 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, ideology was measured using the standard question: "In general, do you think of yourself as . . ." (Extremely liberal, Liberal, Slightly liberal, Moderate, middle of the road, Slightly conservative,

Conservative, Extremely Conservative). Responses were re-coded to range from zero to one (where 0=extremely conservative, .17=conservative, .33=slightly conservative, .50=moderate, .67=slightly liberal, and .83=liberal, and 1=extremely liberal).

**Education.** On the GfK profile survey prior to wave 1 and then again between waves 6 and 7, respondents were asked for the highest grade/degree that they received. These responses were then converted into an indicator of the number of years of education received (with an original range of 2.50 – 20), and then re-coded to range from zero to one.

**Gender.** Measured on the GfK profile survey (0=male and 1=female).

**Region.** Measured on the GfK profile survey (0=non-South and 1=South).

## Online Appendix B: Demographics of the Panel Survey

Table B1. Demographics of the July 2008 Current Population Survey and the 2008-2013 Panel Survey

	2008 CPS	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8
<b>Education</b>									
High school or less	44.2%	31.0%	28.7%	26.6%	25.8%	25.4%	23.3%	41.3%	41.7%
Some college	28.1%	34.8%	34.6%	34.9%	34.6%	34.4%	31.0%	23.4%	23.3%
College graduate	18.2%	21.2%	22.5%	23.6%	24.0%	24.5%	26.3%	21.0%	20.8%
Postgraduate work	9.5%	13.0%	14.2%	14.9%	15.6%	15.7%	19.4%	14.3%	14.2%
<b>Income</b>									
Less than \$25,000	19.7%	19.9%	18.9%	16.9%	16.2%	15.9%	13.0%	19.9%	19.9%
\$25-49,999	26.2%	32.6%	31.8%	29.7%	29.4%	29.5%	27.9%	26.4%	26.5%
\$50-74,999	20.6%	20.8%	20.7%	21.2%	21.2%	21.3%	22.7%	21.9%	21.7%
\$75-99,999	13.4%	13.0%	13.7%	14.9%	15.3%	15.4%	15.7%	15.3%	15.4%
\$100,000 or more	20.1%	13.7%	14.9%	17.2%	17.8%	18.0%	20.7%	16.5%	16.6%
<b>Age</b>									
18-29	20.1%	10.1%	9.6%	9.9%	9.4%	9.1%	7.1%	5.5%	5.3%
30-44	26.5%	27.5%	27.0%	26.8%	26.6%	26.0%	24.0%	34.3%	33.9%
45-59	28.6%	34.7%	35.4%	36.4%	36.8%	37.1%	37.4%	27.4%	27.2%
60+	24.7%	27.6%	28.0%	26.9%	27.1%	27.9%	31.5%	32.8%	33.6%
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	47.8%	46.1%	46.2%	43.8%	43.6%	43.9%	47.3%	47.0%	46.9%
Female	52.2%	53.9%	53.8%	56.2%	56.4%	56.1%	52.7%	53.0%	53.1%
<b>Race</b>									
White Non-Hispanic	73.1%	81.2%	80.9%	79.2%	80.1%	80.6%	100.0%	70.1%	70.3%
Black Non-Hispanic	9.3%	8.5%	8.4%	9.5%	9.1%	8.8%		13.4%	13.1%
Hispanic	10.9%	5.9%	5.8%	6.4%	6.0%	5.8%		9.8%	9.8%
Other, Non-Hispanic	6.7%	4.3%	4.8%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%		6.8%	6.8%
Sample Size	101,618	19,190	17,747	20,052	19,241	19,234	3,263	2,606	2,471

*Note:* Data are unweighted.

## Online Appendix C: Wording of the 2014 CCES Items

***Racial Resentment.*** Respondents were asked three questions, including two questions on the common content and one question on the team module. The first two questions began with the stem: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” Then, respondents were shown two statements, each with five response options (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree): 1) “The Irish, Italians, Jews and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.” 2) “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.” The third item appeared on the team module: 3) “Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder, they could be as well off as whites.” The second item was reverse coded, and all three items were averaged to create a reliable scale (Cronbach’s alpha = .84). Finally, the scale was re-coded to range from zero to one.

***Perceptions of Racial Favoritism.*** “Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Black elected officials are more likely to. . . Favor blacks for government jobs over white applicants. Support government spending that favors blacks. Give special favors to the black community.” (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). I combined the three perception items into a reliable scale (Cronbach’s alpha = .94), and coded the measure to range from zero to one.

***Attitudes about Racial Favoritism.*** “Thinking about the statements you just read, would it be good or bad if black elected officials favored blacks?” (very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, very bad).

**Obama Favorability.** “Please rate Barack Obama on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. Rating above 50 means that you feel favorable and warm toward him, and rating below 50 means that feel unfavorable and cool.” Respondents were also given two other options: “Don’t know who person is” and “Don’t know enough about him.” Those who checked either of the latter two boxes were excluded from the analyses.

**Perceptions of Family Finances.** “Over the past four years has your household’s annual income...?” (0=increased a lot, .25=increased somewhat, .5=stayed about the same, .75=decreased somewhat, 1=decreased a lot).

**Perceptions of the National Economy.** “Would you say that over the past year the nation’s economy has . . . ?” (0=gotten much better, .25=gotten better, .5=stayed about the same, .75=gotten worse, 1=gotten much worse).

**Party Identification.** Measured using the standard set of branching questions, which produced a seven-point scale (where 0=strong Republican, .17= weak Republican, .33=leaning Republican, .50=Independent/undecided/other, .67=leaning Democrat, .83=weak Democrat, and 1=strong Democrat).

**Ideology.** Measured using the standard question, which produced a seven-point scale (where 0=extremely conservative, .17=conservative, .33=slightly conservative, .50=moderate, .67=slightly liberal, and .83=liberal, and 1=extremely liberal).

**Education.** Measured the highest grade/degree received (0=no HS, .2=high school graduate, .4=some college, .6=2-year, .8=4-year, 1=post-grad).

**Gender.** 0=male and 1=female.

**Region.** 0=non-South and 1=South.

### Online Appendix D: Additional Models

Table D1. The Interaction of Perceptions and Attitudes about Racial Favoritism on Obama Favorability, 2008 – 2013 (OLS)

	Wave 3 Summer 2008	Wave 5 Fall 2008/ Winter 2009	Wave 6 Fall 2010	Wave 7 Fall 2012	Wave 8 Fall 2012/ Winter 2013
Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-10.75*** (2.39)	-22.03*** (1.13)	-13.07*** (2.06)	-12.96*** (2.74)	-16.71*** (2.78)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-11.12*** (3.09)	-10.49*** (1.58)	-11.01*** (3.09)	-1.11 (3.87)	-9.20* (3.89)
Perceptions X Attitudes	-10.77 (6.09)	-9.79** (2.91)	-6.78 (5.28)	-5.46 (6.75)	-3.00 (6.84)
Racial Stereotypes	-30.05*** (4.60)	-19.15*** (2.56)	-10.72* (4.32)	-13.17* (5.73)	-15.05* (5.94)
Perceptions of Family Finances	-1.11 (1.69)	3.21*** (.76)	-2.15 (1.44)	-1.81 (2.14)	-7.33** (2.29)
Perceptions of National Economy	14.91*** (2.38)	11.65*** (1.36)	-23.05*** (1.27)	-34.89*** (2.08)	-28.63*** (2.05)
Party ID (Democrat)	30.62*** (1.48)	32.63*** (.69)	32.90*** (1.31)	39.08*** (1.90)	41.22*** (1.99)
Ideology (Liberal)	31.30*** (2.12)	25.87*** (1.00)	29.27*** (1.86)	19.42*** (2.57)	17.34*** (2.81)
Education	28.36*** (3.72)	8.38*** (1.66)	4.78 (2.98)	-3.95 (4.81)	-3.42 (5.10)
Income	4.71* (1.91)	5.47*** (.89)	-.87 (1.57)	4.15 (2.49)	.63 (2.64)
Age	2.89 (2.96)	9.34*** (1.34)	4.58* (2.05)	1.11 (3.23)	6.74* (3.39)
Gender (female)	.56 (.80)	.94* (.36)	1.96** (.66)	1.83* (.91)	2.40* (.96)
South	-4.22*** (.85)	-1.66*** (.40)	-1.04 (.71)	.01 (1.02)	-.97 (1.07)
Constant	3.01 (4.89)	24.69*** (2.47)	37.42*** (4.16)	51.68*** (6.25)	56.52*** (6.83)
Sample Size	3,524	13,860	3,110	1,685	1,606
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.49	.55	.66	.70	.68

*Note.* Presents unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05



Table D2. Effects of Fear of Racial Favoritism on Obama Favorability, 2008 – 2013 (Multilevel Linear Regression with Respondent Random Effects)

Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-14.96*** (.57)	-16.61*** (.57)	-12.34*** (1.77)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism		-12.85*** (.61)	-10.32*** (1.17)
Perceptions X Attitudes about Racial Favoritism			-5.38* (2.11)
Racial Stereotypes	-32.56*** (1.92)	-26.29*** (1.93)	-25.98*** (1.93)
Perceptions of Family Finances	-.39 (.59)	-.24 (.59)	-.26 (.59)
Perceptions of National Economy	4.13*** (.56)	4.55*** (.56)	4.57*** (.56)
Party ID (Democrat)	36.03*** (.59)	35.08*** (.59)	35.12*** (.59)
Ideology (Liberal)	28.18*** (.83)	26.67*** (.83)	26.74*** (.83)
Education	13.12*** (1.56)	10.60*** (1.55)	10.72*** (1.55)
Income	3.53*** (.82)	3.70*** (.81)	3.69*** (.81)
Age	-9.54*** (1.10)	-8.28*** (1.09)	-8.35*** (1.09)
Gender (female)	.94** (.35)	.87* (.34)	.88* (.34)
South	-2.53*** (.38)	-2.26*** (.37)	-2.26*** (.37)
Constant	35.47*** (1.90)	43.53*** (1.92)	41.25*** (2.12)
Number of Observations	24,026	23,785	23,785
Number of Respondents	15,212	15,090	15,090
Overall R <sup>2</sup>	.53	.54	.54

*Note.* Presents unstandardized coefficients from a multilevel linear regression model with respondent random effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. Includes panel waves 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*p<.05

Table D3. The Interaction of Perceptions and Attitudes about Racial Favoritism on Vote Choice, 2008 – 2013 (Logit)

	Wave 3 Summer 2008	Wave 5 Fall 2008/ Winter 2009	Wave 7 Fall 2012	Wave 8 Fall 2012/ Winter 2013
Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-1.24** (.40)	-3.06*** (.23)	-3.06*** (.83)	-2.07** (.68)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-1.09* (.51)	-2.36*** (.34)	-.91 (1.16)	-.83 (1.01)
Perceptions X Attitudes	-.95 (1.06)	2.01** (.63)	2.17 (2.06)	1.28 (1.81)
Racial Stereotypes	-1.90* (.82)	-2.73*** (.52)	-.77 (1.47)	-3.13 (1.64)
Perceptions of Family Finances	.86** (.27)	.76*** (.14)	-.04 (.58)	-1.05 (.56)
Perceptions of National Economy	1.74*** (.42)	1.75*** (.26)	-5.15*** (.54)	-3.40*** (.47)
Party ID (Democrat)	4.75*** (.23)	5.13*** (.12)	5.99*** (.46)	6.06*** (.47)
Ideology (Liberal)	4.03*** (.35)	3.94*** (.19)	3.69*** (.68)	3.65*** (.69)
Education	2.25*** (.60)	1.95*** (.32)	-.76 (1.34)	.10 (1.36)
Income	.49 (.31)	.19 (.17)	-.25 (.68)	.21 (.66)
Age	-.58 (.48)	-.37 (.26)	-.79 (.88)	.43 (.87)
Gender (female)	-.09 (.13)	-.27*** (.07)	-.28 (.25)	-.31 (.24)
South	-.72*** (.14)	-.40*** (.08)	-.15 (.28)	-.37 (.28)
Constant	-5.65*** (.84)	-4.36*** (.49)	1.32 (1.69)	.29 (1.79)
Sample Size	3,014	12,062	1,458	1,287
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.73	.77	.86	.84

*Note.* Presents unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Vote choice ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 equals support for Obama and 0 equals support for his Republican opponent. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05

Table D4. Effects of White Fear of Racial Favoritism on Vote Choice, 2008 – 2013 (Multilevel Logistic Regression with Respondent Random Effects)

Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-3.35*** (.23)	-3.65*** (.24)	-4.14*** (.34)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism		-2.15*** (.22)	-2.95*** (.45)
Perceptions X Attitudes about Racial Favoritism			1.75* (.83)
Racial Stereotypes	-5.50*** (.72)	-4.40*** (.72)	-4.45*** (.71)
Perceptions of Family Finances	.96*** (.21)	1.04*** (.21)	1.03*** (.21)
Perceptions of National Economy	-.49* (.23)	-.46* (.23)	-.47* (.23)
Party ID (Democrat)	9.63*** (.40)	9.45*** (.39)	9.41*** (.39)
Ideology (Liberal)	7.12*** (.37)	6.84*** (.37)	6.81*** (.36)
Education	3.64*** (.50)	3.27*** (.50)	3.26*** (.50)
Income	.48 (.25)	.49 (.26)	.49 (.25)
Age	-.55 (.36)	-.35 (.36)	-.34 (.36)
Gender (female)	-.37*** (.10)	-.35** (.10)	-.35** (.10)
South	-.86*** (.12)	-.82*** (.12)	-.81*** (.12)
Constant	-5.80*** (.68)	-5.60*** (.68)	-5.25*** (.69)
Number of Observations	17,993	17,821	17,821
Number of Respondents	13,455	13,344	13,344
Log likelihood	-4601.57	-4511.78	-4509.57

*Note.* Presents unstandardized coefficients from a multilevel logistic regression model with respondent random effects. Standard errors are in parentheses. Includes panel waves 3, 5, 7, and 8. Vote choice ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 equals support for Obama and 0 equals support for his Republican opponent. All of the independent variables range from 0 to 1. \*\*\*p<.001, \*p<.05

Table D5. The Impact of *Lagged* Predictors on Obama Favorability, 2008 – 2013 (OLS)

	Wave 5 Fall 2008/ Winter 2009	Wave 6 Fall 2010	Wave 7 Fall 2012	Wave 8 Fall 2012/ Winter 2013
Perceptions of Racial Favoritism	-10.63*** (1.52)	-20.64*** (1.60)	-23.24*** (2.48)	-25.54*** (2.54)
Attitudes about Racial Favoritism	-14.14*** (1.83)	-16.91*** (1.60)	-13.23*** (2.51)	-12.26*** (2.58)
Racial Stereotypes	-31.64*** (5.06)	-18.48*** (5.18)	-10.46 (7.48)	-19.35* (7.56)
Perceptions of Family Finances	4.65* (1.81)	.70 (1.50)	.35 (2.40)	-.98 (2.44)
Perceptions of National Economy	16.11*** (2.56)	7.10** (2.64)	8.51* (4.08)	8.19* (4.14)
Party ID (Democrat)	29.50*** (1.62)	35.04*** (1.38)	40.95*** (2.08)	39.95*** (2.13)
Ideology (Liberal)	28.89*** (2.29)	27.28*** (2.00)	25.53*** (3.06)	26.72*** (3.11)
Education	14.49*** (3.99)	13.78*** (3.28)	13.75* (6.09)	11.71 (6.21)
Income	4.31* (2.05)	.35 (1.71)	5.59 (3.38)	6.21 (3.45)
Age	8.70** (3.21)	2.53 (2.77)	-4.81 (4.50)	4.01 (4.60)
Gender (female)	2.18* (.85)	.87 (.72)	1.92 (1.13)	2.00 (1.16)
South	-3.02** (.92)	-1.21 (.78)	-2.03 (1.25)	-2.35 (1.28)
Constant	26.47*** (5.33)	25.74*** (5.00)	19.83* (8.15)	24.96** (8.26)
Sample Size	2,686	3,079	1,645	1,581
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.51	.60	.54	.54

*Note.* Presents unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Favorability ranges from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings toward Obama. In column 1, Obama favorability on wave 5 is predicted by measures from wave 3. Columns 2, 3, and 4 predict Obama favorability on waves 6, 7, and 8, respectively; all use measures of the independent variables from wave 5. \*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05