

Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts Between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest

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Abstract: This paper seeks to explain how it is that African Americans make political decisions that involve tradeoffs between their racial group interest and their simple self-interest. We argue that the black American experience has provided political tools of crystallized group norms about politics, internalized beliefs about group solidarity, and mechanisms for enforcing them through social pressure. In a series of experiments, we test these claims by offering black subjects personal incentives to defect from the political position most favored by African Americans as a group. We find that while many blacks are willing to accept private incentives to defect from the group norm of political behavior, social pressure—particularly social pressure from other African Americans—and an internalized belief in black group solidarity are constraining, and work to prevent self-interested behavior. The results of this series of experiments speak to the types of internal conflicts that many blacks experience every day of their lives—choosing between maximizing racial group interests and self-interest—and offer new insight into how it is that blacks as actors in American partisan politics remain so politically homogeneous despite their growing ideological and economic variation.

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Introduction

During the 20th century movement for black rights, it was not uncommon for African American leaders and their associates to be offered money, jobs, and political appointments in exchange for either ceasing their political activities or actively subverting the efforts of other black activists. For example, some accounts report that A. Phillip Randolph, founder of the first officially recognized black labor union and one of the organizers of the 1963 March on Washington, was at one point offered a blank check by the Pullman Railroad Company in exchange for cessation of his organizing of black railroad workers. According to published accounts, Randolph was greatly offended by the implication that he could be “bought off” and returned the check, but only after writing on it “Negro Principle: Not For Sale” (Santino 1983; 1989). Randolph’s implication is believed to have been that blacks were no longer property and as such could no longer be bought and sold.

Although many black activists, like Randolph, refused to “sell-out”—to accept personal gain at the cost of the greater racial group interest—others did choose to accept the incentives offered to them in exchange for undermining the objectives of the black rights movement. A well-known case of the latter is that of Ernest Withers. Withers, a photojournalist and close associate of Martin Luther King, Jr., documented many of the most important moments of the Civil Rights Movement. He was especially known for his iconic and often personal photographs of King, himself, which were taken as the two traveled the country together campaigning for black rights. After Withers’ death in 2007, however, it was revealed that he had been working for the FBI as a paid informant tasked with spying on King and his acquaintances. While the exact details and scope of Withers’ spying are still unknown, his actions were seen by many blacks as a betrayal of black Americans’ efforts towards racial equality.²

² To be fair, the Hoover FBI was known to coerce, rather than positively incentivize, informants. While we do not know if this was the case for Withers, it is important to understand that in such circumstances

These high profile accounts of attempts to undermine the black rights movement, we argue, are illustrative of a more general and fundamental problem of black politics: how to prevent members of the group—whether they be movement participants, elected officials, or ordinary black citizens—from “selling out” the shared interest of the racial group in political choices and actions that increase the political and social standing of blacks as a group in exchange for individual private gains. For those interested in advancing black rights the answer to this question was not obvious. How might they be able to enforce compliance with group norms? And what would enable blacks, who may, indeed, agree with the principles of the black rights movement, to choose to act on personal incentives to betray racial group norms?

This paper addresses these fundamental questions about black political behavior. We endeavor to understand how it is that blacks navigate tradeoffs between their racial group interest and their simple self-interest. We are notably departing from previous research on the connection between racial group interest and self-interest among black Americans that describes the use of racial group interest in black political decision making as a type of low information rationality, where the racial group interest stands in as a proxy for self-interest when true self-interest is difficult to gauge. We are instead asking explicitly about the navigation of *known conflicts* between maximizing racial group interest and one’s own simple self-interest. We argue that blacks do have incentives to act in their rational self-interest, and may readily accept private incentives to defect from expected

individual motivations for betraying close associates are often much more complex than they seem. Our use of these examples is mostly illustrative.

The buying off of black leaders has continued well into the post-civil rights era. Consider the case of U.S. Representative Danny K. Davis (D, Ill). In 2002, Davis, along with nearly all of the other members of the Congressional Black Caucus, supported strict regulations on the rent-to-own industry, citing the industries’ omnipresence in poor black neighborhoods along with its predatory practices of charging exorbitant interest rates on electronic and appliances that were bought on time. In 2009, however, Davis reversed his position and actually co-sponsored legislation supported by the industry. According to the *New York Times*, Davis’ support for the industry changed after, “the industry made a promise to provide computers to a jobs program in Chicago named for him.” The *Times*’ investigation details how Larry Carrico, then president of the rent-to-own trade association, traveled to Chicago to personally “hand over the donations, including a van with ‘Congressman Danny K. Davis Job Training Program’ painted on its side” (Lipton and Lichtblau 2010).

racial group norms of political behavior—but only under specific informational conditions.³ In particular, we argue that racialized social pressure can prevent blacks from abandoning behavior that many/most blacks see as in the best interest of the racial group in exchange for what might satisfy the individual's own simple self-interest. We test these arguments using a series of experiments, where we vary both the personal incentives and the amount and kind of peer monitoring of political behavior. By offering black subjects private (monetary) incentives to abandon group norms of political behavior, we are not only able to observe who defects, but we are also able to assess the effectiveness of racialized social pressure at both preventing and encouraging defection from these norms. We conclude by discussing how the evidence presented here is consistent with previous arguments about the centrality of black institutions and black social networks in explanations of black political behavior, as they are the purveyors and enforcers of group-based norms of behavior.

Racial Group Interest's Incorporation into Black Politics

Much of what we know about the empirical linkage between racial group interest and black political decision making stems from Michael Dawson's (1994) book *Behind the Mule: Race Class and African American Politics* (see also Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson 1989). Dawson argues that the central importance of race to black political decision making represents a form of low information rationality. Arguments about low information rationality generally invoke the notion that individual citizens cannot access and process all of the relevant information about their potential political choices, and thus use heuristics, or information shortcuts, to infer how choices relate to their self-interest (e.g., Popkin 1991; Lupia 1994). In this vein, Dawson argues that African Americans regularly rely on racial group interest, as it is their most salient known interest, as a proxy for their own individual interests. As Dawson states, because of the history of racial discrimination in the United States:

³ By this we mean behaving in ways counter to the majority of African Americans, such as supporting Republican candidates and conservative causes, including supporting racially regressive policies.

...it was much more efficient for African Americans to determine what was good for the racial group than to determine what was good for themselves individually, and more efficient for them to use the status of the group, both relative and absolute, as a proxy for individual utility (p. 10).

This idea, termed the “black utility heuristic,” established a theoretical justification for why African Americans would be more likely to use racial group considerations as opposed to individual level considerations when making political decisions. Indeed, many studies have linked the key measure from Dawson’s study—linked fate, or subscription to the notion that what happens to blacks generally affects oneself as an individual black person—to an array of political outcomes, from policy positions to voter turnout (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1992; Dawson 2004; White 2007). Yet, some have challenged the notion that group interest is always the default for black political decision making (e.g., Cohen 1999). And, in fact, one of us (White 2007) has shown in previous work that the relevance of racial group considerations to black political decision making is context specific and dependent upon whether political choices are communicated in a way that makes their implication for the racial group clear and unclouded by sub-group differentiation.

Thus, while the notion of the black utility heuristic is a useful framework for understanding black political decision making under conditions of low information, “linked fate politics” fall short in explaining decision making where blacks are faced with perceptible tradeoffs between their own self-interest and the interest of the racial group. And we argue that such circumstances are not uncommon. They seem relatively easy to identify in social choices. Consider, for example, that when evaluating housing options, African Americans have been shown to express a preference for neighborhoods with significant numbers of other African Americans (Charles 2000; Krysan and Farley 2002) as well as an interest in neighborhoods with low crime rates, good public schools and quality housing stock (Erase 2012; Harris 1999; Krysan et al. 2009). What guides the choice when these considerations directly conflict with one another, which they too often do? Similarly, blacks can feel very conflicted about dating and marrying outside of their race because of the tension such a

choice represents between their individual preferences and their sense of the group interest (Kennedy 2008). One might expect the same dilemmas in choices about whether or not to attend predominantly white colleges and universities or attending churches with largely white congregations. And one also expects that such trade-offs are at least at times quite perceptible in explicitly political choices. Why should middle-class black Americans not perceive some tension between their own self-interest and support for social welfare programs? Or why should those who strongly favor anti-abortion stances not desire to support the (Republican) candidates who endorse those positions? Our standard answers are likely ones that would invoke a strong commitment to a norm of racial group solidarity. But why is it that some blacks, even those who claim to be loyal group members, do, in fact, defect from the expected group behavior while others do not? And *how* is it that blacks are able to maintain group solidarity in the face private incentives to defect from the group norm?

Part of the answer to these questions might be found in rational choice accounts of black political behavior. Notably, in his book, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, Dennis Chong (1991) lays out a theoretical framework for understanding why individual African Americans would choose to participate in the collective action of the Civil Rights movement given that they likely realized that their participation was not a necessary condition for them to enjoy the benefits of the movement—if any were actually to accrue. Chong argues that African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement were able to overcome this collective action problem because they were motivated by a number of non-tangible incentives to participate, most centrally social pressure. Chong, in other words, argues that activists during the Civil Rights Movement behaved in ways consistent with group expectations because they were constrained, at least in part, by the

reputational consequences of defecting from the group norm; they did not want to be seen by their peers as free riders thus they adhered to group expectation of political participation.⁴

While the evidence provided by Chong in support of his theory is largely anecdotal, and at times fails to address important alternative explanations of black behavior, the theoretical framework he offers is useful in explicitly outlining possible constraints and motivations underlying blacks' willingness to participate in political action. Most notably, Chong offers the explanation that reputational sanctions have the power to constrain black behavior, even when the behavior in question may come at the risk of significant cost to the individual.⁵ Indeed, though Chong does not invoke them by name, notions of punishment with social sanctions by the black community for defection from common conceptions of the group interest are tangible enough that terminology for such sanctions is found in political discourse through the use of the "Uncle Tom" and/or "sellout" epithets. These are phrases that are most commonly used to describe those blacks who seek personal benefit in supporting the causes of white Americans at the expense of causes supported by most other blacks and which are meant to directly benefit all or most members of the racial group.⁶ In other words, these terms are linguistic evidence of reputational sanctions for those who engage in what some might call "racial free riding" (see Starkey 2010).

Though Chong's treatment was of the Civil Rights Movement in particular, there are reasons to expect that the threat of reputational sanctions—including being called an "Uncle Tom" and/or "sellout"—should generally constrain black political behavior and work to prevent defection from the expected group norm of political action, even in the post-civil-rights era.⁷ In this era, public use

⁴ Certainly many blacks at this time also faced social pressure to abstain from participation in movement activities. Given the dangerous nature of political action during the Civil Rights Movement, particularly among those in the southern United States, it was common for family members and loved ones to discourage participation (Payne 2007).

⁵ That is, at least at times, movement participants were well aware that their participation came with real risk of imprisonment, police or mob brutality, and even death.

⁶ These phrases are also at times used to describe those blacks who might fail to support the causes of black Americans because they perceive some personal benefit from abstaining.

⁷ Chong, however, never actually directly acknowledges the use of the phrases "Uncle Tom" and/or "sellout."

of these epithets continues, and commonly occurs in discourse of disapproval of blacks who endorse mainstream conservative principles and reject the social and cultural conventions of the black community.⁸ Black conservatives such as Clarence Thomas, Herman Cain, and Allen West, for example, have all fallen victim to the “Uncle Tom” and/or “sellout” characterization. While scholars have argued that the problem with the modern usage of these terms is that defining the boundaries of blackness can be difficult and in some cases the expressions appear recklessly overused as ways of punishing any small deviation from the group norm (Kennedy 2008), most would not disagree that the threat of such characterizations continues to powerfully constrain African American behavior (Carter 1991; Steele 1991; Kennedy 2008).

The enduring power of reputational sanctions to constrain the political behavior of African Americans derives from widely held and historically entrenched expectations within the black community about how blacks are to behave politically and socially. Nowhere is the norm of black political behavior more clear than in electoral politics: it is not only well-documented, but also commonly known that nearly all African American voters will vote for the Democratic candidate in modern presidential elections. In no presidential election in modern time has a Republican candidate received more than 11% of the African American popular vote. And in the elections where race was not only read into the party identifications of the candidates, but in the candidates, themselves—the elections of 2008 and 2012—the Democratic candidate took even larger shares of the African American vote (95% and 93%, respectively). These “facts” of black political homogeneity also get reified by media coverage of elections and campaigns, which consistently describe African Americans as the most loyal voting bloc of the Democratic Party.^{9 10} It is the lack of ambiguity in common knowledge of where “most” blacks stand on certain political issues that

⁸ Some who endorse conservative principles such as black preachers may be spared these insults as they do not reject many of the cultural norms of the black community.

⁹ Similarly, African Americans are more liberal than most whites on issues related to race, social welfare and income inequality (Smith and Seltzer 2000).

¹⁰ In contrast, it is less clear that ascriptive whiteness is particularly highly correlated with partisan politics.

gives sanctions such as the “Uncle Tom” and “sellout” epithets their power. Because the political loyalties and dispositions of the black community are so clear in common understandings, any deviation from the group position, even a small one, could potentially open one up to charges of “selling out” the race.¹¹

Also overlooked in many accounts of black political behavior are the enforcement mechanisms for these sanctions. During the Civil Rights Movement the exercise of applying social pressure to encourage black political involvement occurred largely through black institutions. It was through black churches, colleges, and social and political organizations that black leaders were able to inspire political action. Their appeals certainly engaged democratic principles such as freedom and equality, but their messages would also directly exploit social connections within the black community to place pressure on blacks to participate (see Morris 1984). Such use of social pressure can be seen in Charles Payne’s (2007) account of 1960’s civil rights efforts in Greenwood, Mississippi, where he describes the rallies and meetings organized by groups such as the NAACP as trying:

“...to change the behavior of their members by offering a supportive social environment, public recognition for living up to group norms, and public pressure to continue doing so. They create an environment in which you feel that if you stumble, you are letting down not only yourself but all of your friends. One might be afraid to go to a particular demonstration or be tired of demonstrations, period, but not going would mean disappointing those people who were counting on you,” (p. 260).

Here Payne highlights the investments that blacks make in their relationships with other blacks and how these interconnections can help to sustain collective action. He then goes on to describe a much more aggressive use racialized social pressure in his description of an April 1963 speech delivered by national civil rights activist Dick Gregory at a black church in Greenwood. In the speech, Gregory calls out prominent members of the local black community who were slow in

¹¹ However, deviations to the right of the group norm are much more likely to incur criticism than deviations to the left (see Carter 1991).

expressing their support for the Freedom Movement demonstrations. Gregory begins by taking on the principal of a local black school saying:

“And your principal you have here [*Loud and very sustained applause, shouting*], this guy... or whatever his name is. [*Loud applause*] When this man would ask Negro kids to stop fighting for their rights he is lower than the lowest Negro, lower than the lowest animal that walks the face of the earth. [*Very sustained applause*].... (p.198)

Gregory then goes on to attack local black preachers who failed to openly support the protest efforts; calling on parishioners to abandon the churches and pray in the streets instead. Gregory explained that this alternative is, “...better than worshipping with a man who is less than a man!” Indeed it seemed that Gregory’s words had some impact. Payne notes that not long after the Gregory’s speech thirty-one local black ministers issued a joint statement expressing their unwavering support for the Freedom Movement.

Despite the expansion of black rights following the Civil Rights Movement, the potential for black social connections to influence black political behavior remains strong today. Blacks continue to be one of the most socially isolated racial groups in American society, and this isolation has helped to maintain many black social and political institutions. For example, a 2009 Pew study found that nearly 60% of African American churchgoers still attend historically black churches, churches which remain predominantly filled with African American members and preachers.¹² Similarly, while the proportion of black college students who attend historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) has declined over the last 40 years, 13% of black college graduates still come from HBCUs.¹³ Furthermore, researchers have found that many of those blacks who choose to attend non-HBCUs, eventually find themselves members of black social and professional organizations within these institutions (Sidanius et al. 2004). This sort of racial homophily can even be seen in black social networks that exist over the internet. In a recent study of friendship networks on the

¹² These are Protestant churches from historically black denominations. <http://www.pewforum.org/a-religious-portrait-of-african-americans.aspx>

¹³ Department of Education. “Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976 to 2001.” September 2004. p. 2.

social networking website *Facebook*, researchers noted that black students were significantly more likely to have same-race social networks than other racial groups (Wimmer and Lewis 2010). Thus, despite the increased integration of blacks into mainstream American society, racial isolation still defines the daily interactions of many if not most African Americans. And it is this segregation—and the investment in black social networks and institutional structures that were born out of it—that enable the definition and enforcement of group-based norms of behavior.

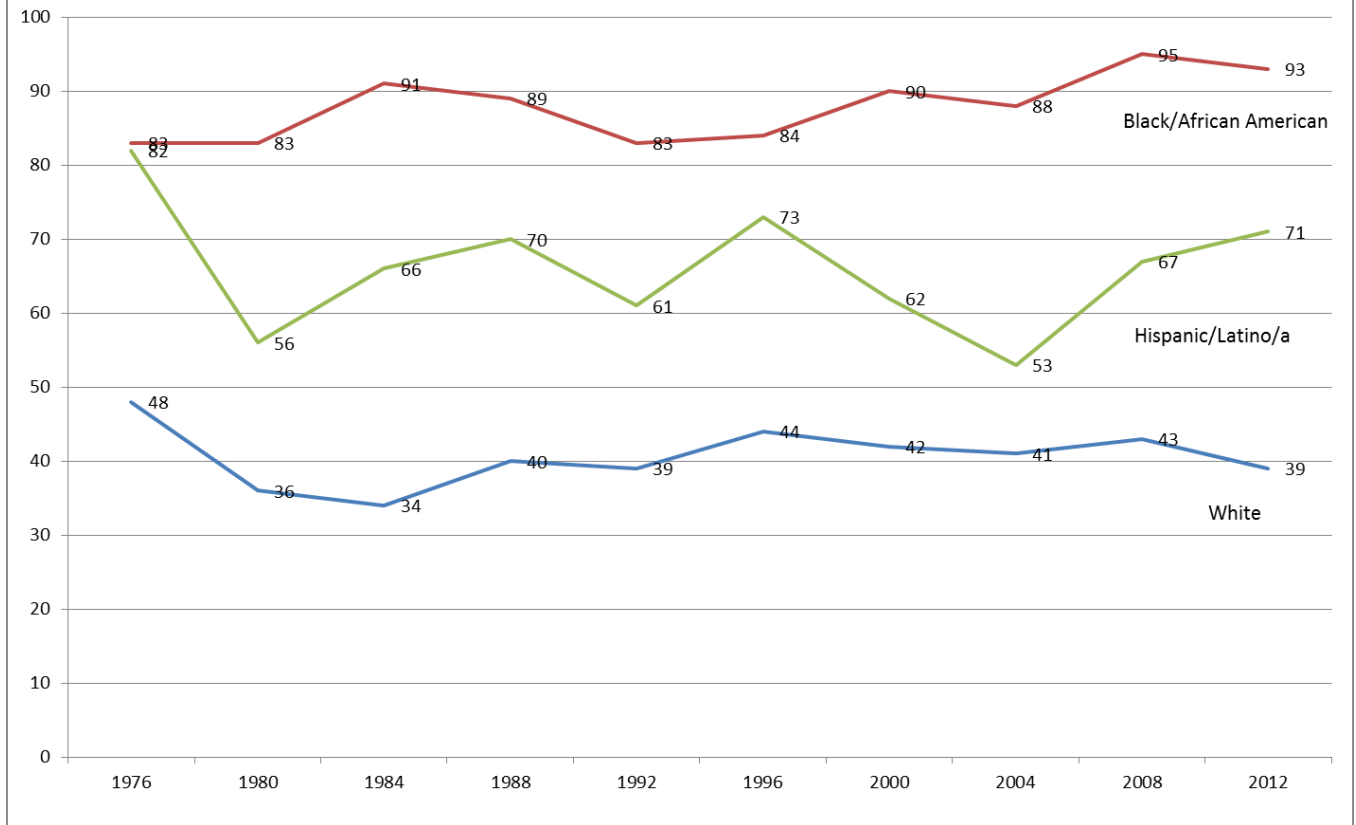
Social Pressure and Political Behavior

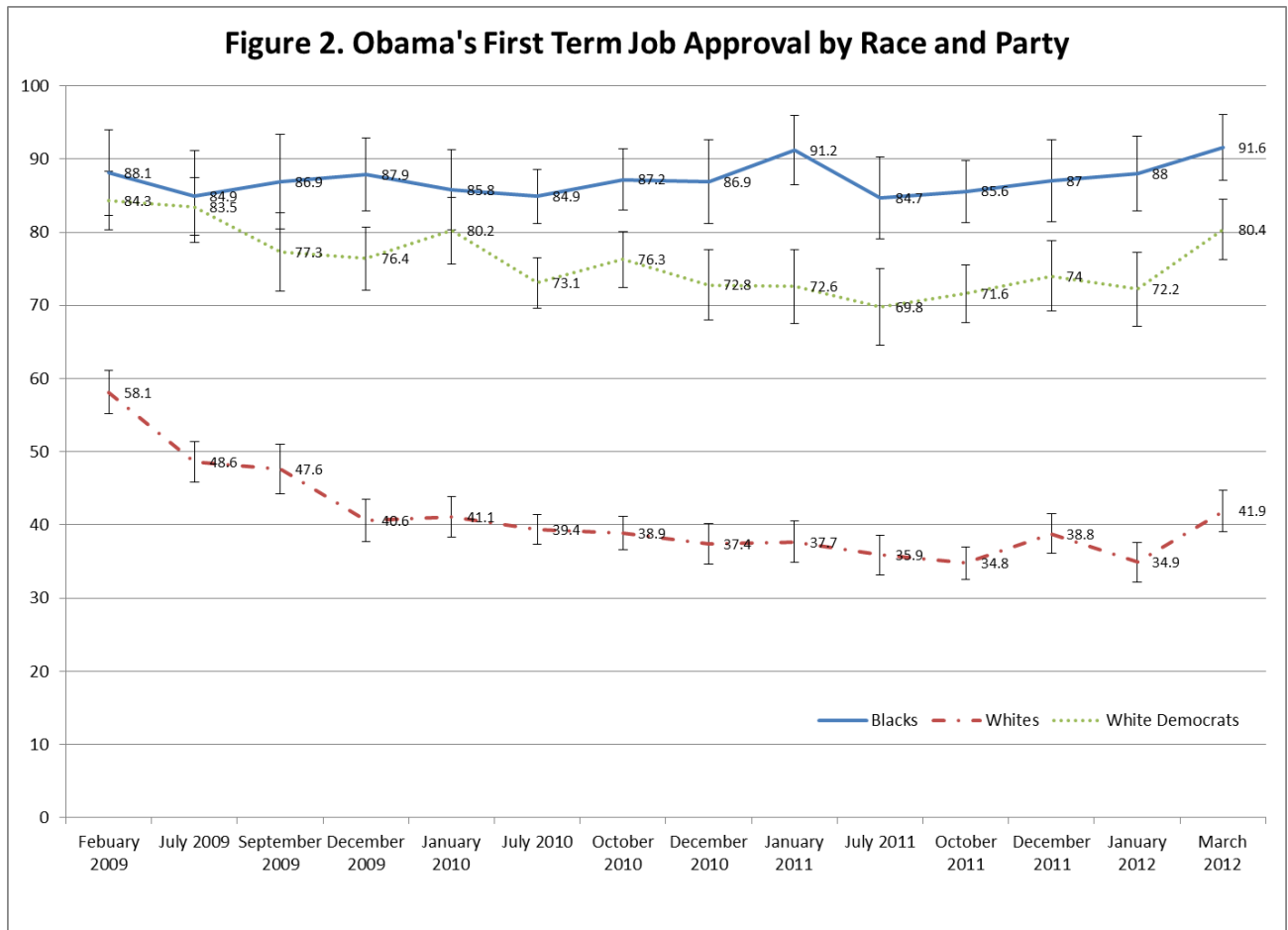
In recent years, there has been a renewed interest among researchers in the power of social pressure to influence mass political behavior, particularly in the realm of voter turnout. Some of these recent studies have focused on how external social pressure in the form of social shame—a concept similar to the idea of “reputational sanctions” that has permeated understandings of black collective action—can influence an individual’s willingness to turnout to vote. In a large scale get-out-the-vote (GOTV) field experiment, for example, Gerber, Green and Larimer (2008) demonstrate that threatening to publicize a citizen’s turnout record to their neighbors can increase turnout by between 2 and 8 percentage points. In other words, some people are more likely conform to norms of participation when they are made to believe that their behavior is likely to be observed by others. This type of effect has been replicated over a number of studies and supports the general idea that “shaming” is an effective tool for shaping political behavior (Gerber, Green and Larimer 2010).

While the GOTV research identifies the potential for the social pressure of reputational sanctions to influence political behavior, less is known about the process by which “shaming” influences such behavior. Social psychological research on social pressure and conformity, however, suggests that norm crystallization and norm intensity are both important in determining whether or not social pressure will result in conformity with the group norm (Jackson 1965). That is, awareness of significant variation in agreement among group members about the importance of the norm to

the functioning of the group—lower norm crystallization—decreases the potential for a message of social pressures to lead to compliance with the norm (Cialdini et al. 1990). Similarly, some norms are perceived as more or less important to the group than others—to have higher or lower intensity. Concerns about reputational sanctions for violations of less intensely held norms are likely to be discounted, as individuals calculate that their deviations from the norm may likely go unnoticed or ignored, while violations of more intensely held norms are more likely to deliver reputational costs. Putting voting in this framework, we might conclude that voting would be best characterized by high crystallization and low intensity. That is, while most Americans are likely aware of considerable agreement in society with the notion that voting is an important civic duty (crystallization), most are also aware that not only do many Americans regularly not vote, but the information of who does and does not vote is typically difficult to discover—suggesting that the norm of voting is not a preoccupation of the public (low intensity). Thus, it seems the effectiveness of the “shaming” GOTV studies should hinge on their ability to increase the perceptions of intensity of the norm of voting; by threatening to publicize a citizen’s turnout to their neighbors, the message is communicating not newfound information about the desirability of voting, but of increased chances of reputational costs for not voting.

Figure 1. Democratic Presidential Vote Share by Race, Exit Polls





How do we translate these shaming results and the norm crystallization and intensity framework into a lens for understanding black political behavior? Our argument is that there are good reasons to believe that social pressure and shaming might be particularly effective both at inspiring participation among African Americans and in shaping the particular choices and actions they take in politics. It seems that norms of political behavior among African Americans are both highly crystallized and intense. Arguably, both the norms of participating in politics for the good of the group (taking action) and making behavioral choices that are likely to increase the standing of the group as a whole (contributing to the racial group's interest) are commonly understood and commonly salient norms for blacks in their roles as citizens. Indeed, the behavior of black Americans in the 2012 presidential election speaks to both these points; not only did the overwhelming majority of blacks voters (93%) choose to cast their votes in support of the first black president (See Figure 1), but blacks turned out as voters at levels equal to or higher than other racial

groups—despite African Americans as a group lacking many of the social and economic resources that would facilitate higher turnout.¹⁴ This dedication to the first black president can also be seen in the intensity of blacks' approval of Obama throughout his first term. As illustrated in Figure 2, while white Democrats' support for Obama began to wane as his term progressed, perhaps unsurprisingly in the face of criticisms over bailout programs and the President's push for health care reform, blacks as a group (regardless of their partisan and/or ideological backgrounds) remained consistently loyal to the president throughout his first term.¹⁵ Taken together, these trends speak to the likelihood of obvious and well understood descriptive norms of expected political behavior with regard to the first black president—that blacks are to be supportive in opinion and action. It is similarly highly salient norms and the social repercussions of violating these norms along with the constraints of the American two party system (see Frymer 1999) that we believe help us to understand why African Americans of all ideological and economic backgrounds have continued to actively and openly support the Democratic Party and its candidates for over 40 years—that to support Democratic candidates and policies is understood to advance the racial group's interests, and that to defect from that choice will likely invite significant reputational costs.

Our explanation of black political decision-making thus centers on *racialized* social pressure as an important constraint on black political behavior.¹⁶ We argue that blacks' use of racial considerations in political decision making is more than just low information rationality—though we do not argue that it never functions as such. Our argument hinges on the notion that many African Americans, even those who are highly racially identified, are frequently faced with political circumstances where the choice before them involves some known conflict between maximizing

¹⁴ These data are very much preliminary but suggest that black turnout is likely to be at least equal to that of whites and higher than that of Hispanics or Asians. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/12/26/the-growing-electoral-clout-of-blacks-is-driven-by-turnout-not-demographics/1/>

¹⁵ Data are Pew opinion poll data available at <http://www.people-press.org/category/datasets/>.

¹⁶ This is also not to say that social pressure is the only thing that influences black political behavior. The point here is that social pressure and reputational costs are often overlooked as factors contributing to black political participation.

private or personal benefits and maximizing what they and most other blacks believe is in the best interest of the group. Yet, clear and common understandings of in-group expectations for the political behavior of blacks and of likely consequences of defection from the expected racial group norm of political behavior place significant constraints on possible defection from the group norms. Note that we are arguing that social pressure from other blacks should be particularly important in shaping black political behavior. For an individual who identifies with his racial group, the cost of defecting from understood norms and practices of that group are greater when it is understood that other members of that group in particular might be aware of this defection. In other words, we expect that blacks are not afraid of whites questioning their blackness, but of having other blacks question their commitment to or standing in the racial group. Beyond external social pressure, we also expect that an internalized belief in black solidarity is internally constraining and works to prevent self-interested behavior—that acceptance of the importance of group solidarity represents an individual level commitment to group based norms of collective political behavior. Lastly, we are arguing that there are limits to the power of black social pressure—that there is a political “there, there.” In particular, in line with the social psychological research on group norms, we argue that black social pressure must work in conjunction with the *established* norms of black political behavior (Cialdini et al. 1990). In other words, it should be much more difficult to enlist racialized social pressure to induce blacks to behave in ways counter to the well-established norms (to subvert group interest because the group is suddenly saying it is OK), than it is to enlist racialized social pressure to induce blacks to subvert their own (long-standing or newly found) self-interest.

Design

To test our arguments about racialized social pressure as a constraint on black political behavior, we designed a series of experiments that enable us to observe the different tradeoffs blacks make between their racial group interest and simple self-interest. Leveraging a real world scenario,

the 2012 presidential election, we are able to juxtapose self-interest (instant monetary gain) with group-interest (supporting a political candidate that the black community almost unanimously endorses) in a way that allows us the ability to test the limits of racial group loyalty.¹⁷ This type of experimental research design is empirically beneficial because it allows us the ability to establish a direct causal connection between group interest, self-interest and politics by manipulating each and comparing the effects to a baseline or control condition. Will blacks be willing to set aside their simple self-interest (instant monetary gain) in order to support the candidate that is both a member of the group and who is also most favored by the black community? And what role, if any, might racialized social pressure play in constraining this defection?

Experiment 1 – Self-Interest and Social Pressure

This first experiment was designed to directly assess the effects of self-interest and social pressure on blacks' willingness to conform to racial group norms of political behavior. The experiment was conducted from September 7, 2012 to September 20, 2012. One hundred and forty-eight self-identified African American subjects participated in this study and all of the subjects were students at a historically black college located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We chose to conduct the study at an HBCU because it provides us with the cleanest test of how social pressure within the black community works. Again, our argument is that the power of social pressure on black political behavior derives from the threat of sanctions for defection and the in-group mechanisms for enforcing them. Conducting this study within a black institution provides us with a context where we can be confident that awareness of these sanctions is prevalent, that the structure of the subjects'

¹⁷ Though vote choice is indeed an anonymous act, and thus not strictly enforceable through social pressure and monitoring, it is still susceptible to internalized norms of group solidarity. Moreover, our explanation is about electoral politics in general (including, but not limited to, voter turnout, which can be monitored) and political participation more broadly. Our focus on voting and the 2012 election is mostly instrumental, given the clear norms of electoral behavior within the black community. Our theory and explanation should be generalizable to any political act for which there are clear norms and expectations of behavior for group members.

peer social networks are almost exclusively black, and there is an accessible institutional mechanism for outing defection. In particular, in this experiment, we take advantage of the school's student newspaper as a known mechanism for dissemination of information through these black social networks to provide a cue to likely social sanctions for deviation from a black political norm.

Subjects in this experiment were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a control condition or one of two treatment conditions, which varied personal incentives and racialized social pressure. Upon agreeing to participate, all subjects were first asked to fill out a pre-test questionnaire and were then instructed that they were to participate in a short five minute one-on-one interview about the upcoming presidential election. During the interview, subjects were told that the researchers conducting the study were political scientists from the Ohio State University who had been awarded a grant from an organization called the "Voter Turnout Project" and that the funds from this grant were to be used to provide young people, "like themselves" with an opportunity to contribute to presidential and congressional campaigns. Subjects were told by the interviewer that the Voter Turnout Project would like to provide them with \$100 to donate to the presidential campaigns of either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney. Subjects were told that they could allocate the money any way they saw fit. They could donate it all to one candidate or split it across the candidates as long as their donations totaled to \$100. The interviewer then directed the subject's attention to a webpage on a nearby laptop where the donation amounts were to be entered (See Appendix A for Script and Screenshots).¹⁸ Once the subject determined how they wanted the money donated the interviewer entered the amount into the website, asked the subject if they were sure about their donation and then submitted the contribution. No money was actually contributed to the campaigns of either candidate. This deception was built into the study to make it seem as realistic as

¹⁸ The interviewers were one self-identified African American female and one self-identified Hispanic female of Dominican decent. Each interviewer conducted a roughly equal number of interviews across each of the three conditions (i.e., the number of interviews were balanced across conditions for each interviewer). There were no observable differences in contribution amounts related to either the race/gender of the interviewers across the three conditions. It is probably also important to note that the Hispanic interviewer acknowledges frequently being perceived as African American, especially outside of the northeastern United States.

possible, though all the subjects were debriefed and informed of the deception at the close of the study.¹⁹

Table 1. Description of Experiment One Conditions

Control (n=48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked to donate \$100 • Money can go to Obama or Romney campaigns or split across campaigns
Incentive Condition (n=50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked to donate \$100 • Money can go to Obama or Romney campaigns or split across campaigns • \$1 for every \$10 donated to Romney
Incentive + Newspaper Condition (n=50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked to donate \$100 • Money can go to Obama or Romney campaigns or split across campaigns • <i>Told contribution and name would appear in school newspaper</i> • \$1 for every \$10 donated to Romney

Table 1 offers a general description of the experimental conditions. In the control condition, subjects were simply asked to allocate the money to the candidates of their choosing. With this condition, we can establish a baseline contribution amount, which also acts as a gauge of the “norm” of black political behavior in the form of campaign contributions. Our expectation was that African American subjects would overwhelmingly choose to have the majority of the funds donated to the Obama campaign.

Row two of Table 1 highlights the manipulations of the first treatment condition, which we call the *Incentive* condition. In this condition, subjects were given the same ability to allocate \$100 in

¹⁹ Subjects seemed to buy the story. In post-test interviews, many of them expressed satisfaction in being able to contribute to the campaigns despite not actually having enough money to contribute on their own. All subjects were debriefed about the deception of the experiment via email.

campaign contributions, but they were additionally instructed that the computer may provide them with an incentive to donate to one of the candidates. They were told that, in the interest of fairness, the computer would randomly determine for which candidate the incentive would be offered. In reality, the incentive was not randomly assigned—all subjects in the incentive conditions were provided an incentive to contribute to the Romney campaign. That is, we wanted to incentivize deviation from the (expected) black norm of behavior—contributing to Obama—with a personal monetary gain, but did not want the subjects to suspect the monetary incentive as being driven by partisan incentives. Subjects in the *Incentive* condition were told that for every \$10 they donated to the Romney campaign they would receive a \$1 personal payout, implying a maximum payout of \$10 if they allocated the entire \$100 to the Romney campaign. These payouts, if chosen by the subjects, were actually paid in cash within the experiment. In this condition we expect to induce internal conflict among black subjects between their individual self-interest and their group interest, causing some to decide to stick with the Obama campaign and others to choose to take the payout and as a consequence provide financial support to the Romney campaign.

Finally, in the second treatment condition, the *Incentive + Newspaper* condition, highlighted in the bottom row of Table 1, we add a manipulation for examining the effect of social pressure in restraining self-interest incentivized defection from the group norm. This condition is identical to the *Incentive* condition with the exception that we informed subjects—before they were asked to make their donation decisions—that the donation would be publicized along with their name in the university’s newspaper. In the context of this HBCU, this manipulation represents quite well the threat of racialized social sanctions. The University has a newspaper that is well read by the largely African American student body, meaning exposure of their choices to their fellow African American student peers was likely to be anticipated by the subjects. Thus the treatment should provide a sense of social pressure to conform to the black norm of expected behavior—contributing to Obama—

and reduce defection as subjects fear the social consequences of being seen as someone who deviates from that norm.

Our most straightforward expectations across the conditions, again, is that the introduction of personal monetary incentives (self-interest) for defection from the norm of supporting Obama should result in decreased contributions to Obama, but that the effect of the incentive should be attenuated with the introduction of the newspaper disclosure as a mechanism for social pressure to comply with the group norm despite its conflict with self-interest. Yet, we do not expect the effects to necessarily be monolithic. In particular, we expect that not all blacks are equally likely to maximize their self-interest in response to the incentive, and that some will elect to remain loyal and disregard the incentive. Most important, we expect that the subjects with beliefs in black group solidarity—those who have internalized the notion of the importance of the collective power of the black community and have a strong commitment to the idea that blacks should not free ride off the efforts of other blacks—will be less likely to defect in the face of the incentive. Similarly, we expect that black's feelings and attachments to money should condition their response to the treatments as those blacks who place a high value on money in their lives will likely be particularly susceptible to the incentives. We will also examine the possible moderating effects of linked fate attitudes and party strength, as these are two other predispositions that are often implicated in the political decision making calculus of African Americans. While the existing literature thus gives reason to investigate the constraining power of these dispositions on black political behavior, we expect the belief in group solidarity provides a stronger incentive to prevent defection from the group norm because of its greater relevance to making a decision about a trade-off between the group and oneself.

We will also examine the possible moderating effects of linked fate attitudes, party strength, attitudes about money and beliefs in black group solidarity on responsiveness to the social pressure cue. Given the overwhelmingly widespread nature of the norm of supporting the Obama campaign

among African Americans (high crystallization), and the likelihood that it would be particularly highly salient within a black institution, we expect that the effect of social pressure cue in this context to reduce defection should be particularly strong, and thus unlikely to be differentiated or conditioned by any of these predispositions.

Results

Figure 3 presents the basic results of this experiment, the average amount of money allocated to the Obama campaign across each of the experimental conditions. Within the *Control* condition the average donation to the Obama campaign was \$90. Consistent with our expectation that support for Obama would be a highly crystallized and highly salient norm, subjects in this condition demonstrated a clear preference for supporting the Obama campaign. Indeed, in the absence of any incentive to do otherwise, most of the subjects in this condition allocated all of the money provided to them to the Obama campaign; only 2% of the control condition subjects gave the Obama campaign less than \$50, and about 75% of subjects gave the Obama campaign \$90 or more. In other words, much like the survey and election results discussed earlier would suggest most black Americans would do, the black subjects who participated in this condition of the experiment, all else equal, expressed fairly unanimous support for Barack Obama with their campaign contribution dollars. Thus, these results reflect the “norm” of black behavior present within our subject population, and provide a useful benchmark to which to compare the results of the other experimental conditions.

Within the *Incentive* condition, where subjects were offered the self-interest payout of \$1 for every \$10 they allocated to the Romney campaign, we expected less adherence to the group interest norm of supporting Obama. Indeed, in the face of an incentive to defect, willingness to allocate

money to the Obama campaign dropped off significantly as compared to the control.²⁰ As displayed in the second column of Figure 2, the average Obama contribution dropped by more than \$20, to \$68. Twenty-two percent of subjects maximized their self-interest and donated the entire \$100 to the Romney campaign. In the face of individual private incentives to defect, individuals who would have ordinarily behaved in a manner consistent with the expected group norm of behavior (supporting the Obama campaign) defected and choose instead to support the Romney campaign.²¹

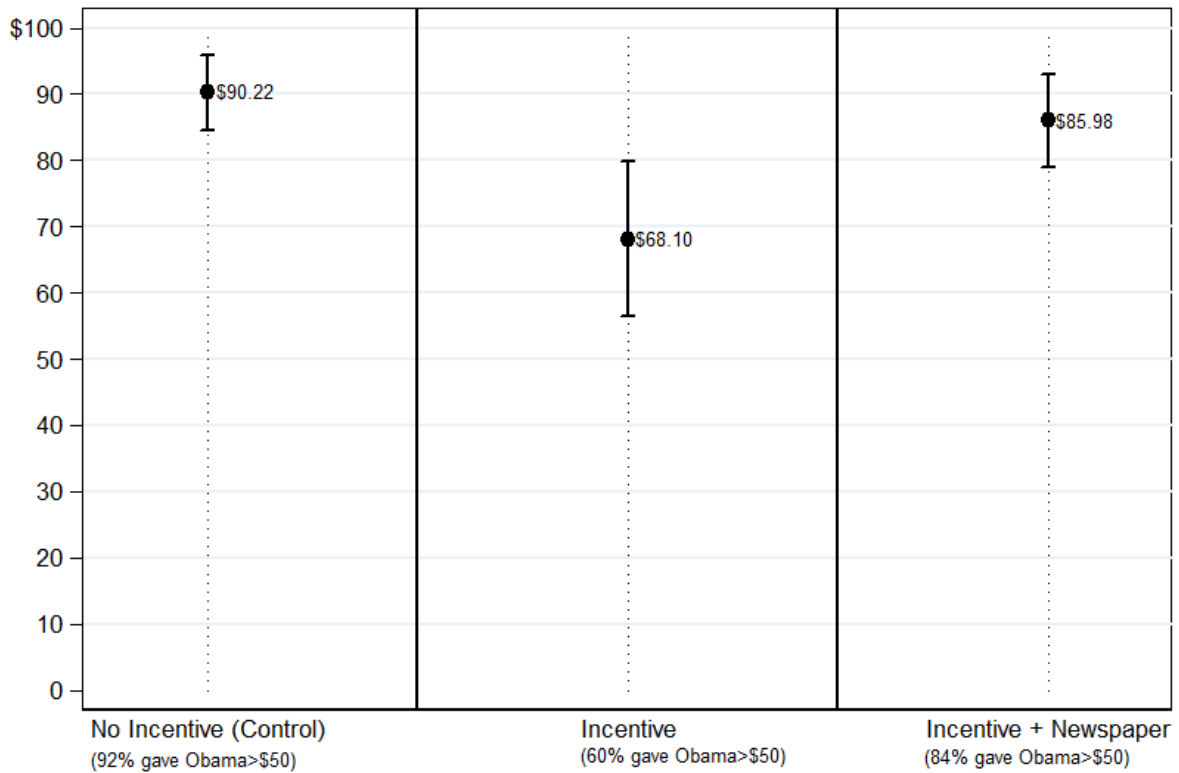
Can social pressure, then, prevent this defection? If so, we should observe an attenuated effect of the incentive in the form of a smaller difference from the control condition in Obama contributions in the *Incentive +Newspaper* condition than in the *Incentive* only condition. Indeed, we observe, as illustrated in Figure 3, that when the incentive was combined with information that the donations would be published in the university's newspaper, defection from the group norm of supporting Obama decreased significantly. Relative to the simple *Incentive* condition, contributions to the Obama campaign in the *Incentive +Newspaper* condition increased by about \$18, on average. The average Obama campaign contributions in the *Incentive +Newspaper* condition are also statically indistinguishable from the control ($p=.485$), suggesting this social pressure resulted in a return to normalized behavior. Thus, while black political solidarity is susceptible to the influence of private incentives, social pressure seems to be an effective tool for keeping defection from the group norm in check.²²

²⁰ We also conducted these tests using nonparametric randomization inference tests (See Keele, McConnaughy and White 2012). The inferences derived from these tests are indistinguishable from those produced using ANOVA. The randomization test results that correspond to the results presented in Figure 3 can be found in the Appendix in Table A4.

²¹ Despite the considerable degree of defection initiated in the presence of an incentive, we should note that 60% of respondents still gave more than \$50 to the Obama campaign in this condition. These individuals' loyalty to the Obama campaign is likely driven by a commitment to some set of principled beliefs about race and/or politics.

²² While we cannot know for certain that the subjects were convinced by our deception, the pattern of responses observed in the two incentive conditions suggests that the subjects seemed convinced by our cover story. If they did not think that we (the researchers) would follow-up on providing the money to the candidates we would expect much more defection in the *Incentive* condition as subjects would seek to maximize the payout. As mentioned earlier, only 22% of the subjects in this condition fully defected (gave all of the money to Romney). The same is true for the *Incentive + Newspaper* condition, if the subjects did not believe that we would follow up on publishing their contributions in the university's newspaper then we should expect to observe not only considerably more defection but full defection where the subject

Figure 3. Experiment 1, Obama Contribution by Experimental Condition (95% CIs)



Predictors of Black Loyalty for Obama

But who is it that defects in the face of self-interest incentives and who is it that responds to social pressure? Below we examine, separately across each of the experimental conditions, the relationships between blacks' willingness to contribute to the Obama campaign and individual level dispositions that might reasonably constrain black behavior. We examine how the effects of the experimental treatments on the subjects' willingness to contribute to the Obama campaign might be conditioned by Democratic partisan strength,²³ black racial identity—as measured by blacks' feeling of interconnectedness or linked fate—willingness to enforce black group solidarity, and the value that the respondent places on money in their life (See Appendix A for exact question wording).

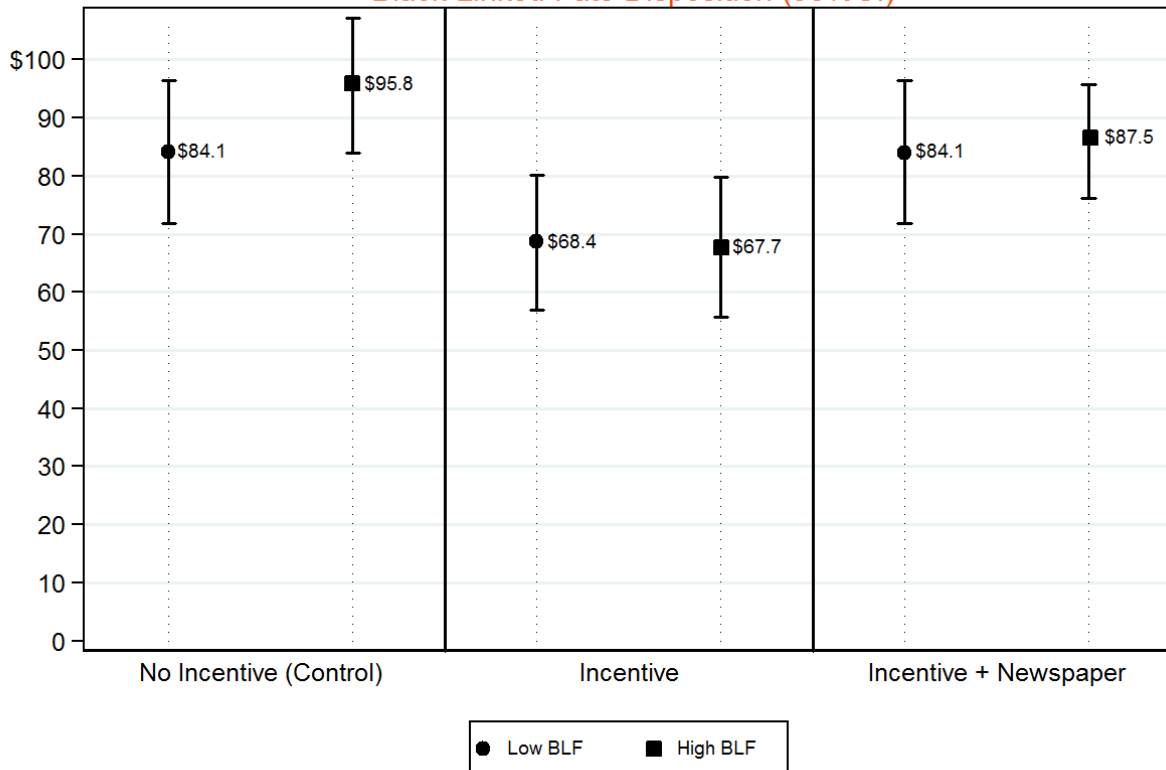
is taking giving all the money to Romney in order to maximize the payout. In the Incentive+Newspaper condition we see that only 4% of the subjects fully defected.

²³ Only 5% of respondents identified as Republicans. Thus, we focus our attention on the strength of Democratic partisan identification.

Linked Fate

Beginning with the concept of linked fate, we might expect, based on the literature, that those blacks who feel more closely tied to blacks as a group (or those with higher linked fate) would be more likely to feel internally constrained and thus not defect from the group norm in the face of private incentives. The results presented in Figure 4. describe the relationship between *Linked Fate* attitudes and blacks' Obama contribution by experimental condition. What we see here is that the pattern of responses exhibited by blacks who are *high* in linked fate look very similar to those presented in Figure 3. High linked fate blacks defect from the group norm in the incentive condition and the social pressure condition brings their behavior back to the contribution levels observed in the control. In fact, there really seems to be no difference in how high and low linked fate blacks respond to the various incentive conditions. In other word, linked fate does not seem be a very effective at containing black defection, it seems that for some blacks the ties that bind them to the group are no match for power of financial incentives.²⁴ The power of social pressure, however, works for all blacks no matter how linked they claim to be to the racial group, this should not be surprising given that all of these subjects are students at a black college. In other words, because all these subjects are part of a black institution for which most of their peers are also members/students it does not really matter how connected they feel to the racial group the consequences of not conforming to the group norms would likely still be the same, thus unless the subject is willing to accept the sanctions for defection, conformity seems to be the only option.

Figure 4. Obama Contribution by Condition and Black Linked Fate Disposition (95%CI)



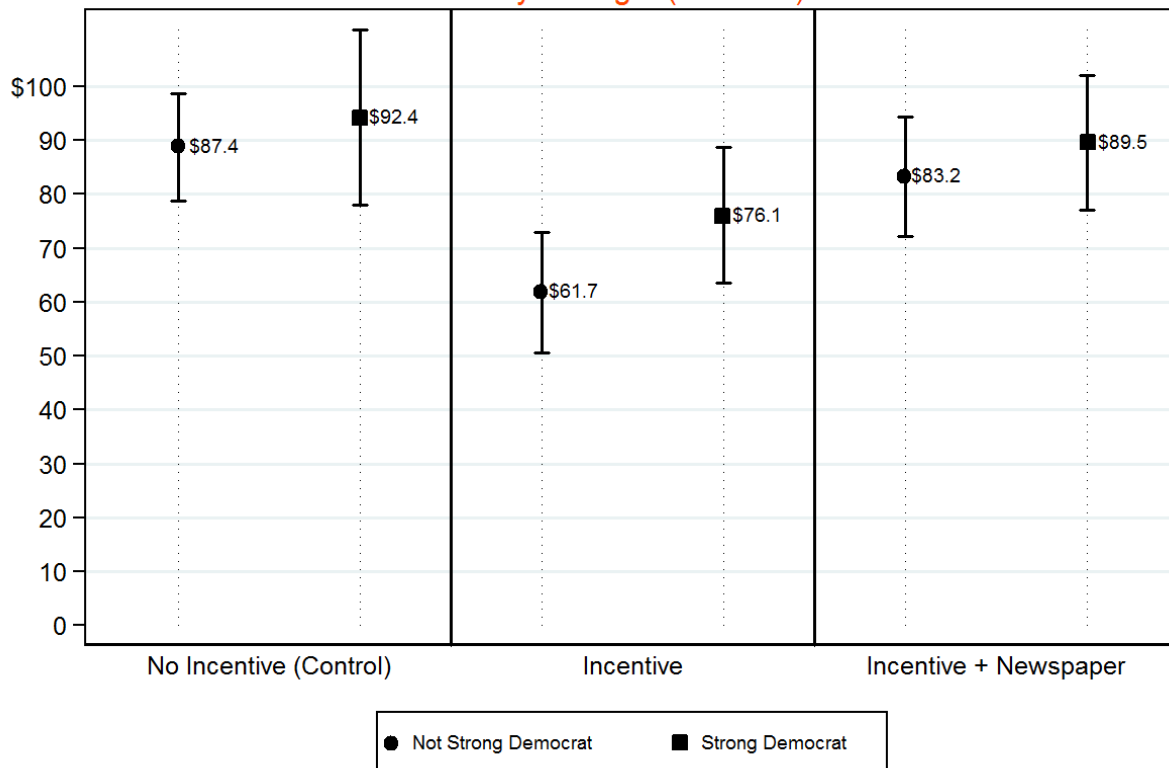
Democratic Party Strength

In what some have called a post-racial America, perhaps black's support for Obama has more to do with black's identities as Democrats than their racial identity. Consequently, we might expect those who identify as very strong Democrats to be less susceptible to the influence of incentives to defect from the group norm. Turning our attention to Figure 5, which presents the relationship between *Democratic Party Strength* and blacks' Obama contribution by experimental condition, we can see that those who identify as very strong Democrats are no less susceptible to the power of incentives.²⁵ While those who describe themselves as strong Democrats give somewhat more money to Obama in the *Incentive* condition than those who do not describe themselves as strong Democrats, their contributions in this condition are still significantly less than that of strong Democrats in the *Control* condition, a difference of about \$16. Much like the initial analyses, the

²⁵ We use party strength instead of partisanship because we lack sufficient variation on partisanship. The vast majority of the subjects were Democrats (81%) and only five subjects identified as Republicans.

Incentive + Newspaper condition significantly reduces defection across all blacks regardless of Democratic partisan strength. Thus, strength of partisanship seems to do little to condition how blacks respond to incentives to defect from the group norm and to social pressure to conform to that norm.

Figure 5. Obama Contribution by Condition and Party Strength (95% CIs)



Enforcement of Black Group Solidarity

We also mentioned that we believe that an understanding of the social consequences of defection should condition blacks' responses to the incentive conditions. The results presented in Figure 7 describe the relationship between Obama contributions and a belief in the enforcement of black social sanctions. Here subjects were asked if they believe that it is ever appropriate to refer to blacks who support the causes of white Americans at the expense of causes supported by other blacks as "sellouts" or "Uncle Toms." The idea here is that blacks who see the use of these terms as

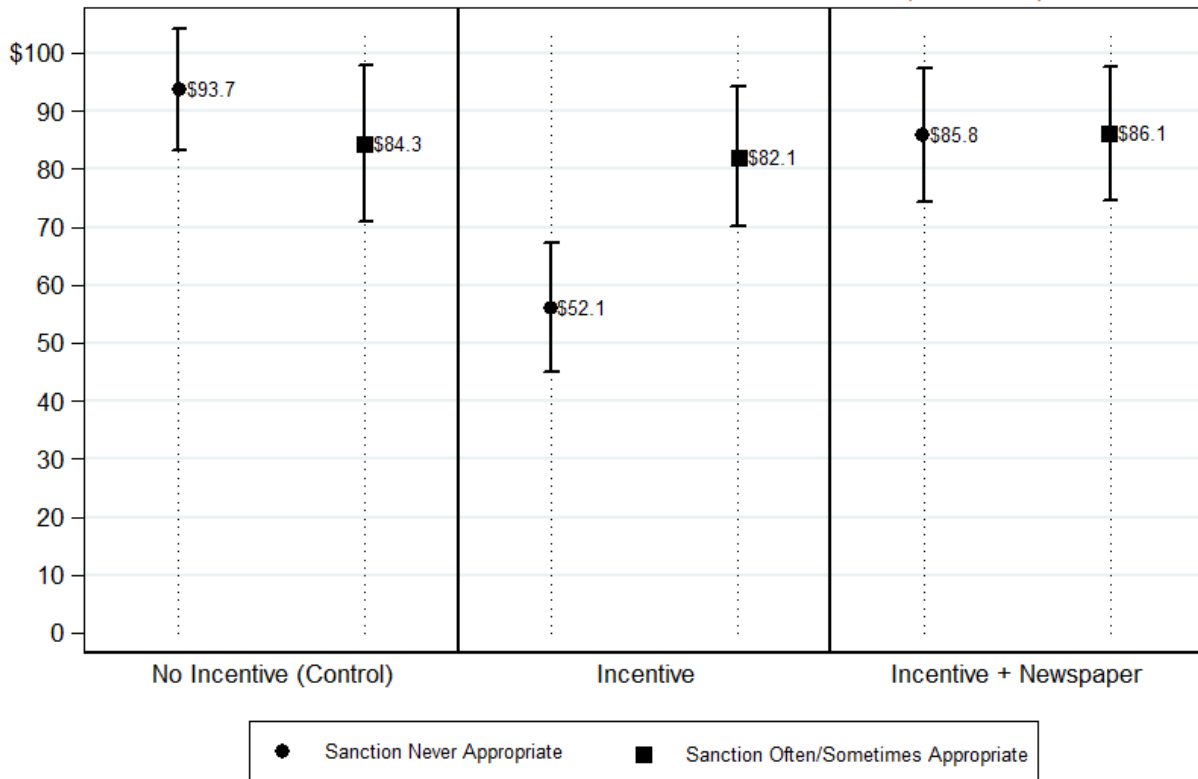
appropriate would feel more constrained perhaps because they more strongly believe in group solidarity and/or they are particularly frustrated by blacks who free ride off the efforts of other blacks. Thus, when faced with the incentive conditions, we would expect that individuals who agree with the enforcement of racial group solidarity through the use of these sanctions to feel internally constrained and thus *not* choose to accept the incentives to defect from the racial group norm of behavior. Those who disagree with these group based sanctions will not feel so constrained especially when they feel that their beliefs are private. When they are threatened with exposure of those beliefs, however, for fear of incurring these sanctions, they will conform to the group norms of behavior.

The results presented in Figure 6 support these expectations. Here we see that across the experimental conditions there is very little change in Obama contribution among those blacks who see the use of the “sellout” or “Uncle Tom” epitaph as appropriate. Even in the face of monetary incentives to defect from the group norm of behavior, blacks who believe in the use of these reputational sanctions were highly constrained and contributed about the same amount of money to the Obama campaign across all of the conditions. Thus, it seems that a belief in the use of social sanctions for preventing defection is internally constraining and much like social pressure an effective tool for preventing black defection from the group norm of behavior.

Blacks who do not see the use of these terms as appropriate, on the other hand, were much more likely to accept the incentive in the simple *Incentive* condition. Among these individuals the average contribution to the Obama campaign dropped dramatically, from \$93 dollars in the *Control* condition to \$52 in the *Incentive* condition. However, when these same blacks were told that their contributions would be published in the university’s newspaper they retreated back to group norm of behavior contributing on average \$86 to the Obama campaign; an amount that is statically indistinguishable from the amount allocated by similarly situated individuals in the *Control* condition ($p=.349$). This is perhaps because while they themselves do not see the use of these terms as

appropriate they realize that other blacks do, and thus feel constrained by the fact that this information might get out. Thus, regardless of what blacks might think about the method of enforcing group norms the presence of sanctions and the mechanisms for enforcing them are all that seem to be necessary to prevent defection.

Figure 6. Obama Contribution by Condition and Belief in the Enforcement of "Sellout/Uncle Tom" Sanctions (95% CIs)

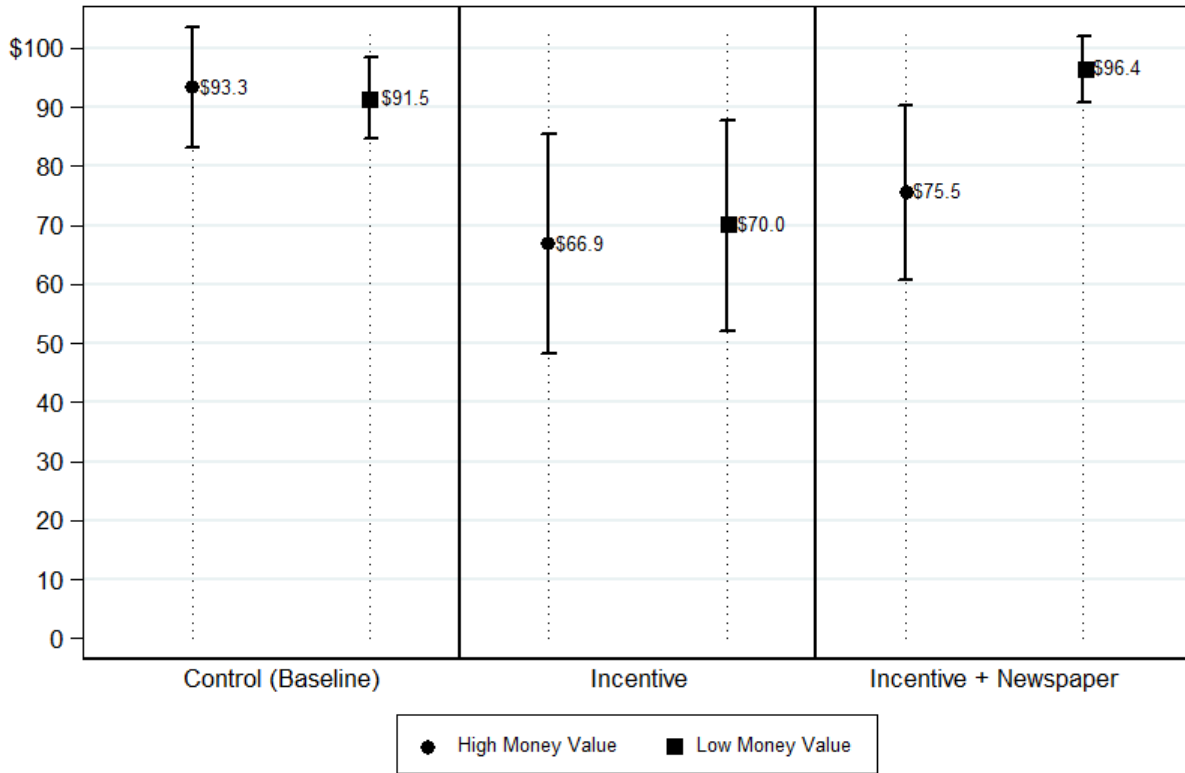


The Importance of Money

Lastly, we assess the moderating effect of the value that the respondent places on money in their life, with the expectation that individuals who place greater value on money will be more likely accept incentives to defect from the group norm. This concept is measured by two questions, one that assess the extent to which the individual bases their own happiness on the amount of money they possess and another that measures the subject's willingness to abandon friendships if they stand in the way of them making money.

The results for this analysis, presented in Figure 7, show that in the *Incentive* only condition there is no real relationship between the value the subject places on money in their life and their Obama contributions; regardless of how they feel about money, subjects in this condition contributed less to the Obama campaign relative to the control. The pattern changes significantly, however, when we move to the social pressure condition, in this condition we see that those individuals who value maximizing the amount of money they possess were considerably less likely to respond to the social pressure treatment. We can also see that individuals exposed to the social pressure treatment who placed a relatively low value on money were willing to forgo the incentive and give just about all of the \$100 to the Obama campaign (\$98.33), those who placed a high value on money remained at Obama contribution levels nearly identical to that presented in the *Incentive* only condition. These results highlight the fact that not everyone is susceptible to the effects social pressure, especially when the choices involve monetary gain. In other words, because of the importance of money to some African Americans, self-interest will likely always win out over group interest.

Figure 7. Obama Contribution by Condition and Value Respondent Places on Money (95% CI)



In sum, the results of this experiment clearly show that social pressure is highly effective at preventing defection from racial group norms of political behavior for African Americans. While the presence of a monetary incentive to defect from the racial group norm of behavior can significantly reduce compliance with the norm, simply threatening to publicize this behavior can significantly suppress blacks willingness to defect. The power of social pressure also out preforms many of the well-recognized constraints on black behavior such as racial group identification and party strength. Additionally while those individuals who place a high value on money are particularly resistant to social pressure, a belief in the legitimacy of the use of reputational sanctions for defection seem effective at preventing black defection even in the absence of social pressure.

Experiment 2 – “Racialized” Social Pressure Experiment

While the power of social pressure demonstrated in the first experiment is clear. We may still want to know what kind of social pressure matters for blacks. In the context of a black institution, as in the previous experiment, the social pressure that blacks faced was exerted by the subject's black peers, but what about social pressure from whites? Might blacks be equally influenced by social pressure from their white peers or is there just a different set of norms and expectations that characterize black/white social interactions? Also does the context of social pressure matter? In the previous experiment we threatened to reveal defection to a wide audience of likely black peers which included not only strangers but also individuals who were likely to be close associates and/or friends of the subject. Clearly social pressure exerted by one's friends and family matters but what about social pressure from strangers? Experiment 2 will provide us with answers to these questions. By more directly testing the effects of *racialized* social pressure this experiment will give us an additional test of how social pressure can condition the trade-off blacks' make between their self-interest and racial group interest and tell us more about the particular types of social pressures might be most effective at encouraging compliance with group norms.

Subjects in this experiment were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a control condition or one of two treatment conditions. Across all of the conditions subjects were asked to fill out a short pre-test questionnaire and were then instructed that they were going to participate in a short three minute interview about the current presidential campaign. Following the completion of the pre-test questionnaire subjects entered a hallway where they approached an interviewer at a table outside of a classroom. During the course of the interview, participants were told that the researchers conducting the study were awarded a grant from an organization called the "Voter Turnout Project" and that the funds from this grant were to be used to provide young people with the opportunity to contribute to presidential and congressional campaigns. During the interview each subject was given \$10 in one-dollar bills and instructed to enter a room where there were two contribution boxes one labeled Obama and the other labeled Romney. The subjects were told that if

they would like to make a contribution to the campaigns of either of the candidates they could do so by simply putting money into the respective contribution boxes.²⁶ They were also told that they were in no way obligated to contribute and if they choose to keep the money for themselves they should feel free to do so. In the room there was a sheet that each subject was asked to sign, acknowledging that they had received the money. Each subject was given between 30 to 40 seconds to sign the sheet and make a contribution (if they choose to). When the subject was done he/she left the room and was then asked to complete another short questionnaire.

Subjects assigned to the control condition participated in the interview by themselves and entered the contribution room alone. Here we expect that because there is no social pressure to contribute that most blacks will maximize their personal gain and will elect to keep most or all of the money given to them.

Subjects in the treatment conditions, however, were told that they would be interviewed at the same time as another student. In all cases, this other student was a confederate. Subjects in the treatment conditions were randomly paired with either an African American or white confederate of the same sex. Most of the confederates were political science graduate students and every effort was made to ensure that the subject and confederate did not know one another.²⁷ During the interview confederates were given the same instructions as the subjects and were also given \$10 in one-dollar bills and told that when they entered the contribution room they could donate this money to either of the presidential candidates but that they were in no way obligated to do so. Following the interview the confederate and subject were instructed that they were to enter contribution room together. Upon entering the contribution room, each confederate was instructed to immediately walk over to the Obama contribution box and say “I am giving all of my money to Obama,” insert

²⁶ They were also told that the “Voter Turnout Project” would match every dollar they contributed to either of the candidate’s campaigns with \$10 additional dollars, up to \$100.

²⁷ There were no cases of the confederates reporting having previously met any of the subjects they were paired with. Each of the confederates were self-identified as white or African American and while each varied somewhat in complexion white confederates defined themselves as noticeably white and African American confederates defined themselves as noticeably African American.

the entire \$10 in the box and then sign the sheet acknowledging that they had received the money. In all cases, this was to be done before the subject made their contribution.²⁸ The confederate was then instructed to wait until the subject was done before leaving the room. When the subject was done both individuals exited the room and were asked to complete a short questionnaire.²⁹

Our expectations here are clear. Given that the norms of black political behavior and the consequences of deviating from those norms mean something very different in the presence of another African American; we believe that social pressure from other African Americans will be most effective at inducing conformity. In other words, while black subjects would be understandably worried about having other blacks question their commitment to racial group goals, because whites are not part of the group, blacks should have no such concerns in their presence and should likely behave in a way consistent with their simple self-interest.

The experiment was conducted from October 11, 2012 to October 20, 2012 and One-hundred and six self-identified African American subjects participated in this study. All of the subjects in this study were recruited on or around the campus of a large mostly white Midwestern university.

Results

The results of this experiment are presented in Figure 8. Presented here are the average Obama campaign contributions across each of the experimental conditions. Again, if our argument about racialized social pressure constraining African American political behavior is correct then we should observe African Americans exhibiting more racial group norm consistent behavior in the presence of other African Americans than in the presence of a white confederate or in private. The evidence presented in Figure 8 supports this claim. As we can see blacks in the *Black Confederate*

²⁸ In all cases the confederate was able to successfully complete the protocol before the subject made any contribution.

²⁹ Out of a concern for allocating state money to political candidates, no money was actually donated to the campaigns. Subjects were debriefed as to this following their participation.

condition contributed on average two dollars and forty cents more than those blacks in the *White Confederate* condition ($p=.010$) and three dollars more than those blacks in the *No Confederate or Control* condition ($p=.001$).³⁰ When black subjects entered the contribution room by themselves, they were perfectly willing to keep most of the money given to them. Subjects in this condition contributed on average only \$3.74 to the Obama campaign. Twenty-nine percent of the subjects in the control condition kept all of the money for themselves. Even in the presence of another white student who made their intentions to support Obama very clear, black subjects only felt the need to contribute on average \$4.45 to the Obama campaign; an amount that is statically indistinguishable from the control ($p=.445$). It is only in the presence of the black confederates that our black subjects were willing to contribute on average most of the money given to them (\$6.85) to the Obama campaign.³¹ In this condition only 9% of subjects kept all of the money and over half 54.5% gave all the money to the Obama campaign. Thus, blacks seem to exert a particularly strong influence on one another, in the absence of social pressure from other blacks most subjects clearly sought to maximize their personal benefit but when this behavior was observed by another black person there was greater conformity to the norm.³² Like experiment 1, these results highlight the

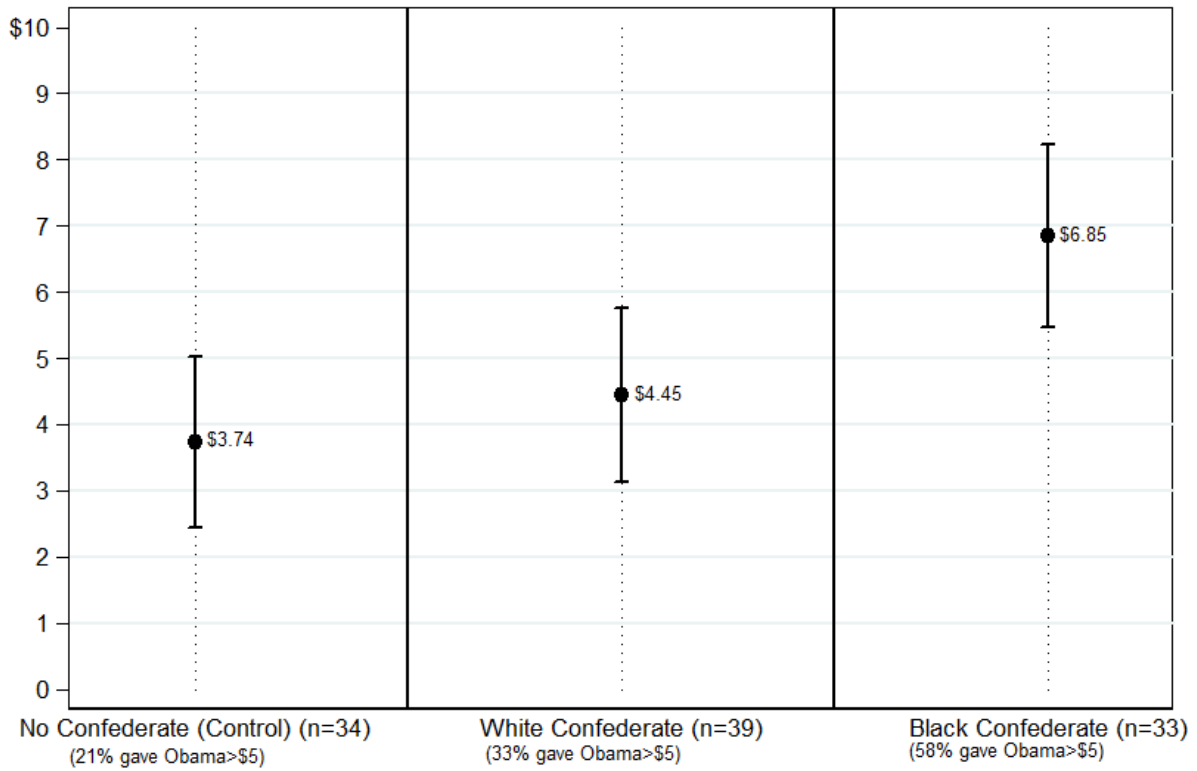
³⁰ We also conducted these test using nonparametric randomization test, specifically an independent sample Fisher-Pitman randomization test (Monte Carlo simulation) (See Keele, McConnaughy and White 2012). The inferences derived from these tests are indistinguishable from those produced using ANOVA. The randomization test results that correspond to the results presented in Figure 8 can be found in the Appendix in Table A5.

³¹ During the course of this experiment only two subjects made contributions to the Romney campaign for an amount totaling of \$5.

³² One concern might be that the presence of a black confederate simply increases the salience of racial considerations in the minds of black subjects, thus increasing willingness to contribute to the Obama campaign. In other words, instead for racialized social pressure the presence of a black confederate is priming racialized thinking about Obama among blacks. We have good reason to believe that racial priming has very little to do with the observed pattern of results presented in Figure 8. One reason to doubt the racial priming explanation has to do with the baseline salience of race with respect to Obama. Given that Obama is the first black president we find it unlikely that blacks would ever *not* think of him in racial terms. Indeed, recent research has shown that the popularity that Obama enjoys among African Americans (see Figure 2) appears directly related to blacks' sense of racial group pride and solidarity (Abrajano and Burnett 2012). Thus, if blacks already have a racialized view of Obama then it is not likely that any treatment could further racialize their judgments. However, just to be sure, we went ahead and tested this question within these data and what we find is that there is indeed very little empirical evidence to support the priming explanation. The results presented in Table 1A show that there is no "salience" and/or "priming" effect of black linked fate (we also find similar results with other measures of black in-group identity) associated with the presence of either a black or white confederate. The interaction of black linked fate and the presence of a black confederate is statically insignificant. In fact, the only significant predictor of contributing to Obama is the independent effect of the black confederate, suggesting that our social pressure explanation is likely driving the effects observed in Figure 8.

intensity of racialized social pressure in constraining black political behavior but unlike the first experiment this experiment also shows that even social pressure from absolute strangers, as long as they are black, can influence black behavior.

Figure 8. Experiment 2, Obama Campaign Contribution by Race of Confederate (95% CI)



Experiment 3 – Social Pressure to Defect

In the previous experiments we were able to show the power of racialized or “black” social pressure to induce African Americans to conform to the norm of black political behavior. In this last experiment we will seek to assess the effectiveness of “black” social pressure at inducing compliance with norms that contrast with the political behavior most expected of African Americans. In this experiment we employ elements from each of the previous experiments to assess the effects of social pressure at *encouraging* defection from the group norm. Here we simply reran the

control and incentive conditions described in Experiment 1 but this time instead of one-on-one interviews, subjects were told that they would be interviewed two at a time (as in the confederate conditions described in Experiment 2). In each interview, however, one of the subjects was always a confederate, the confederate is always black, the confederate was also always asked to make their decision first and what was manipulated here was whether the confederate forwent the incentive and gave all the money to the Obama campaign or took the incentive and gave all the money to the Romney campaign.

Here we expect that when encouraged to support Obama by another black person nearly all the subjects will forgo the incentive and allocate all of the money to Obama. What is less clear, however, is the power of racialized peer influence to encourage defection *away* from the group norm. Will subjects see the confederate's defection as representative of the group position? Will they just use the confederate's behavior to rationalize taking the money? Or will they just ignore the confederate and behave in a norm consistent way?

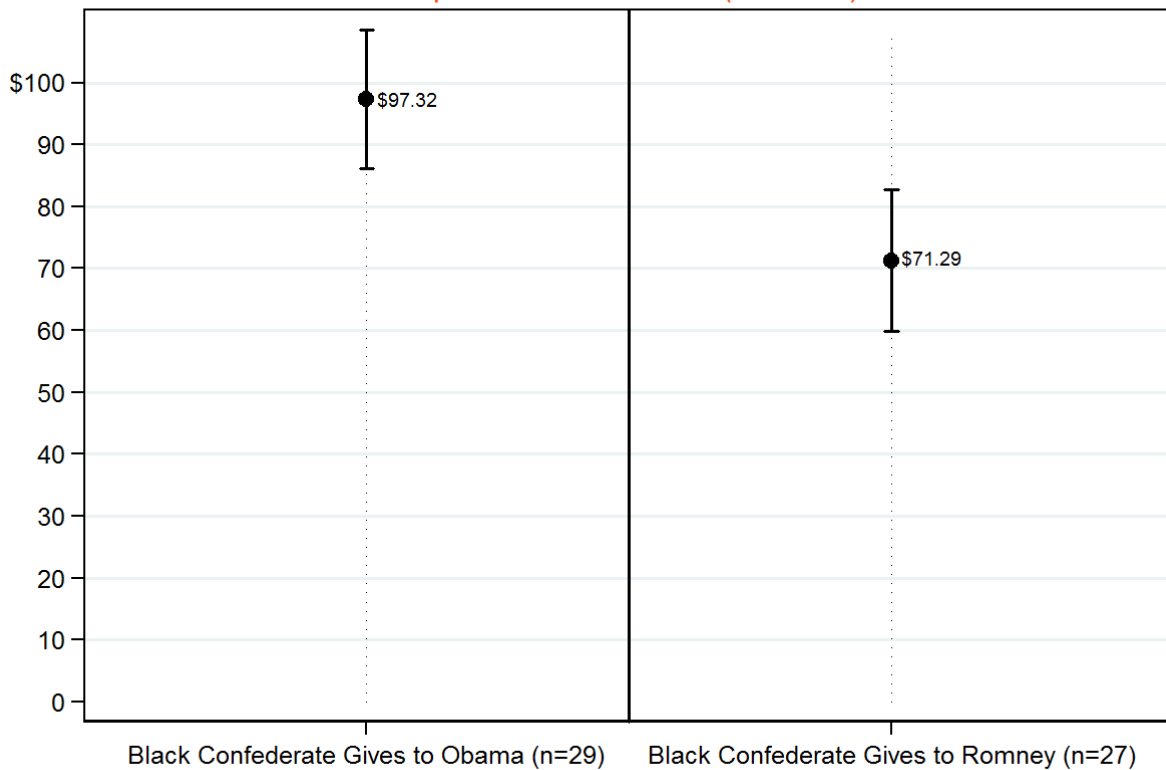
The experiment was conducted from October 15, 2012 to October 20, 2012 and Fifty-six self-identified African American subjects participated in this study. All of the subjects in this study were recruited on or around the campus of a large mostly white Midwestern university.

Results

The results of this experiment are presented in Figure 9. What we see here is that while in the previous experiments social pressure was effective at *preventing defection* from the group norm, it is somewhat less effective at encouraging defection away from the group norm. The results presented in Figure 9 show that although those black subjects in the *Black Confederate Gives to Romney* condition, gave significantly less than those who contributed after a pro-Obama black confederate, the difference is about the same as that observed between the *Control* and *Incentive* only conditions

presented in Experiment 1.³³ Thus, it seems that encouraging black defection from the group norm of political behavior can matter but it really just seems makes those who would have likely defected in the first place feel freer to defect from the group norm of black political behavior.

Figure 9. Experiment 3, Obama Contribution by Experimental Condition (95% CIs)



Conclusion

Despite the high degree of political solidarity often observed among African Americans, the results presented here clearly show that the ties that bind blacks together can be undone by appeals to self-interest. Indeed, in this context, where the self-interest involved clear but small monetary gains, self-interest was readily traded for a political behavior that seemed incredibly well understood

³³ We realize that some readers may have concerns about comparing results of two different experiments run on separate populations at different times. We acknowledge these concerns, however, these comparisons are largely meant to put the results of experiment 3 in context and to illustrate that if we were in fact able to encourage defection away from the norm of black behavior through the use of racialized social pressure, we would expect a much larger decrease in black's willingness to contribute to Obama. We also are not attempting to conduct actual test across the two experiments.

as in the racial group interest. Our results, then, are consistent with narratives that warn of “selling-out” the interest of blacks, which depend on a reality that some blacks are very much willing accept private incentives to defect from group norms of political behavior. Yet, we also observed that not all blacks were equally vulnerable to such incentives. The willingness to defect depended importantly on internalized values, with those blacks who had internalized a strong attachment to money being most willing to trade a small personal gain for the group’s larger interest, and those blacks who had internalized beliefs in the importance of maintaining racial group solidarity being least vulnerable to the self-interest incentive. This variation is worth underscoring. While it has become almost common knowledge that blacks share a common political interest, we have shown that the degree of dedication to this collective interest can vary greatly when choice at hand is the maximization of group interest *versus* self-interest.

For those interested in maintaining black group solidarity, this result may nonetheless come across as troubling. It raises important questions about how to maintain black collective action in the face of personal incentives offered to members of the racial group—be they movement participants, community leaders, elected officials, or ordinary black citizens—to betray the shared interest of the group. Can black leaders simply be bought off? Does black economic progress equal an end to black politics, as wealthy blacks become more concerned with their economic self-interest than with their racial group interest? While these concerns for the future of black collective action are legitimately suggested by our incentive results, the results of our introduction of racialized social pressure, on the other hand, seem more encouraging. While we found some blacks clearly motivated to abandon group norms of political behavior in the face of self-interest incentives to do so, we also found that social pressure and an understanding of the consequences of defection can effectively prevent defection from the group norm. When we threatened to “out” defection from the group norm, we were able to substantively reduce defection. Strikingly, both the very public “outing” of advertising it in the university’s newspaper and the far more inter-personal “outing” of simply having defection

observed by another black person—a complete stranger to the subjects—worked as mechanisms for this effect. This consistent racialized social pressure effect suggests that blacks can powerfully police one another's behavior, keeping group members in line with group expectations of political behavior and ultimately prevent free riding. Yet, such policing, we contend, rests on the notion that the outing of deviant behavior will incur reputational sanctions. Believing in the enforcement of group solidarity through the use of social sanctions not only worked to keep those who held such a belief behaving consistently with group norms in our study, but is also a necessary resource for the process of policing. Ultimately, these results suggest that if blacks seek to maintain black political unity to make further gains toward social and political equality for the racial group, black leaders need to continue work to educate blacks about the norms of black political behavior and not recoil from sanctions that enforce group loyalty.

Our results are also consistent with limits to the political potential of racialized social pressure. Drawing on the shaming results of GOTV studies and the norm crystallization and intensity framework from social psychology, we developed the argument that social pressure and shaming would be particularly effective both at inspiring participation among African Americans and in shaping the particular choices and actions they take in politics because the norms of political behavior among African Americans are both highly crystallized and intense—that both the norm of participating in politics for the good of the group (taking action) and the norm of making behavioral choices that are likely to increase the standing of the group as a whole (contributing to the racial group's interest) are commonly understood and commonly salient norms for blacks in their roles as citizens. Thus, we expected the use of racialized social pressure to enforce group norms to be much more effective than the use of such social pressure to encourage defection from the group norm. Indeed, we found that the presence of a Romney-supportive black confederate fell far short of pushing most of our subjects to defect from supporting Obama. This helps to explain the mostly fruitless efforts of Republicans to recruit black votes through endorsements or candidacies of black

Republican personalities. The group norm of Democratic support is far too highly crystallized and intense for behavior in contradictory terms to be understood as socially acceptable with such small cues. Republicans, it would seem, face a much more daunting challenge of changing the norms within the black community before their party has a chance at winning significant political support from African Americans. Yet, perhaps greater social signals than the ones we—or the Republican Party—have offered could work to encourage defection from the group norm. Thus, more work in this direction seems both theoretically and politically consequential.

We would also be remiss if we did not discuss that the power of racialized social sanctions does not come without difficult normative questions. If the effectiveness of racialized social pressure hinges so centrally on what is understood to be central to the racial group interest, then the social processes that create that understanding are important. Cathy Cohen has written powerfully about how the interests of some blacks have been defined out of the black political agenda—how leaders within the black community, for example, had for so long been unwilling to push for addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the black community as a racial group issue. Our work, in some ways, magnifies her concerns. It suggests that not only would there be difficulty in mobilizing black politics to address the epidemic, but that there are incentives that would keep even those blacks whose self-interest was defined by HIV/AIDS—those who suffered from the disease personally or through close personal ties—from feeling able to push for political attention to the cause. With the issue so clearly defined as “not black,” the constraint of racialized social pressure may have, indeed, suppressed important and legitimate expressions of self-interest.

DISPITE OUR USE OF NORMS OF BLACK ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR WE ARE NOT SAYING THAT WE CAN EXPLAIN BLACK VOTING BEHAVIOR

**WHY BLACKS ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTING
WHAT WE HAVE DONE CAN BE USED TO EXPLAIN THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHER GROUPS**

---Highlight somewhere how blackness is different because of acriptiveness

HOW THIS CONSTRAINS THE BLACK MIDDLE CLASS IN PARTICULAR. SOCIAL NETWORKS PREVENT DEFECTION.

---MENTION SOMWHERE IN THEORY ABOUT HOW BLACKS INVESTMENT IN NON POLIITCAL BLACK SOCIAL NETWORKS CONSTRAINS THEM POLITICALLY

NEXT STEP: INCENTIVES FOR COPLIANCE

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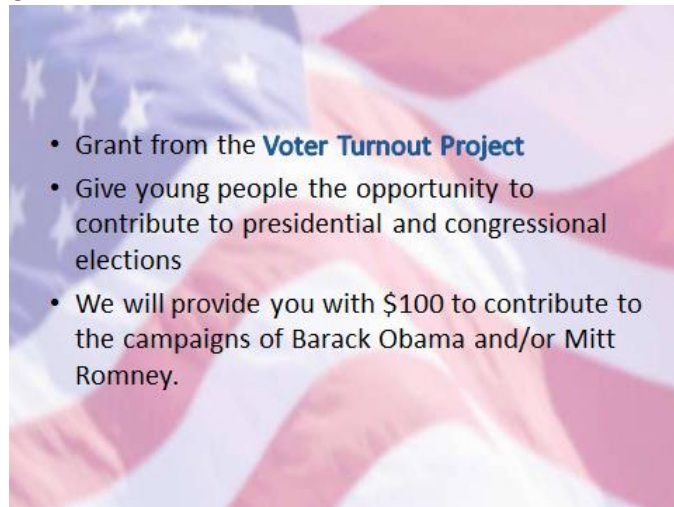
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Appendix

Table A1. Experiment 2: The Effect of Priming Black liked Fate on Obama Contribution

Black Confederate (BC)	4.89 *	2.21
White Confederate (WC)	1.27	2.11
Black Linked Fate (BLF)	0.10	2.08
BCxBLF	-2.50	2.89
WCxBLF	-0.80	2.77
Constant	3.67 *	1.53
R ²	0.07	
N	106	

SLIDE 1



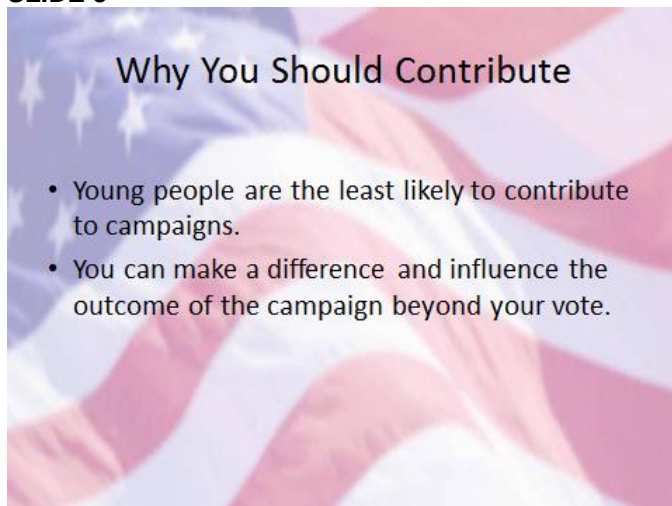
Hello, we are Researchers from Ohio State University and we received a grant from an organization called the Voter Turnout Project. What we are using the money from the grant to provide young people an opportunity to contribute to presidential and congressional elections. If you are ok with taking part in this project, we would like provide you with \$100 to contribute to the campaigns of Barack Obama or Mitt Romney.

SLIDE 2



So why should you contribute? Polls show that the race for president is very close and that at this point any candidate can win. And your vote counts but your money can matter more. Research on campaign contributions shows that for every \$100 a candidate receives he or she can get as many as 10 additional votes. These contributions tend to be used towards campaign ads and voter mobilization efforts.

SLIDE 3



Other reasons you should contribute is because young people, like yourself, are least likely to contribute to campaigns and with these contributions you can make a difference and influence the outcome of the campaign beyond your single vote.

SLIDE 4

What We Offer

- You may be offered a cash incentive to contribute to one of the candidates' campaign.
- These incentives can range from \$0 to \$20 dollars.
- If you choose to accept the incentive you will be paid in cash.

So in a second we will give the opportunity to contribute to the campaigns. Before we do here are few details about what you might be offered. You may be offered a cash incentive to contribute to one of the candidates. These incentives can range from \$0 to \$20.00. In the interest of fairness, exactly which candidate you will be offered the incentive for will be determined randomly by the computer. If you choose to accept the incentive you will be paid in cash. Again, to be clear you will not have to donate ANY money of your own pocket.

[READ ONLY IF NEWSPAPER CONDITION.]

One requirement of the Voter Turnout Grant is that we need to publicly disclose the donations that you make to the candidates. So we will be publishing your name and contribution in the "Southern Digest."

Your contribution will be published in the "Southern University Digest"

The following is a list of SU students who made political contributions through the Voter Turnout Project

		Barack Obama	Mitt Romney
Tom	Clark	\$100	\$0
Jane	Wilson	\$50	\$50
Frank	Jones	\$0	\$100
Your	Name	???	???

Next

SLIDE 5

[IF CONTROL CONDITION]

So this is the calculator. How would you like us to allocate the \$100? Keep in mind that you can split the money however you would like.



[IF INCENTIVE OR INCENTIVE+NEWSPAPER CONDTION]

So this is the calculator.

You have been offered an incentive to donate to the Mitt Romney campaign. You will receive \$1.00 for every \$10.00 you donate to the campaign of Mitt Romney. The maximum amount of money that you can receive is \$10.00..

How would you like us to allocate the \$100? Keep in mind that you can split the money however you would like.



[ENTER AMOUNT USING KEYBOARD.]

Are you sure that is what you want to give?

[SUBJECT CONFIRMS THEN THANK SUBJECT FOR PARTICIPATING]

Table A1. Experiment 1 Balance Statistics			
	Control	Incentive	Incentive + Newspaper
Age	21	22	23
Female	0.68	0.66	0.62
Income	\$17,000-\$34,999	\$17,000-\$34,999	\$17,000-\$34,999
Conservative Ideology	Moderate, Middle of the Road	Moderate, Middle of the Road	Moderate, Middle of the Road
Republican Party ID	Leaning Democrat	Weak Democrat	Weak Democrat
Obama 0 to 10 Rating (10=Like very much)	8.56	8.93	8.54
Percentage with Stable to Excellent Financial Situation	53.19	71.43	68
Registered to Vote	83	84	88
Note: No differences statically significant from control			

Table A2. Experiment 2 Balance Statistics			
	Control	White	Black
Age	25	22	24
Female	73	59	55
Income	\$35,000-\$69,999	\$35,000-\$69,999	\$35,000-\$69,999
Conservative Ideology	Slightly Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Slightly Liberal
Party ID	Weak Democrat	Weak Democrat	Weak Democrat
Obama 0 to 10 Rating (10=Like very much)	8.8	8.5	8.8
Percentage with Stable to Excellent Financial Situation	56	60	66
Registered to Vote	91	91	90
Note: No differences statically significant from control			

Table A3. Summary Statistics for Experiment 1 Predictors	
Strength of Democratic Partisanship Mean=.61 SD=.37	Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or Independent? 1= Strong Democrat .66=Weak Democrat .33=Independent leaning Democrat 0= all else
Black Linked Fate Mean=.59 SD=.37	Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life? 0=A lot .33=Some .66=Not very much 1= Not at all
Enforcement of Black Solidarity Mean=.45 SD=.49	Black people have often used the terms “sellout” and/or “uncle tom” to refer to those Blacks who support the causes of White Americans at the expense of causes supported by other Black Americans. Do you think the use of these terms (“sellout” and/or “uncle tom”) is ever appropriate? 0=Never appropriate 1=Sometimes appropriate or Very often appropriate
Low Money Attachment Scale Mean=.54 SD=.26	Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: More money will make you happier. 0=Strongly Agree .25=Somewhat Agree .5=Neither Agree nor Disagree .75=Somewhat Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is sometimes okay to abandon friends if they stand in the way of you making money. 0=Strongly Agree .25=Somewhat Agree .5=Neither Agree nor Disagree .75=Somewhat Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

Table A4. Experiment 1. Obama Contribution Means Difference Test by Experimental Condition - Randomization Test Results		
	Fisher-Pitman permutation test for two independent samples (Monte Carlo simulation 200,000 runs, two-tailed p-value)	
Condition Comparison	\$0-\$100	>\$50
Control – Incentive Condition	.00	.00
Control – Incentive + Newspaper Condition	.35	.39
Incentive Condition – Incentive + Newspaper Condition	.00	.01

Table A5 Experiment 2. Obama Contribution Means Difference Test by Experimental Condition - Randomization Test Results		
	Fisher-Pitman permutation test for two independent samples (Monte Carlo simulation 200,000 runs, two-tailed p-value)	
Condition Comparison	\$0-\$10	>\$5
Control – White Confederate Condition	.46	.34
Control – Black Confederate	.00	.00
White Confederate – Black Confederate	.01	.01