5-2019

Gendered Socialization and Racism

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Gendered Socialization and Racism:
How Does Self-Identified Sex Affect Attitudes Towards Spending
to Improve the Conditions of Blacks?

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Word Count= 4,251

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Does gender influence racial attitudes? I propose that the differences in men and women's emotional processing as a result of gendered socialization have an effect on their attitudes towards improving the lives of Blacks. I performed a secondary analysis on 2016 survey responses from a subset of 533 White, American, English or Spanish-speaking, non-institutionalized adults who responded to the General Social Survey. Respondents were asked about their attitudes towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks. I found no statistically significant relationship between self-identified sex and a respondent's attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks. These findings do not support my hypothesis and are inconsistent with prior research done on this topic. I did, however, find a statistically significant relationship between respondents' political views and their attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks. This indicates that we need a more nuanced understanding of the emotional effects of gendered socialization, as well as a more nuanced understanding of what intellectual processes are affected by gendered socialization and how.

Gendered Socialization and Racism: How Does Self-Identified Sex Affect Attitudes

Towards Spending on Improving the Conditions of Blacks?

From a young age, we are taught to identify the gender of others based on stereotyping of external physical characteristics, mannerisms, and even speech patterns. Subsequently, we make assumptions about how they think, speak, talk, and act. The reality is that none of those factors make it possible to determine someone else's sex or gender. Gender is also often presented as binary, leading to assumptions about the differences between men and women that are not based in fact. Differences do exist, however, and some theorize that they arise as a result of gender socialization. Research has shown that gender differences exist in our emotions, which could impact decision-making and the way we think about and interact with others, particularly of differing identities.

Through the continued psychological and sociological study of the intersection between gender and emotion, we have been able to come to some conclusions about how they relate. Research has shown that gender socialization does have an impact on our emotional processing, perception, and performance. Considering these factors of identity and decision-making are important in terms of understanding how people choose to treat others. The way that gender socialization affects our racial attitudes is important to consider when trying to understand and eradicate the racism being perpetuated institutionally.

While we do not have control over the chromosome makeup or anatomy we are born with or the secondary sex characteristics that we may develop, gender and gender

identity involve changeable, external factors. In the United States, gender has been historically presented as a binary in which individuals are forced to identify as either male or female. Subsequently, socially constructed gender roles are learned through media and interactions with others who enforce these roles.

A variety of social factors have allowed gender roles to include very toxic notions about how men and women ought to think, act, and present themselves. For example, it is thought that people who were born with a penis and identify as men ought to be "masculine" and display fewer emotions, while people who were born with a vagina and identify as women are thought of as overly emotional.

These socially constructed notions affect how we think about each other, and ourselves, and consequently the way we interact, especially with groups of differing identities. In addition to politically driven beliefs about government spending, someone's gender and sex may contribute to their racialized beliefs about why or why not the government should spend more money on "improving the conditions of Blacks."

Therefore, I hypothesize that if a respondent identifies as female, they will be more likely to think that the government spends too little on "improving the conditions of Blacks" than respondents who identify as male due to their emotional differences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender

Through sociological studies, researchers have been able to come to a few differences surrounding the way that men and women process, understand, and reproduce emotions as a result of gendered socialization. Gendered socialization is the idea that people are treated differently from the moment they were born as a result of their gender

identity. This socialization theory ascertains that our gender can subsequently affect the way that we process information, respond to situations, and even view ourselves.

For example, one study found that "women are more verbally expressive of their feelings than men" (Goldschmidt and Weller 2000), and another even found that men have a fear of emotions as a result of "masculine ideology and masculine gender role stress" (Jakupcak et al. 2003). Additionally, men and women experience certain positive and negative emotions with differing frequencies (Simon and Nath 2004). Finally, women's "moral decisions are more likely to reflect others' needs" and "women have closer relationships with others…are more altruistic, and are more compassionate and empathetic" (Hughes and Tuch 2003). In summary, "gender-related behaviors are obviously linked to social practices and societal structures" (Berenbaum, Blakemore, and Beltz 2011).

Social Dominance Theory (SDT)

SDT "argues that intergroup oppression, discrimination, and prejudice are the means by which human societies organize themselves as group-based hierarchies" (Sidanus and Pratto 1999). Out of the three systems that humans use to create social hierarchies, this study looks at the relationship between two- a gender system and an arbitrary-set system. However, later research by Rob Foels and Christopher Pappas finds that "the difference between men and women is not invariant when controlling for social factors, which suggests that the gender differences in social dominance may be learned through masculine socialization and that gender may therefore be an arbitrary set category that does not need a separate classification" (Foels and Pappas 2004). In other words, societally imposed gender roles do have an effect on the way we see ourselves

within social hierarchies. The implication is that sex and gender have two different definitions and subsequently different effects- and that is crucial when considering the differences between self-identified men and women.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is defined as "the extent to which one endorses group based dominance and group inequality" (Pratto et al. 1994). SDT's classification of some groups as arbitrary categories means "levels of SDO should be influenced by the social context." Research in the early 2000's has shown that "gender identity and masculinity and femininity mediate the link between gender and SDO" (Foels and Reid 2010). However, it is considered a "random variable, [with] some people being more dominance oriented than others" (Sidanus, Devereux, and Pratto 1992).

The theories of gender socialization and social dominance suggest that women are socialized to be more altruistic and emotionally empathetic, which would lead them to be more likely to be in favor of increasing spending to improve the conditions of Blacks than men, who are socialized to be more individualistic and less emotionally generous.

LITERATURE REVIEW

People possess a variety of identities at any given time. In order to fully understand how different identities interact with each other, it is important to take an intersectional approach to the research. Sociological research has allowed us to understand that "gender-related behaviors are obviously linked to social practices and societal structures" (Berenbaum, Blakemore, and Beltz 2011). However, the extent to which gender affects racial attitudes has not been fully explored.

It is known that "both racial and gender identities are perceived immediately and automatically; are connected to numerous, well-known stereotypes and shape how others

react to us" (Babbitt 2011). Thus, studying the nuances of the interaction between gender identity and racial identity is a natural progression towards learning more about social interaction and socialization. There is a significant amount of research about how men and women are different, particularly in their social relationships and values.

When it comes to the way that researchers approach racial attitude, there is a fundamental schism. Some believe that racial attitudes are a resort of personality traits, while some argue that racial attitudes are instead a reflection of group conflict (Hughes and Tuch 2003). This divide fails to consider the nuance of gender and sex, and how gender affects both our personalities and the groups with which we identify.

West and Zimmerman, led by Erving Goffman's Role Theory, define sex as "a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males" and gender as "the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category" (West and Zimmerman 1987). This differentiation allows the two separate concepts to be studied and understood without conflation.

This distinction has allowed researchers to come to a few differences surrounding the way that men and women process, understand, and expess emotions. For example, one study found that "women are more verbally expressive of their feelings than men" (Goldschmidt and Weller 2000), and another even found that men have a fear of emotions as a result of "masculine ideology and masculine gender role stress" (Jakupcak et al. 2003). These differences in emotional processing have been shown to exist in a wide variety of sampled countries all around the globe- suggesting that the gender

difference exists despite vastly different social structures (Fischer et. al 2004). The emotional availability and altruism of women shown in this research supports the hypothesis that women would be more likely to be in favor of spending to improve the conditions of Blacks than men.

Additionally, Johnson and Marini explore the results of gendered socialization and its potential effect on racial attitudes. They explain, "women demonstrate greater concern for the well-being of others and for the community as a whole in their positions on humanitarian issues…and support for social welfare programs. This difference extends to a greater concern for those of other races: Women are more liberal on racial policy aimed at achieving equality" (Johnson and Marini 1998). This also supports the hypothesis that women would be more likely to be in favor of spending to improve the conditions of Blacks than men.

Clarifying the relationship between self-identified sex and racial attitudes furthers our understanding of how our identities impact us consciously and unconsciously, which is crucial in being able to better understand not only how we view and interact with one another, but also how we perpetuate institutional systems such as racism. Differences in emotional processing and expression based on gendered socialization could complicate what we know about how societies organize themselves. While conscious biases are important to be aware of in order to actively fight them, unconscious or emotional biases should also be explored in order to get a better sense of the big picture.

METHODS

I use the General Social Survey (GSS) from the year 2016. This data consists of

survey responses collected from ninety-minute in person interviews with non-institutionalized, English or Spanish speaking adults with a residence in the United States. The complete 2016 GSS contains survey responses from 2,876 people, with a response rate of 61.3% (Smith et al. 2016). For more information on the data collection, see the General Social Survey's codebook on their website, www.gss.norc.org/get-documentation.

Within my data, I created a subset of only White respondents by excluding those who responded "Black" and "Other," which decreased my sample size to 2100 people. I also controlled for respondent's political views, age, education, and income. After removing missing data from respondents who did not answer all of the questions I required, my final sample included 533 White, employed, non-institutionalized, English or Spanish speaking US adults from the General Social Survey.

When asking about political views, the survey questions, "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal - point 1 - to extremely conservative - point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?" For age, the survey simply says "respondent's age." Education is coded as years of school completed.

With the income variable, I looked at only the respondent's annual income. The question is worded, "In which of these groups did your earnings from {job}, from all sources for 2015 fall? That is, before taxes or other deductions" (Smith et al. 2016). The groups were originally under $1000, $1000- $2999, and so on up to $17,000 and over. I

recoded it using the median of each category in order to reduce the groups and look at the pattern in a more succinct way.

The independent variable for this study is sex, male or female. This variable was dummied, with Male as 0 and Female as 1. The dependent variable asks whether we are "…spending too much, too little, or about the right about on improving the condition of Blacks," with the acceptable answers including "too little" coded as 1, "about right" coded as two, and "too much" coded as three.

FINDINGS

Univariate Results

The first task in my analysis was to compute the measures of central tendency and standard deviation for all of my variables. Sex of respondent is a nominal variable and the highest year of education completed by the respondent was recoded into an interval-ratio variable. The respondent's income, the respondent's political views, and the respondent's attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks are all ordinal variables.

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of male respondents compared to the percentage of female respondents in my sample. This sample contains seventeen percent more women than men, which is not an accurate representation of the United States population as a whole. Self-identified sex of respondent is my main independent variable, and it had a mean of .415 with a standard deviation of .493.

Figure 1 About Here

The dependent variable being analyzed is attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks. Figure 2 shows that a very small portion of my sample, less than twelve percent, believe that we are spending "too much" on improving the conditions of

Blacks. The remaining portion is split, with almost forty-seven percent believing that we are spending "too little" on improving the conditions of Blacks and almost forty-two percent believing that we are spending an amount that is "about right" to improve the conditions of Blacks.

Figure 2 About Here

Figure 3 shows that most of the respondents in my sample chose to identify as "Moderate" on the spectrum of political views. Among the people who did not choose to identify as "Moderate," over thirty-two percent identified as some form of "Conservative" while less than thirty percent identified as "Liberal." The mean of this variable is 3.98 with a standard deviation of 1.478. This indicates that the average respondent identifies as "Moderate," as opposed to leaning liberal or conservative.

** Figure 3 About Here**

In the GSS, the original question about the age of respondents has no upper cap. Once I narrowed down my sample, none of my respondents were over the age of eighty-two, so I was able to cut off there. Almost twenty-five percent of the respondents in my sample are between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-eight. Another twenty-five percent are between the ages of sixty-one and eighty-two. Less than nineteen percent are between fifty and sixty years old, less than sixteen percent are between thirty-nine and forty-nine years old, and the remaining sixteen point one percent are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven.

Figure 4 About Here

The majority of my sample had more than a high school education, as shown in Figure 5. Additionally, in 2016, the federal poverty level was $11,880 (Semega,

Frontenot, and Kollar 2017). Figure 6 demonstrates that the vast majority of my sample was living well above the poverty line. Additionally, the majority of my sample had more than a high school education, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 About Here

Figure 6 About Here

Attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks is my dependent variable, with a mean of 1.64 and a standard deviation of .675. This means that on average, respondents chose "Too Little" as a response more than "About Right" or "Too Much."

Figure 7 About Here

Bivariate Results

After running a bivariate correlation, it became clear that there is no statistically significant relationship between attitude towards spending to improve the conditions of Blacks and self-identified sex of the respondent. However, there are a number of statistically significant relationships that exist between my dependent variable and various control variables.

The statistically significant relationship with the strongest correlation is political views and attitude towards spending to improve conditions of Blacks. The correlation is .358, which indicates a moderate relationship. It indicates that the more conservative a respondent is, the more likely they are to believe that we are spending "Too Much" to improve the conditions of Blacks.

The other control variable that has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable is years of education. It is negative and very weak, only -.085. This

indicates that the fewer years of education one has, the less likely they are to believe that we are spending "Too Much" to improve conditions of Blacks.

Between the remaining control variables, significant and positive relationships exist between age and income, sex and income, and years of education and income. All of those correlations are weak.

Figure 8 About Here

Multivariate Results

As seen in Figure 9, the *R* square on my multivariate linear regression is .135, which means that 13.5% of the variation in my dependent variable, asking about Attitudes towards Spending to Improve Lives of Blacks, can be explained by the independent variables of sex, years of completed education, age, yearly income, and political views. The *F* test demonstrates that my model is significant and different from the y-intercept model. The only significant relationship that exists on a multivariate level is between political views and the dependent variable.

The standardized coefficient is .351, illustrating that political views has the largest impact on the dependent variable. The unstandardized coefficient is .16, indicating that for each unit increase on the scale of political views leads to a .16 increase in the scale of Attitude Towards Spending. In other words, the more liberal someone is, the more likely they are to be in favor of increasing spending to improve lives of Blacks.

Figure 9 About Here

DISCUSSION

These findings neither support nor reject my hypotheses, due to the fact that there is not a statistically significant relationship between my dependent variable and my

independent variable at the bivariate or multivariate level of analysis. The literature seemed to support my hypothesis that women would be more in favor of increasing spending to improve the lives of Blacks. Prior research on the difference in socialization between men and women as well as the difference in emotional processing and understanding supports the idea that women are more altruistic and group-oriented than men, which would, in theory, support my hypotheses. However, this study does not align with prior research.

The lack of significance between the independent variable, sex, and the dependent variable, attitude towards spending to improve the lives of Blacks, indicates that Social Dominance Theory requires more nuance to accurately predict social hierarchies within societies. My findings indicate that there are more complexities to social hierarchies than discrimination based on superficial identifiers such as sex, race, and socioeconomic status. Additionally, "intergroup oppression, discrimination, and prejudice" are not necessarily the only "means through which human societies organize themselves" (Sidanus and Pratto 1999).

CONCLUSION

In an attempt to begin to explain the association between gendered socialization and racialized attitudes, this study looked at the link between self-identified sex and responses to a survey question asking about their Attitudes towards Spending to Improve Lives of Blacks? Using a subset of 533 English or Spanish speaking, non-institutionalized, American, White adults from the 2016 General Social Survey, I performed secondary analysis to interpret these intersections. The results demonstrated no significance in the relationship between my main independent variable, sex, and my

dependent variable, Attitudes towards Spending to Improve Lives of Blacks. At the multivariate level, the only significant relationship exists between political views and Attitudes towards Spending to Improve Lives of Blacks.

These findings do not support my hypothesis that women would be more likely to be in favor of increasing spending to improve lives of Blacks. This suggests that a more complicated understanding of the way that we are socialized and how that effects our emotions and subsequently our attitudes, choices, and actions would be beneficial in order to better understand the complexities behind racialized attitudes.

Limitations

Within the dataset, my sample size is only 533 people, which is rather small in terms of generalizability. Additionally, my subset of only White people and the fact that my dependent variable only asks about Blacks limits the ability to make larger conclusions about interactions between people of different racial and ethnic identities. Ideally, this study could be replicated with different combinations of racial and ethnic groups in order to further explore the nuances between their dynamics.

Future Research

Learning more about how our identities shape us is a crucial step on the path to understanding how we interact with each other on the conscious or unconscious basis of these identities. In this case, my study focused on gender and race, and there was not a statistically significant relationship between the two despite the theory and prior research suggesting otherwise. These identities are difficult to empirically research due to the complex nature of human socialization. Further research must be done in order to clarify the nuances of some of these complexities. It would be extremely beneficial to be able to

do a longitudinal study where researchers would be able to measure attitudes over time. Qualitative studies as well as further quantitative studies with large sample sizes will both be necessary in order to further understand our relationships with each other and the effects on society as a result.

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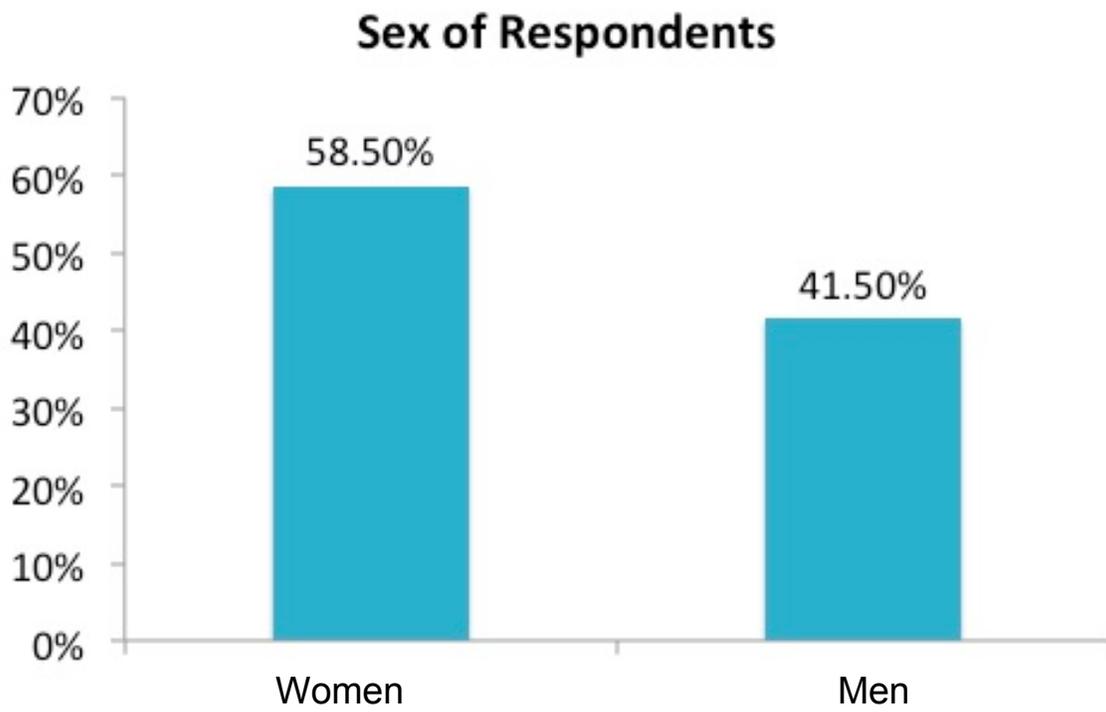
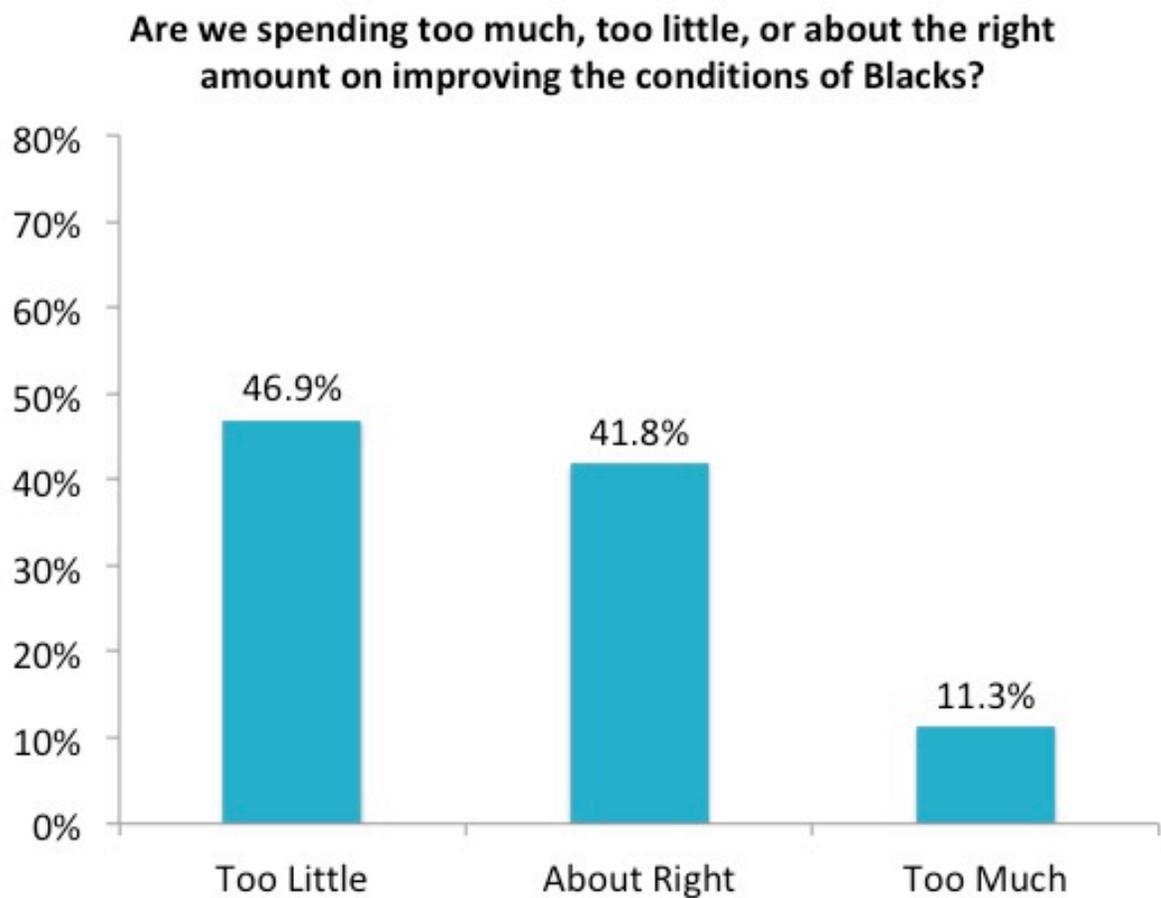1(2):125-151.

Fig. 1 Respondents' Sex In Percent

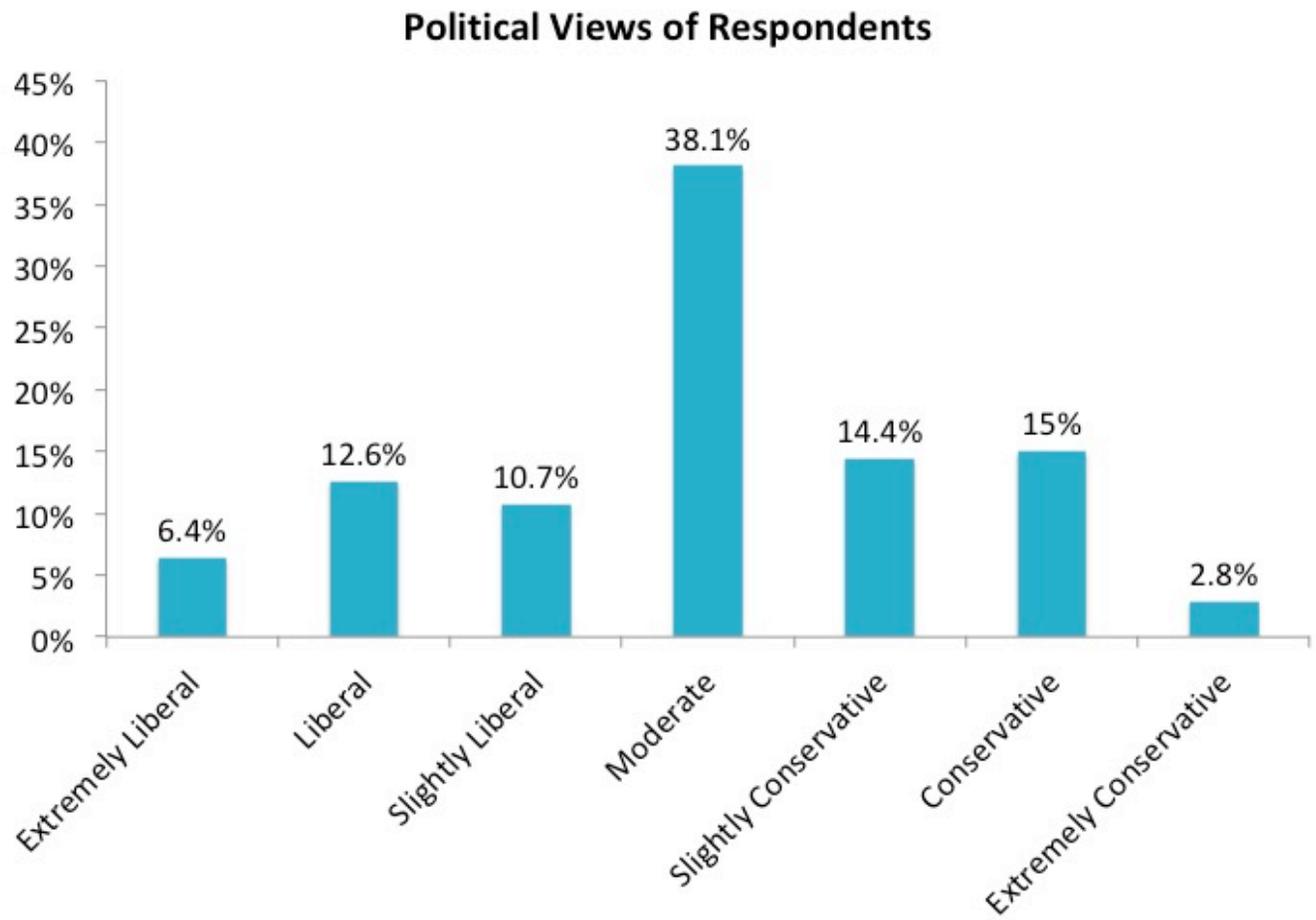Fig. 2 Perceptions of Spending to Improve the Conditions of Blacks in Percent

Political Views of Respondents

Fig. 3 Respondents' Political Views in Percent

Age of Respondents in Years

Fig. 4 Age of Respondent by Year in Percent

Number of Years of Education Completed by Respondents
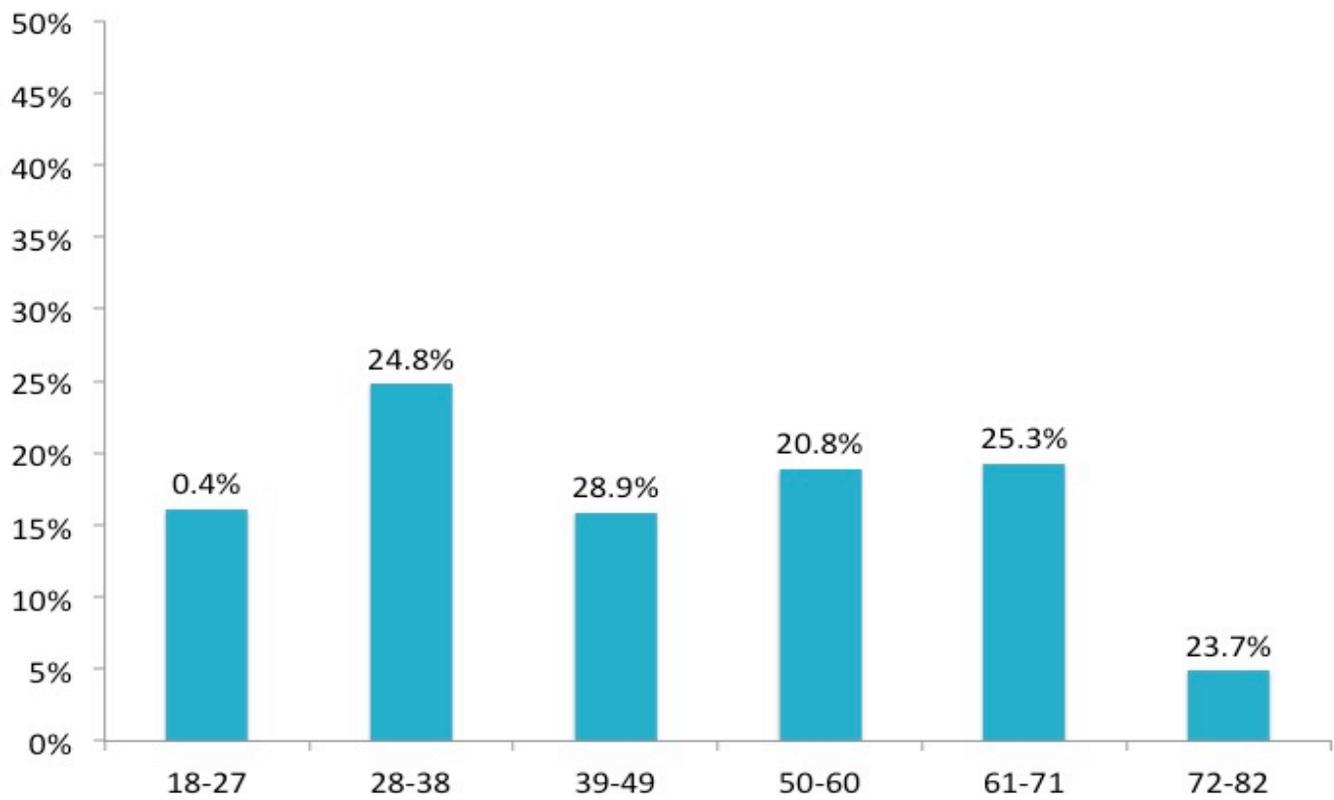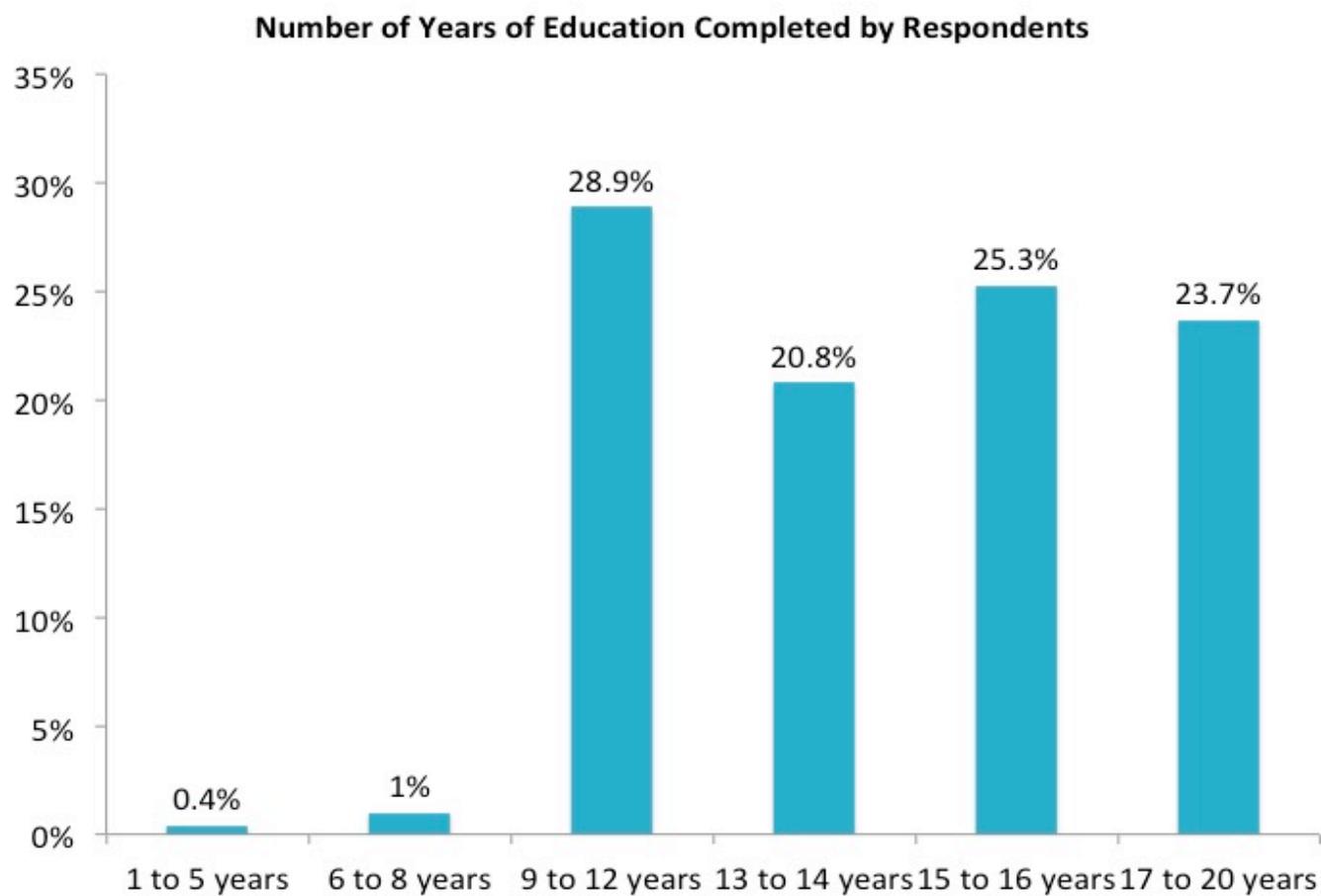

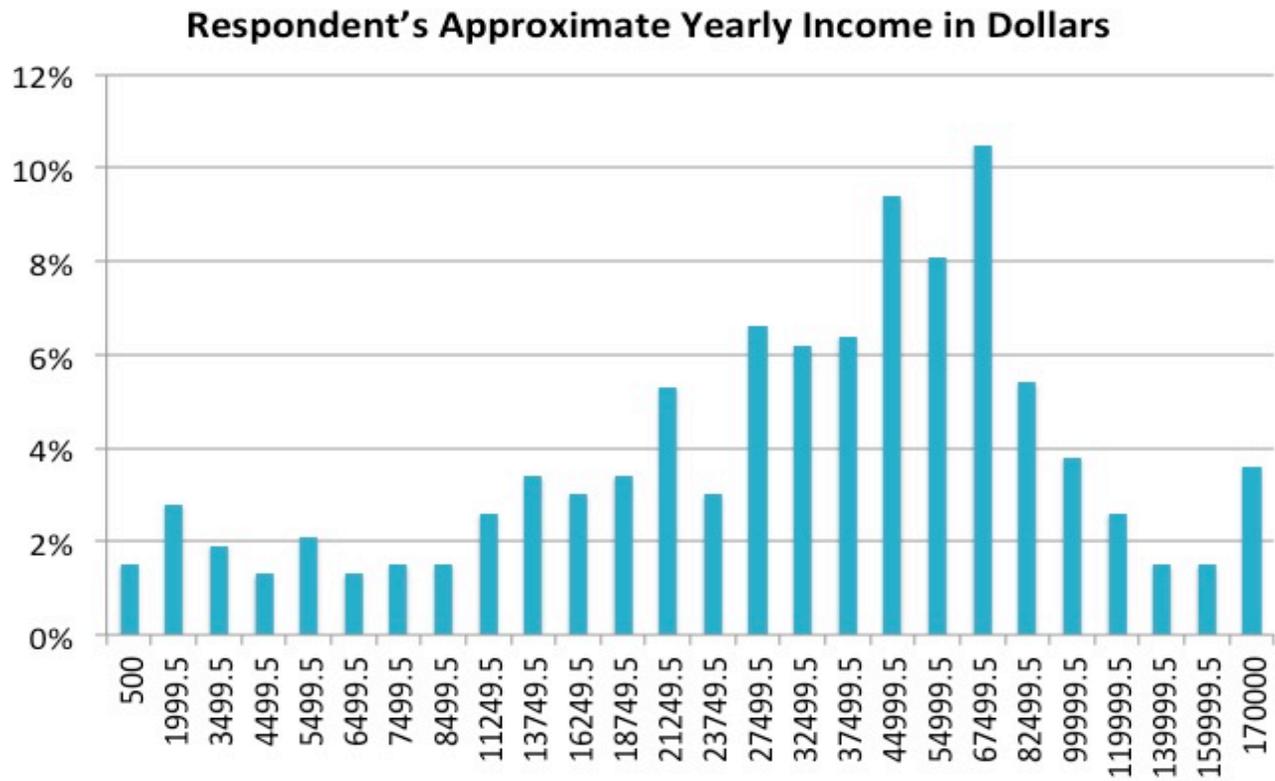Fig. 5 Respondents' Education Level by Years in Percent

Fig. 6 Respondent's Yearly Income by Dollars in Percent

Table 1. Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation N= 533

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Spending to Improve Conditions of Blacks	1.64	2	.675
Sex	.415	0	.493
Political Views	3.98	4	1.478
Respondents' Income	15.62	17	6.075
Age	44.03	43	14.727
Years of Education Completed	14.69	14	2.881

Table 2. Bivariate Correlation Matrix   n=533

Variable	Age	Political Views	Respondents' Income	Male	Years of Education
Spending to Improve Conditions of Blacks	.075	.358*	-.066	-.001	-.085*
Age		.083	.186*	-.026	.012
Political Views			-.015	.056	-.144*
Respondents' Income				.257*	.342*
Male					.001

p < .05

Table 3. Regression of Attitude Towards Spending to Improve Lives of Blacks by All Variables

Variable	b	β
Male	-.003	-.002
Highest Year of Education	-.003	-.012
Age	.003	.061
Yearly Income	.000	-.064
Conservative	.16	.351*
Constant	.98	

n=533; $p < .05$*
$R^2 = .135$; $F_{(5, 532)} = 16.493$*