

Can political affiliation change how people evaluate parole decisions for Caucasians and African Americans?

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Introduction

- Political attitudes can change people’s racial attitudes—that is, level of political conservatism has been linked to racism (Burdein, 2007)
- In addition, racial bias is prevalent in parole decisions (Bynum and Huebner, 2008)

Objectives

How much does political affiliation change people’s decisions about whether to release a nonviolent offender on parole who is either Caucasian or African American?

- Examine the relationship between political affiliation and parole approval
- Examine the relationship between offender race and parole approval
- Determine whether political affiliation and offender race interact to predict parole outcomes

References

- Burdein, I. (2008). Principled Conservatives or Covert Racists: Disentangling racism and ideology through implicit measures (Doctoral dissertation, Stony Brook University, 2007).
- Huebner, B. M., & Bynum, T. S. (2008). The Role of Race and Ethnicity in Parole Decisions. *Criminology*, 46(4), 907-938.

Methods

Participants

200 Amazon Mechanical Turk participants

Design

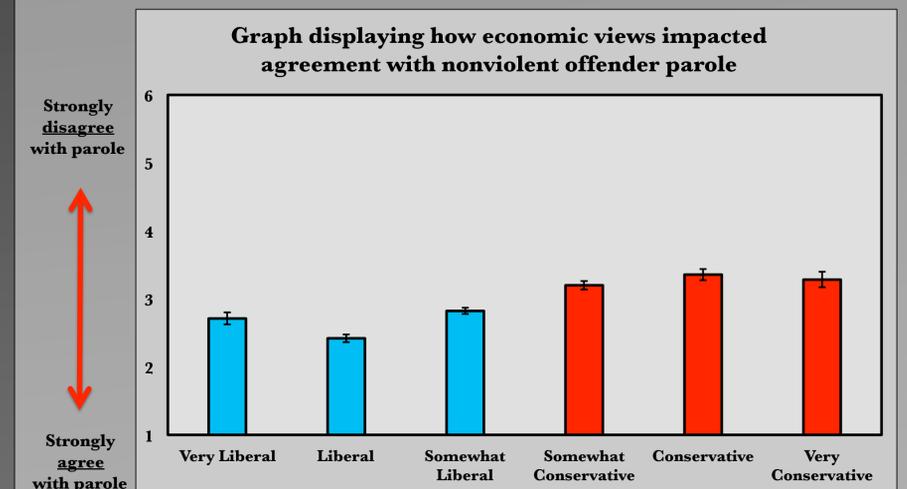
4 (Case) x 2 (Race of Offender: Caucasian or African American) Mixed Design

Procedure



Results & Conclusion

A hierarchical regression was run to investigate the relative impact of predictors of parole approval. Participants’ political identification was not a significant predictor of how much people agreed with an offender’s eligibility for parole ($\beta = -.082, p = 0.067$). Rather, economic values and the nature of the specific case appeared to be the best predictors of parole decision ($\beta = 0.169, p = 0.013; \beta = 0.195, p < .001$, respectively).



Participants disagreed more strongly with the parole release of the offender who committed identity theft compared to the other three crimes ($\mu=3.397, SD=1.240$).

In conclusion, political affiliation did not significantly change people’s decisions about the approval of parole release for Caucasian or African American nonviolent offenders.