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

Methods
Participants
200 Amazon Mechanical Turk participants

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

Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African Am.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1: Burglary</td>
<td>OR</td>
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<td>Case 2: Drugs</td>
<td>OR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case 3: Larceny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case 4: ID theft</td>
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Following each case:
“How much do you agree with parole release?”

Strongly agree  Strongly disagree

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 ($\beta = -0.082, p = 0.067$). Rather, economic values and the nature of the specific case appeared to be the best predictors of parole decision ($\beta = 0.169, p = 0.013; \beta = 0.195, p < 0.001$, 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.

References