

**The Color of Our Skin and the Content of Our Politics: Exploring the Effects of  
Skin Tone on Policy Preferences Among African Americans**

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## **The Color of Our Skin and the Content of Our Politics: Exploring the Effects of Skin Tone on Policy Preferences Among African Americans**

### Abstract

Social scientists have established for some time that darker-skinned African Americans have lower incomes, encounter more discrimination in the workplace, and have poorer health outcomes than lighter-skinned Blacks. These findings persist into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet public opinion scholars have found few attitudinal differences among Blacks that reflect these disparate outcomes. That is, previous work has failed to uncover consistent correlations between skin tone and racial group identification or policy preferences. We revisit this question by relying on the discipline's most comprehensive political survey: the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES). The 2012 ANES includes interviewer assessed skin-tone measurements along with an oversample of Black respondents (N=511). We find significant skin tone related differences among Blacks on economic redistribution, explicitly racial policies, and endorsement of racial stereotypes. We also find in a supplemental experiment that skin tone based identities can be made more relevant with respect to racial group identity.

*“I remember a time when I too felt unbeautiful. I put on the TV and only saw pale skin, I got teased and taunted about my night-shaded skin. And, my one prayer to God, the miracle worker, was that I would wake up lighter-skinned..I tried to negotiate with God..I would listen to my mother’s every word..if he just made me a little lighter.”*  
(Lupita Nyong’o’s acceptance speech at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Essence Black Women in Hollywood Luncheon 2/28/14)

In his 1903 book, “The Souls of Black Folk,” the iconic scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois proclaimed that, “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” Du Bois’ oft-quoted phrase referred to the racial divide in the U.S. during the height of Jim Crow segregation, as well as the European – and American – colonial dominance of Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Pacific Islands. The imposition of racial hierarchy, with Whites always positioned firmly on top, was an inevitable feature of global and domestic empire building. But maintenance of the color line involved more than simply sorting individuals into discrete racial categories. A color-based hierarchy was also cultivated within racial categories, particularly among lower status groups. This practice is referred to as “colorism.” The term colorism refers to differential treatment accorded to members of a racial group based on the lightness or darkness of his or her skin tone. Historically, lighter skinned Blacks received better treatment than darker skinned members of their racial group (Baptist 2014; Hill 2000; Myrdal 1996 (1944)). This practice began prior to emancipation when White enslavers would bestow greater privileges on the offspring that resulted from the systematic raping of enslaved African women (Myrdal 1944).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, lighter-skinned enslaved Africans – so-called

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<sup>1</sup> Myrdal (1996 (1944)) describes the advantaged status of mixed-race African Americans thusly: “The American order of color caste has even more directly stamped the Negro class system by including relative whiteness as one of the main factors determining status within the Negro community. This has a history as old as class stratification itself among Negroes. Mixed bloods have always been preferred by the whites in practically all

“mulattoes” – particularly women, commanded a substantially higher price on the slave market (Baptist 2014; pg. 242). Unfortunately, the stratification and inequality associated with this color line has not faded with the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A wealth of social scientific and public health research has demonstrated that, relative to their lighter skinned counterparts, darker skinned African Americans continue to experience worse socioeconomic outcomes (Branigan et al. 2012; Hill 2000; Monk 2014), greater labor market and wage discrimination (Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity 2007; Harrison and Thomas 2009; Wade Romano, and Blue 2004), more punitive criminal justice decisions (Blair et al. 2004; Eberhardt et al. 2006; Viglione and DeFina 2010), greater social rejection from Whites (Hebl et al. 2012), as well as poorer physical and mental health related outcomes (Klonoff and Landrine 2000; Thompson and Keith 2001). Darker skinned Black political candidates are also disadvantaged at the polls relative to lighter skinned candidates (Hochschild and Weaver 2007; Terkildsen 1993; Weaver 2012; although see Lerman, McCabe, and Sadin 2015 for an interesting twist on these results). In short, the problems of the color line persist into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In spite of the numerous ways in which skin tone continues to influence the life chances of African Americans there have been relatively few scholarly efforts to determine if color stratification matters in terms of political orientations. That is, although skin tone distinctions appear to influence almost every aspect of life in Black America, researchers have uncovered little evidence that it is associated with racial

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respects. They made a better appearance to the whites and were assumed to be mentally more capable. They had a higher sales value on the slave market. The select classes of trained mechanics and house servants who early came in close contact with the dominant culture of whites seems largely to have been drawn from the group of mixed bloods, and their superior training further raised their status” (pg. 695-696).

identity, perceptions of discrimination, or broader political perspectives (Hochschild 2006; Hochschild and Weaver 2007; Seltzer and Smith 1991). Hochschild and Weaver (2007) have dubbed this the “skin color paradox.” In this paper, we examine this paradox and argue that the conclusion regarding the (non-existent) influence of skin color on public opinion should be reconsidered for reasons outlined below.

### Revisiting the Linkage between Skin Color and Political Attitudes

Seltzer and Smith (1991) represent one of the first scholarly efforts to assess whether skin color stratification in the Black community also led to different political preferences. This research relied on the 1982 General Social Survey (GSS), which contained an oversample of African Americans. Skin tone assessments were determined by interviewer observation, with respondents placed in one of five separate categories: very dark brown, dark brown, medium brown, light brown, and very light brown. Seltzer and Smith examined the possible influence of skin color on political ideology, government spending on various domestic problems, support for civil liberties, confidence in American institutions, the perceived concern of public officials for ordinary citizens, different indicators of satisfaction with their personal life, and participation in previous presidential elections. In the end they concluded that, “...while color stratification and differences persist in the Afro-American community, they make little difference in terms of the attitudinal configuration of Afro-American society and politics.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Seltzer and Smith (1991) did find a few items on which skin color differences emerged, but there was no discernible pattern of results. For example, out of nine domestic spending questions they found only one that showed significant color differences.

Hochschild and Weaver (2007) also examine the association between skin color stratification and political views. They focus in particular on the 1979-1980 National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA) and the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) (Bobo et al. 2000; Jackson and Gurin 1980). In the NSBA, skin color was determined by interviewer observations using the same scale described for the 1982 GSS. In the MCSUI survey, skin color was also measured by interviewer observation although the categories were reduced to dark, medium, and light.<sup>3</sup> Hochschild and Weaver were concerned primarily with race-based attitudes, so they did not examine broader policy preferences and instead focused on perceptions of color consciousness, group and individual discrimination, linked fate, and group identity (also see Bowman, Muhammad, and Ifatunji (2004) who arrive at similar conclusions in their analyses of the NSBA) . They reported that, "...despite plausible expectations, African Americans' skin color has almost no relationship to any of these political beliefs or values."

Why aren't skin color differences reflected in political orientations? Hochschild and Weaver offer an explanation. They argue that in terms of their lived experience, "race" has trumped skin color throughout American history. This was particularly true in the Jim Crow south. Individuals coded as "Negro" were subjected to state-sponsored racial subjugation irrespective of their phenotype. One well-known example of this custom involves Homer Plessy of the infamous Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision.

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Lighter skinned Blacks were more likely to indicate that there was too little spending on the environment. Similarly, darker skinned Blacks were more likely to adopt conservative positions on a variety of civil liberties questions. In all of these cases however, the differences vanished once controls for education were added to the model.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the GSS and NSBA data, the MCSUI survey was not based on a national sample. Instead, researchers focused only on individuals living in Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Boston.

Plessy was only one-eighth African American (in the parlance of the day, an “Octoroon”) and was sufficiently light-skinned that he had to inform the train conductor that he was a “colored man [by Louisiana law]” and therefore not permitted to remain in the Whites Only section (Williams 2006). His lawsuit objecting to this practice led to the court case that bears his name and ultimately resulted in the Supreme Court endorsing the principle of “separate but equal.” By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these segregationist perspectives were embedded in the culture via the “one drop rule,” and would ultimately be codified in government bureaucracies.<sup>4</sup> According to Hochschild and Weaver, this rigidly segregated reality helped to forge a strong sense of group identity among African Americans – if only because there was no other choice. Moreover, it would also foster a deep psychological investment in challenging racial barriers. In both cases, this outlook would be unconnected to skin color stratification because it represented a secondary form of marginalization that mostly divided rather than united the Black community (Cohen 1999).

In spite of the groundbreaking research and thought-provoking arguments offered by Seltzer and Smith (1991), as well as Hochschild and Weaver (2007), we believe that the possible relationship between skin color and political orientations remains an open question. In particular, we maintain that there are several reasons to reconsider the “skin color paradox” described above. First, it is striking just how few representative surveys have been devoted to investigating the relationship between variations in skin tone, on the

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<sup>4</sup> For example, in determining racial identifications for the 1930 census, the U.S. Census Bureau proclaimed that, “A person of mixed white and Negro blood should be [classified] as a Negro, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction” (quoted in Hochschild and Weaver 2007, pg. 655).

one hand, and political preferences and racial attitudes, on the other hand. As far as we can tell, prior to the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there have only been three surveys that have included the necessary variables: the 1979-1980 NSBA, the 1982 GSS, and the 1992-1994 MCSUI. Each of these studies represented pioneering efforts to understand public opinion among African Americans and, in the case of the MCSUI dataset, other racial and ethnic minorities. However, with the exception of the GSS, these surveys were not primarily designed to gauge respondent attitudes about broad matters of public policy.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the NSBA and MCSUI datasets, the 1982 GSS provided a wide range of race and policy related questions. However, at least some policy domains where color-based attitudinal differences might be most likely to manifest – if only because color-based inequalities are most prevalent here – were not included on the 1982 GSS. These policy areas include affirmative action, and efforts to reduce income inequality. And, even in the domain of race, the GSS had not yet launched their battery on racial stereotypes in 1982 so it is unclear how skin tone variation among African Americans might affect the endorsement of these attitudes. In short, the survey evidence on which the “skin color paradox” is based is surprisingly limited.

Second, survey researchers have rarely asked about perceptions of discrimination based on skin color. Hochschild and Weaver’s (2007) nearly comprehensive review of

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<sup>5</sup> According to its introductory page on the ICPSR website, the NSBA was designed to investigate “...neighborhood-community integration, services, crime, and community contact, the role of religion and the church, physical and mental health, self-esteem, life-satisfaction, employment, the effects of chronic unemployment, the effects of race on the job, interaction with family and friends, racial attitudes, race identity, group stereotypes, and race ideology.” The same source notes that the MCSUI “was designed to broaden the understanding of how changing labor market dynamics, racial attitudes and stereotypes, and racial residential segregation act singly and in concert to foster contemporary urban inequality.”

the relevant data turns up only two questions, both asked on the 1979-1980 NSBA. These questions were worded as follows: (1) “Black people have many different shades of skin color. Thinking about the present, does your skin color make any difference in the way White people treat you?”; and (2) “How about the way that Black people treat you? Do you think your skin color makes a difference?” Although Hochschild and Weaver (2007) report relatively few differences in the distribution of attitudes by skin color, they do find a significant result with the second question. That is, lighter skinned Blacks (26%) are significantly more likely than Blacks of either dark or medium hue (17%) to indicate that other African Americans treat them differently because of skin color. One problem with these questions, however is that they are too vague. As a result, the researcher cannot determine if the differential treatment the respondent encounters is positive or negative. Moreover, the wording of the question also directs the respondent to report on their individual experiences with skin color bias as opposed to their perceptions of the bias that lighter or darker skinned Blacks may encounter *as a group*. This distinction is important because individuals are more inclined to report discrimination against their group as opposed to something they have personally experienced (Crosby 1984; Taylor et al. 1990).<sup>6</sup> It is therefore possible that more precisely worded questions asking about discrimination directed against lighter or darker skinned Blacks would reveal more discontent, and perhaps more variance, based on skin color.

The passage of time and the resulting changes in the U.S. economy represents a third reason to revisit the possible relationship between skin color and public opinion. As

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<sup>6</sup> For example, in the face-to-face portion of the 2012 American National Election Study 66% of African Americans reported that their racial group encounters “a great deal” or “a lot” of discrimination in the U.S. In contrast, only 29% of Blacks indicated that they “personally faced [discrimination] because of [their] ethnicity or race.”

indicated above, the most recent survey used to examine this question (the 1992-1994 MCSUI) was fielded over twenty years ago. Since that time, income inequality has increased substantially. Given the persistent linkages between skin color and socioeconomic status among Blacks, it seems likely that increasing income inequality has only exacerbated discrepancies between lighter and darker skinned African Americans.<sup>7</sup>

The final reason for reexamining the connection between skin color and political views is the evolving societal perspective on racial classification. The most proximate source of this evolution is the multiracial movement of the 1990s. In short, this movement sought to add a “multiracial” category to the U.S. census or, barring that, to allow individuals to indicate their membership in more than one racial group (Williams 2006). Beginning with the 2000 census, this latter goal was achieved – marking the first time in the history of this country that individuals could be classified into more than one racial category (Hochschild, Weaver, and Burch 2012). The head of the Census Bureau at that time, Kenneth Prewitt, remarked that, “Census 2000 will go down in history as the event that began to redefine race in American society.”<sup>8</sup> Whether or not one regards this statement as hyperbole, it is clear that many African American leaders and prominent civil rights organizations opposed this change, arguing that it would undermine the

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<sup>7</sup> Evaluating this claim more rigorously is a challenging proposition. Most national surveys do not collect information on respondent skin tone. Moreover, those few studies that have done so do not necessarily measure skin tone or income in comparable fashion. In any case, Hochschild (2006) reports that in the 1992-1994 MCSUI data – admittedly not a national sample – mean family income for dark skinned Blacks was about \$3,000 lower than the mean household income for lighter skinned Blacks. In the 2012 American National Election Study (described more fully below), the mean household income for darker skinned Blacks was between \$13,000 and \$15,000 lower than lighter skinned African Americans. These figures have not been adjusted for inflation, but they at least suggest that income differences across skin color groups have been growing over time.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Williams (2006, pg. 2).

collection of government statistics needed to evaluate and enforce civil rights laws (Williams 2006).

Yet another fear may have also contributed to opposition to the U.S. Census Bureau decision to allow individuals to “mark one or more” (MOOM) racial categories on various government documents. With the implementation of this rule, and the increasing popularity of the multiracial category, some Blacks may worry that the temptation to “escape” from the stigmatized confines of their racial group will be irresistible. Arthur Fletcher, then-chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, indicated as much in 1993 when testifying before Congress that, “[he could] see a whole host of light-skinned black Americans running for the door the minute they had another choice.”<sup>9</sup> This fear may not be entirely unreasonable. In spite of its perniciousness, one side effect of the “one-drop rule” has been to bind African Americans together across phenotypes in a common project to dismantle racial barriers (Hochschild 2006). If the introduction of the MOOM decision – and the resulting redefinition of race in American culture – begins to weaken this unity, then it is also possible that lighter skinned Blacks will feel less committed to controversial policy goals, such as affirmative action, designed to encourage racial equality. One might almost say that they would have less skin in the game.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Williams (2006, pg. 102).

<sup>10</sup> Some contemporary lighter skinned sports, entertainment, and political figures with at least one self-identified African American parent no longer feel constrained to identify exclusively, or even nominally, as “Black.” This list includes such prominent figures as professional golfer, Tiger Woods, New York Yankees superstar, Derek Jeter, actors Vin Diesel, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Rashida Jones, and Jennifer Beals. Woods has famously referred to his racial background as “Cablinsian,” to represent his African American, Native American, Dutch, Chinese, and Thai ancestry, and the aforementioned actors have all played non-Black (and implicitly “White”) characters on television or in

The discussion outlined above suggests a number of specific hypotheses. First, we expect that more contemporary data will show that darker skinned African Americans have significantly higher levels of racial group identification than their lighter skinned counterparts. Second, Blacks with darker skin color will be more inclined than lighter skinned Blacks to perceive discrimination against themselves and their racial group – and, when appropriate measures exist, specifically against darker Blacks as a group. Third, as a result of their more precarious economic circumstances, we hypothesize that darker skinned African Americans will support economic redistributive policies more than comparable individuals of lighter skin tone. For similar reasons, darker skinned Blacks should also oppose increased immigration levels.

Fourth, given their greater probability of encountering racial/color discrimination, we argue that darker skinned Blacks will be more supportive of race-based remedies such as affirmative action. As a corollary to this hypothesis, we also expect darker skinned Blacks to be more likely to reject negative stereotypes about their racial group.

Finally, we have argued that skin color stratification is a salient and pervasive feature of African American life. If so, then it should not take much prompting to encourage Blacks to bring their skin color based experiences to bear on race relevant attitudes. In other words, we argue that skin color represents a socially meaningful identity just like race, or religion, or gender. And, as such, this identity can also be

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motion pictures. Needless to say, this option was not available to entertainers who were active prior to the civil rights movement. In the domain of politics, former congressman Harold Ford, Jr. publicly identified his paternal grandmother as White while running for a U.S. Senate seat in Tennessee in 2006 – even though her death certificate indicates that she was Black (Thomas 2006). Lastly, although Barack Obama is frequently touted as the first Black president, surveys consistently show that most Americans regard him as mixed-race, an outcome he may have encouraged (Citrin, Levy, and Van Houweling 2014; Hutchings, et al. 2014).

primed or activated such that its relationship to various outcome measures becomes heightened. We believe this last hypothesis in particular represents the first time that social or behavioral scientists have sought to prime skin color based identities. If America is indeed entering into a “new racial order,” then we suspect that this will not be the last time such an experiment is undertaken (Hochschild et al. 2012).

### Data and Methodology

We test most of our hypotheses by relying upon the 2012 American National Election Studies (ANES) face-to-face time series data. The 2012 ANES Time Series is a nationally representative sample of voting-eligible Americans living in the contiguous 48 states. The pre-election phase of the survey was collected between Labor Day and the day immediately prior to Election Day in 2012. The post-election phase of the survey was conducted beginning with the day immediately following Election Day and continuing into late December of 2012. The survey data were weighted to approximate national representativeness and, in light of our hypotheses, we focus only on self-identified African American respondents (N=511).<sup>11</sup>

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

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<sup>11</sup> As with census data, ANES respondents are given the option to indicate more than one racial group. However, relatively few (including African Americans) identify with more than one racial group in this survey. Among the 511 Black respondents, only twenty-three indicate another racial group in addition to African American. Of this group, 17 of 23 choose Native American as their secondary racial identification.

For the first time in the history of the study, the 2012 ANES included interviewer observations of respondent skin tone. This information was obtained by relying on the New Immigrant Study (NIS) Skin Color scale developed by researchers at Princeton University (Massey and Martin 2003; Massey et al. 2003). The 10-point scale ranges from 1-10 with each point on the chart represented by a hand, of identical form, but differing only in gradations of color. As indicated by the developers of the scale, it was designed to be used, "...by interviewers, who essentially memorize the scale, so that the respondent never sees the chart." A reproduction of the chart is depicted in Figure 1.<sup>12</sup>

Skin tone data was also recorded at the beginning of the interview to limit any possible bias that might occur as a result of respondents' answers to questions throughout the interview. The ten-point skin color scale is useful as a continuous variable, but in our analyses we have divided the measure into thirds, based on the proportion of individuals at each point along the scale. Doing so gives us a sample that is roughly evenly divided, with 30 percent being classified as light-skinned (1-5 on scale), 40 percent classified as medium-skinned (6-7 on scale), and 30 percent classified as dark-skinned (8-10 on scale).<sup>13</sup> In all analyses, this and all other variables are coded 0-1 for interpretational ease.

To control for those factors that might be confounds for skin tone, we include socioeconomic measures that capture respondents' income, education, employment status, and whether the respondent owns a home. Gender, age, and residence in the south

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<sup>12</sup> More information about the scale and instructions provided to interviewers can be found at the following link:  
[http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/anes\\_timeseries\\_2012/anes\\_timeseries\\_2012\\_SkinColorScale.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/anes_timeseries_2012/anes_timeseries_2012_SkinColorScale.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Our results are not substantively altered if we use the full 10-point scale. That is, all results in tables 1 through 4 remain statistically significant and in the anticipated direction when using the entire range of the scale. Similarly, all of the experimental results are significant with either the three-category or 10-point scale.

are also included. Given that the outcome variables of interest bear on individuals' attitudes about redistributive policies, we also include measures of egalitarianism, partisanship and ideology. To account for the role racial group identity might play in affecting Black attitudes toward redistributive and race-coded policies, we include a measure of linked fate and a measure of racial group importance, featured for the first time on the 2012 ANES. The complete question wording is available in the appendix. Lastly, we also control for the skin color of the interviewer. The logic behind this decision is in part comparable to the rationale for controlling for the race of interviewer (Davis 1997). If, as we argue, skin color distinctions are a meaningful social marker in society then interviewer characteristics on this dimension may influence responses.<sup>14</sup>

The second component of our study relies on an experimental design. As indicated above, the aim here was to demonstrate that the relationship between skin color and political orientations could be primed just as researchers have shown with other salient social characteristics such as race, gender, class, and religion (Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Steele 2011). The data for this experiment were collected on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and relied upon subjects participating online through Amazon MTurk. Our experiment involved 204 African American participants who were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a control condition and a prime condition. Subjects receiving the latter treatment were instructed to identify their own skin color, *at the very beginning of*

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<sup>14</sup> Interviewer skin color was assessed by their supervisors using the same 10-point scale as used for respondents. For a variety of reasons, interviewers in about 20% (N=103) of our cases do not have a recorded score on the skin color scale. In these instances, in order to preserve the number of cases in our analyses, we assigned to these missing cases the median skin tone for interviewers who belonged to the same racial group.

*the survey*, by using the NIS Skin Color scale described above (see Figure 1).<sup>15</sup>

Individuals in the control condition also self-rated their skin color, however this was done at the very end, rather than the beginning, of the approximately 15-minute survey. This unobtrusive treatment is the only thing manipulated across the two conditions. Our expectation is that this simple act of self-description will be sufficient to enhance what we already expect to be non-trivial relationships between skin color and political judgments.

### Results: ANES Observational Data

Given the literature across the social, behavioral, and economic sciences with respect to skin tone, we were first interested in replicating with the 2012 ANES data the basic relationship between skin color and various measures of socioeconomic status. We examined the relationship between skin tone and four variables: education, income, home ownership, and health insurance (see Figure 2). These figures are based on the weighted bivariate relationships between skin tone and the variable of interest. The effects remain for multivariate analyses of these relationships when gender, age, education, income/homeownership, marriage, employment, and region are included as controls.

Examining the impact of skin color on socioeconomic outcomes in the ANES data reveal patterns largely consistent with those found in other studies. For example, darker skinned Blacks have significantly lower incomes relative to lighter skinned Blacks ( $p < .05$ ), darker skinned Blacks have significantly lower levels of home ownership relative to

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<sup>15</sup> The NIS scale, as shown in Figure 1, has the title “Scale of Skin Color Darkness.” This title was not visible to the interviewers, however, as they rated respondents’ skin tone. That is, the interviewers saw only the images in the scale representing the skin tone gradations.

lighter skinned Blacks ( $p < .05$ ), and darker skinned African Americans assess their health status to be of lower quality relative to their lighter skinned counterparts ( $p < .05$ ). The one finding that our data did not replicate was related to skin tone and level of education. Previous work (e.g., Monk 2014) has found that darker skinned Blacks are significantly less educated than lighter skinned Blacks. This is not the case in our data. As with some previous studies, we also find that darker skinned African Americans have lower levels of educational attainment. In the 2012 ANES, however, these differences are relatively mild and not statistically significant.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Next, we wanted to reexamine the paradoxical skin tone findings from Hochschild and Weaver (2007). Recall that these authors reported that there was no relationship between skin tone and feelings of linked fate to the group for Blacks. The authors hypothesized that this was because the primary marginalization of race took precedence over the secondary marginalization of skin tone. This hypothesis may once have been plausible, but we suspect that this may no longer hold true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We argue that growing income inequality and evolving conceptions of racial classification may have made the relationship between skin tone and group identity more important. That is, as a result of these changes, perhaps skin tone divisions have become clearer among Blacks and resulted in differential feelings of attachment to the group.

To examine these hypotheses, we relied on two questions from the ANES. The first was the standard linked fate question, also used by Hochschild and Weaver (2007).

The question reads, “Do you think that what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?” In addition to the linked fate question, the ANES offered another question about group identity that highlighted racial group importance. This question asks, “How important is being Black or African American to your identity?” We anticipated that this question could potentially tap into the different experiences of light and dark skinned blacks in a way that the linked fate item used by Hochschild and Weaver (2007) may not.

Surprisingly, our first hypothesis was not supported. As Table 1 shows, there are no significant differences between skin tone groups on either the linked fate item or racial group importance item. Thus it appears that the skin color paradox advanced by Hochschild and Weaver persists through 2012, at least on this measure. Of course, it is also possible that respondents have different modal skin tone categories in mind when answering these questions. In other words, the label “Black” or “African American” may conjure up different phenotypic images among respondents based, perhaps, on their own skin color. If so, then they may be envisioning slightly different populations when responding to these questions. A more fine-grained approach, disentangling race from skin color, might help to address this issue but unfortunately the 2012 ANES contained no questions about skin color per se. We will return to this issue later when we discuss the experimental component of our analyses.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

In our next analyses, we determine whether there is a relationship between skin color and perceptions of discrimination. Again, our expectation is that the changing economic and racial landscape may provide an incentive for respondents to view this issue through the lens of skin color as well as race. The ANES offers two relevant questions related to discrimination; the first is about discrimination against Blacks as a group, and the second is about personal experiences with discrimination. The group discrimination question reads, “How much discrimination is there in the United States today against Blacks?” The personal experiences with discrimination questions reads, “How much discrimination have you personally faced because of your race or ethnicity?” We anticipated that darker skinned Blacks would be more likely to report higher levels of personal discrimination primarily because numerous studies have found that this group does in fact encounter more discrimination in a variety of domains (e.g., the labor market, the criminal justice system, interpersonal relations, etc.). For similar reasons, we also expected that relative to lighter skinned Blacks darker skinned African Americans would report greater levels of discrimination against their racial group.

The results in Table 2 provide, at best, only partial support for our second hypothesis. As shown in the first column of Table 2, perceptions of discrimination against African Americans are not significantly greater among darker skinned African Americans relative to comparable group members of a lighter skin tone. However, a borderline significant effect ( $p = .09$ ) does emerge among Blacks of medium skin color. After controlling for a variety of demographic and attitudinal variables, medium skinned Blacks are about 7-percentage points more likely to indicate that their race encounters discrimination relative to the comparison group. A roughly equivalent, and statistically

significant, effect also occurs among this group with respect to discrimination the respondent believes he or she personally experiences. Although this pattern of results was unanticipated, it does provide the first tentative indication that skin color can influence perceptions of discrimination among African Americans.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Although the skin color paradox seems to persist in terms of feelings of connectedness to the group and, to a lesser degree, perceptions of discrimination we wondered if there was a relationship between skin tone and policy preferences. Seltzer and Smith (1991) examined this proposition with GSS data collected in 1982. However, the range of policies was somewhat limited and much of the political, economic, and even racial environment has shifted since this time. It is therefore worthwhile, for all the reasons outlined above, to reconsider the possible link between skin color and policy preferences. We focus in particular on two distinct sets of policies: the first being redistributive policies such as welfare spending and government efforts to reduce income inequality, and the second being race-based policies like affirmative action.

In Table 3, we focus on support for redistributive policies. If, as our own analyses and other researchers have shown, darker skinned Blacks are more likely to encounter economic disadvantages, then one might also expect that they would be more inclined to embrace policies that are designed to provide economic relief. Similarly, if lighter skinned African Americans are less likely to face these challenges then all else equal they should be less supportive of governmental efforts to address these concerns. As it turns

out, this is precisely what we find. Darker skinned Blacks, as shown in Table 3, are significantly more likely to say spending on welfare benefits should be increased relative to light-skinned Blacks. The magnitude of this effect, at 15-percentage points, is also non-trivial. African Americans with darker skin tones are also 15-percentage points more likely than lighter skinned Blacks to indicate that government should provide more services. Similarly, dark skinned Blacks are also significantly more supportive of increased spending on education. Lastly, as shown in column 4 of Table 3, darker skinned Blacks are also 17-percentage points more likely to say that the government should make efforts to reduce income inequality compared to light skinned Blacks. It is worth noting that in every instance in Table 3, the results for darker skinned African Americans are also statistically significant relative to Blacks of medium skin tone. Thus, it is truly the darkest members of this racial group who embrace the most liberal issue positions on redistributive matters as the views of light and medium skinned Blacks are essentially indistinguishable.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

In Table 4, we examine the effects of skin color on policies with an unmistakable racial character: affirmative action in the workplace, immigration policy, and the endorsement of anti-Black stereotypes. In the case of affirmative action, our straightforward hypothesis is that lighter skinned African Americans should be less invested in the policy – even though some have argued that they are the particular group of Blacks most likely to benefit from these initiatives – than darker skinned African

Americans (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). This is because lighter skinned Blacks are less likely to encounter color-based, if not race-based, discrimination and thus are less likely to appreciate the need for policies like affirmative action. With immigration policy, we expect that darker skinned African Americans will be less supportive of efforts to increase the number of immigrants who come to this country, as they (Blacks with darker skin colors) are more economically vulnerable, and hence more concerned about the impact of immigration on employment prospects. Finally, with negative racial stereotypes, we anticipate that lighter skinned Blacks will be less inclined to interpret these attitudes as descriptions of themselves, and thus more likely to endorse them. Darker Blacks, on the other hand, should feel more personally insulted by these stereotypes and therefore more motivated to reject them.

The results from these analyses are presented in Table 4. As we hypothesized, darker skinned Blacks are significantly more likely to support affirmative action in workplace settings compared to light skinned Blacks. The effects are in the substantial and in the anticipated direction for both darker and medium skinned Blacks, although the results achieve only borderline significance ( $p = .056$ ) with the latter group. African Americans of dark and medium skin color also show significantly higher levels of opposition to increasing levels of immigration to the US relative to their lighter skinned counterparts. Here the effect sizes are of 8 and 9-percentage points, respectively.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, although darker skinned Blacks are less supportive of increasing the number of immigrants who come to the U.S. this does not translate into more negative attitudes towards Hispanics. When we examine scores on the Hispanic feeling thermometer we find that darker skinned African Americans rate this group 8-points higher ( $p=.02$ ) than lighter skinned Blacks.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Finally, we examine the relationship between skin tone and belief in stereotypes about the group as a whole. The ANES asks a standard set of questions to all respondents related to the intelligence and hardworking tendencies of various groups. In this case, we are interested in examining how Blacks respond to these two questions about how intelligent or unintelligent is their racial group, and how hardworking African Americans are as a group.<sup>17</sup> As shown in the last column of Table 4, darker skinned Blacks are significantly more likely to reject these negative stereotypes about Blacks as a whole. Blacks of medium skin tone are also less supportive of these negative stereotypes, but the effects are weaker relative to dark skinned Blacks, and fall short of statistical significance ( $p = .15$ ). In contrast, relative to darker skinned Blacks, lighter skinned African Americans are more likely to *embrace* these negative racial stereotypes about a group to which they self-identify. This result is consistent with our expectation that lighter skinned Blacks are less inclined to regard these negative stereotypes as intended to apply to them personally. Consequently, we argue that they should also be less motivated to reject them.

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<sup>17</sup> The specific dependent variable here is a scale composed of the two stereotype questions, which asked respondents to place various groups on a 7-point scale ( $\alpha = .75$ ) with respect to the characteristics of “hard working” and “intelligence.” The variable was subsequently recoded onto a 0-1 scale, with higher values indicating higher levels of support for the negative stereotype.

### Priming Skin Tone as an Identity: Experimental Data

Now that we have established that, at least in some cases, skin color is associated with policy preferences and racial attitudes we turn to a related question. If skin tone is linked to political orientations just as researchers have shown with race, class, gender, and religion then is it also possible to raise the salience of this social characteristic such that its relationship to public opinion is strengthened? We have argued throughout this paper that in some ways skin color distinctions are likely to be more potent than at any time in recent American history. If so, then it should naturally follow that such distinctions can be brought to mind when making political judgments without much difficulty. Just as the stereotype threat literature has demonstrated with other social characteristics, we have proposed that activating this identity can be as simple as asking subjects to indicate their approximate skin color on a brief (self-administered) survey (Steele 2011). This is the procedure we adopt in our skin tone salience experiment.

As indicated above, our experiment relied on a very simple yet elegant design adapted from psychology. We included only two conditions: one where we did not ask our subjects to self-report skin tone until the end of the survey (the control condition), and one where we asked respondents to self-report their skin tone at the beginning of the survey (the prime condition). We hypothesized that priming one's skin tone would lead to significantly different responses about perceptions of discrimination and racial group importance to what previous data, and our own ANES data, have shown. Additionally, another virtue of this study is that we could provide our own question wording, tailored specifically to address skin tone stratification. That is, in addition to many of the standard (ANES) questions about race and public policy, our questionnaire also featured

a number of items that asked about discrimination directed at darker (and lighter) skinned African Americans. The questionnaire also included items asking about which skin color groups would be most or least likely to benefit from various public policies.<sup>18</sup> We relied on a sample of Blacks from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to field our experiment. The experiment was fielded on MTurk on November 24, 2014, and we ultimately had 204 observations from African American participants. The compensation for participating in our study was \$1.50 per participant. We used a series of pre-screening questions to filter out any non-Black participants.

Before addressing the results of our experiment, we turn first to a brief examination of our subjects’ perception of discrimination based on race and skin tone. Recall that the ANES did not ask a question regarding perceptions of discrimination based on skin color, so it is difficult to determine whether Blacks recognize and appreciate what social scientists have documented for some time. Although the results from this study are based on a convenience sample, they can nevertheless provide some preliminary indication of whether actual discrepancies in treatment based on skin color are in fact recognized as such by ordinary African Americans. Thus, we asked participants about their perceptions of the levels of discrimination that Whites, light skinned Blacks, dark skinned Blacks, and African Americans in general encounter.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For example, after being presented with the NIS skin color scale, subjects were asked: “Please select the skin color of the people most likely to benefit from an increase in welfare spending.” There was surprisingly little variance across self-designated skin color groups in response to these questions so we do not focus on them in this paper. However, subjects seemed to agree to a remarkable degree that welfare spending, affirmative action, and reducing income inequality would primarily benefit darker skinned Blacks, and would be *least beneficial* to lighter skinned African Americans.

<sup>19</sup> Questions asking about color-based discrimination were simply modified version of the items asked on the 2012 ANES. All results are coded onto a 0-1 scale.

Note, the following results are pooled across both control and treatment groups, so the average levels of discrimination are among *all Black participants*.

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Perceptions of race and color based discrimination are presented in Figure 3. In these data, Whites are perceived as facing a relatively small amount of discrimination (0.24). Perceptions of discrimination against Blacks as a group are much greater (0.60), relative to Whites.<sup>20</sup> Further, all African American participants reported on average that light skinned Blacks faced levels of discrimination that fall more or less between perceived levels for Whites and Blacks as a group (0.48), while darker skinned Blacks faced the highest levels of discrimination of any of the four groups (0.67).<sup>21</sup> This suggests that it is clear within the Black community that darker skinned Blacks are seen as facing more discrimination, while lighter skinned Blacks are perceived as facing considerably less discrimination – both than darker skinned African Americans and Blacks more generally (although, still more so than Whites).

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<sup>20</sup> These results are comparable, although somewhat lower, than the identically worded questions asked on the ANES. Among Black respondents in the face-to-face survey, perceptions of discrimination against Whites are at .28 and the corresponding figure for Blacks is .72. Thus, it is plausible that the difference in perceived levels of discrimination against lighter and darker skinned African Americans would be even greater in a more representative sample.

<sup>21</sup> Perceptions of race and skin color differences in experiences with discrimination are all significantly distinctive from one another. That is, perceptions for Whites are significantly different than perceptions for light skinned Blacks, just as perceptions of discrimination faced by light skinned Blacks are significantly distinctive relative to African Americans as a group, and so on.

[FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

Building on these results, we also explored whether participants in our MTurk study had different *personal* experiences with discrimination based on skin color. Recall that Hochschild and Weaver (2007), relying on data from the 1979-1980 NSBA, find only mixed support for the proposition that skin color moderates perceptions of color-based discrimination. We employ a slightly different question – albeit, administered to a convenience sample – to determine whether this aspect of the skin color paradox still applies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> As shown in Figure 4, our subjects’ personal experience with discrimination based on skin color is indeed influenced by their skin color. Although light skinned Blacks are significantly distinctive relative to both medium and darker skinned Blacks, it is with the latter that the discrepancy is starkest. The average perception of color-based discrimination for lighter African Americans is .32, the functional equivalent of a response of “a little.” Among dark skinned African Americans, the comparable figure is 15-percentage points higher (.47), or the equivalent of a response of “a moderate amount.”

Now that we have provided some preliminary evidence that more finely tuned questions about skin color based discrimination can also generate more variance, we turn to some results from our experimental manipulation. Our first result here involves perceptions of discrimination against lighter skinned Blacks. As shown in Figure 5, we

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<sup>22</sup> Subjects were asked the following question to assess personal experiences with color-based discrimination: “How much discrimination have you personally faced because of your skin color (e.g., light, medium, or dark)?” In contrast, the NSBA respondents were not asked about discrimination but rather if their skin color made any difference in the way they were treated.

find that when subjects were primed to think about their own skin tone – regardless of whether that may be light, medium, or dark skinned themselves – they reported significantly lower levels of discrimination faced by light skinned Blacks. Put differently, when African Americans are primed to think about their skin tone, regardless of what their skin tone may be, they report seven percentage points less discrimination faced by light skinned Blacks as a group. This result suggests that skin tone can be primed in the ways that we might expect, such that it makes salient the disparities disproportionately faced by some Blacks relative to other subpopulations within the racial group.

[FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE]

Finally, in our last analyses we examined the relationship between the experimental treatment, skin tone, and the racial group importance item. Recall that the 2012 ANES data revealed no relationships even approaching significance with respect to skin tone and feelings of attachment to the group or racial group importance. Here, we wondered if priming people to think about their own skin tone prior to answering questions about racial group importance would lead to differing reported levels of importance across skin tone groups. Indeed, we hypothesized the priming of one's skin tone identity would lead to differences in racial group importance such that darker skinned Blacks would become more strongly identified and lighter skinned Blacks would become less strongly identified.

[FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE]

As shown in Figure 6, in the control condition, we again find no significant relationship between skin tone and racial group importance. This is consistent with the results from our observational analyses, as well as the findings from Hochschild and Weaver (2007) that the linked fate item was unrelated to skin tone. Looking at our treatment condition, however, we see a clear divide between each skin tone group and feelings of racial group importance. For dark skinned Blacks, reports of racial group importance are at nearly 80 percent, whereas for light skinned Blacks, reports of racial group importance are around 40 percent. Blacks with a medium skin tone do not move relative to the control group. Recall that in the control group, each skin tone group was indistinguishable from the other, rating racial group importance around 60 percent. In the treatment, we see a remarkable 20-percentage point shift upwards from darker skinned African Americans, and a 20-percentage point shift downward among light skinned African Americans. Thus, at least in the case of racial group importance, it appears that the skin color paradox dissolves when Blacks are innocuously primed to think about their skin tone identity. Once this identity becomes salient a sharp divide appears across skin color lines with respect to this measure of racial group identity.

### Conclusion

The research presented in this paper was motivated by a relatively straightforward question: How does one's skin tone affect various political attitudes? Given the depth and persistence of skin color stratification among African Americans, we wondered whether this would also have implications for various political judgments among this

population. Previous research on this matter has turned up scant evidence of a skin color divide that would rival the more familiar racial divide in public opinion. Indeed, previous researchers have uncovered almost no evidence that skin color stratification influences Blacks' politically relevant attitudes. This non-finding was so perplexing that it gave rise to a theory – the skin color paradox – that might account for this result (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). The main elements of this argument are essentially that the burdens of race have historically trumped the burdens of skin color, and so the African American community has (perhaps wisely) chosen to emphasize challenges to the former rather than the latter. Although this theory is plausible, it is required only if skin tone variations are in fact unrelated to political orientations and racial attitudes. In light of the limited survey data on which this finding is based, we thought this conclusion – and the theory designed to account for it – might be premature.

We reevaluated this skin tone paradox by relying on two data sources: the 2012 ANES and an experiment of our own design. Although our hypotheses concerning the possible link between skin color and group identity were not supported in the observational data, we did find some mixed support regarding perceptions of discrimination and – most importantly – a number of public policy preferences. In short, we found that darker skinned Blacks are significantly more supportive of economic redistributive policies than either medium or lighter skinned African Americans. Additionally, both medium and especially darker skinned Blacks are also more supportive of affirmative action policies in the workplace relative to their lighter skinned counterparts. Finally, we found that lighter skinned Blacks were, relative to medium and

especially darker skinned Blacks, more likely to embrace negative stereotypes about their racial group.

Why do we uncover consistent evidence of skin color based differences in political orientations when other researchers have not? In our view, this apparent discrepancy is not all that mysterious. Previous efforts to address this issue have mostly relied on surveys that were not primarily designed to assess policy preferences. The GSS represents a clear exception to this rule. However, although the questions on the 1982 GSS and the 2012 ANES cover similar terrain they routinely employ different question wording. Scholars have known for some time that seemingly slight changes in question wording can nevertheless lead to large differences in how the issue is interpreted and subsequently in the distribution of responses (e.g., see Zaller 1992). Additionally, some of the policy domains and racial attitudes where we uncovered our largest results were in areas where even the GSS (at least in 1982) did not provide coverage. As a result, we regard our findings as simply the latest effort to determine the limits of skin color influence on public opinion rather than a refutation of an established body of results.

If our observational analyses represent little more than an early first step in our understanding of the relationship between skin color and political views, then our experimental results are even more preliminary. That is, as far as we can determine, no one has yet sought to ascertain whether self-assessed skin color designations could be experimentally primed. Still, our results suggest that skin color stratification among Blacks is sufficiently salient that it does not take much to activate it. Specifically, we found that in our convenience sample there was widespread agreement among our subjects regarding the differential levels of discrimination encountered by different

groups in society. That is, Whites were deemed to experience the least amount of discrimination and darker skinned Blacks were judged to face the greatest amount of discrimination. Light skinned African Americans fell about midway between these two groups on this dimension. With respect to personal experiences with color-based discrimination, lighter Blacks reported significantly less than their darker skinned counterparts. Our experimental manipulation was designed to enhance the group-related perceptions of Blacks based on self-assessed skin color identifications. We found strong support for this hypothesis in the case of the racial group importance measure.

In summary, we regard this project as the first step in a developing line of research examining this understudied intra-group cleavage among African Americans. If our framing of this question is correct, then we would expect to find additional evidence that skin color stratification influences Blacks' political decision making. And, this may well become increasingly clear as our society becomes increasingly unequal. We would urge researchers to develop appropriate instrumentation to assess color based perceptions and grievances. This is important because, to paraphrase W.E.B. Du Bois, the problem of the twenty-first century may also turn out to be the color line.

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**Table 1. The Impact of Skin Color on Linked Fate Perceptions and Group Importance**

	<u>Linked Fate</u>	<u>Racial Group Importance</u>
Intercept	-.07 (.17)	.34* (.17)
Skin Color Scale		
Medium-skinned	.04 (.07)	-.06 (.04)
Dark-skinned	.04 (.08)	-.05 (.05)
Interviewer Skin Color	.08 (.08)	-.04 (.06)
Income	.13 (.14)	.02 (.10)
College Degree	.18** (.06)	-.05 (.07)
Home Ownership	-.02 (.06)	-.10* (.05)
Female	-.10 (.06)	-.00 (.03)
Age	-.09 (.14)	.15* (.07)
Reside in South	-.04 (.06)	.01 (.04)
Unemployed	-.05 (.13)	.06 (.08)
R squared	.19	.18
N	384	400

*Notes:* +  $p \leq .10$ ; \*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  for two-tailed test. All variables coded 0-1. Results are based on weighted data and incorporating survey design effects. Egalitarianism, ideology, and partisan identification are included as controls.

**Table 2. The Impact of Skin Color on Perceptions of Discrimination**

	<u>Discrimination Against Blacks</u>	<u>Discrimination Against Self</u>
Intercept	.28** (.09)	-.06 (.11)
Skin Color Scale		
Medium-skinned	.07+ (.04)	.08* (.04)
Dark-skinned	.04 (.04)	-.01 (.04)
Interviewer's Skin Color	.04 (.05)	.00 (.05)
Income	-.10 (.07)	-.12+ (.07)
College Degree	.01 (.05)	-.05 (.05)
Home Ownership	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)
Female	.05 (.04)	-.11*** (.03)
Age	.04 (.06)	.15* (.07)
Reside in South	.05 (.04)	.08* (.03)
Unemployed	.03 (.05)	.03 (.07)
R squared	.17	.33
N	379	382

Notes: +  $p \leq .10$ ; \*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  for two-tailed test. All variables coded 0-1. Results are based on weighted data and incorporating survey design effects. Egalitarianism, ideology, party identification, racial group importance, and linked fate are included as controls.

**Table 3. The Impact of Skin Color on Redistributive Policy Preferences**

	<u>Welfare</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Income Diff.</u>
Intercept	.22* (.11)	.52*** (.13)	.54*** (.11)	.23 (.17)
Skin Color Scale				
Medium-skinned	-.02 (.05)	-.00 (.04)	-.01 (.03)	.02 (.05)
Dark-skinned	.15** (.05)	.15** (.05)	.10* (.05)	.17** (.06)
Interviewer's Skin Color	.16** (.06)	.24*** (.05)	.06 (.06)	-.03 (.08)
Income	-.16 (.10)	-.06 (.07)	.18** (.06)	-.17+ (.11)
College Degree	-.01 (.05)	-.04 (.04)	.05+ (.03)	-.01 (.07)
Home Ownership	.01 (.05)	.02 (.04)	.02 (.04)	-.00 (.05)
Female	-.06 (.04)	.06+ (.03)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.05)
Age	.10 (.09)	-.04 (.08)	-.10 (.07)	-.01 (.10)
Reside in South	-.05 (.04)	-.06+ (.03)	-.07* (.03)	-.05 (.04)
Unemployed	.02 (.11)	-.00 (.07)	.08+ (.05)	.09 (.08)
R squared	.21	.18	.17	.12
N	371	300	381	375

*Notes:* +  $p \leq .10$ ; \*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  for two-tailed test. All variables coded 0-1. Results are based on weighted data and incorporating survey design effects. Egalitarianism, ideology, party identification, racial group importance, and linked fate are included as controls.

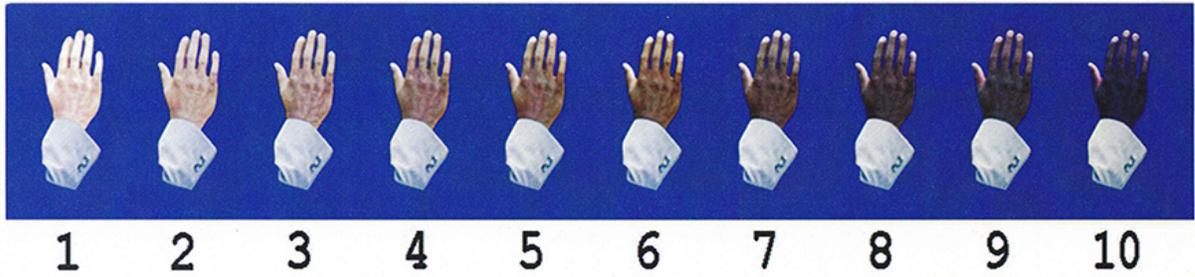
**Table 4. The Impact of Skin Color on Racialized Policy Preferences and Anti-Black Stereotypes**

	<u>Affirmative Action in the Workplace</u>	<u>Opposition to Increased Immigration</u>	<u>Anti-Black Stereotype Scale</u>
Intercept	.16 (.17)	.39*** (.09)	.35*** (.08)
Skin Color Scale			
Medium-skinned	.10+ (.05)	.08* (.03)	-.04 (.03)
Dark-skinned	.16* (.07)	.09* (.04)	-.09* (.04)
Interviewer's Skin Color	-.00 (.08)	.01 (.05)	.01 (.04)
Income	.06 (.11)	.07 (.07)	.03 (.07)
College Degree	.17** (.06)	-.14*** (.04)	-.00 (.04)
Home Ownership	-.06 (.06)	-.03 (.04)	-.01 (.03)
Female	.01 (.05)	.03 (.04)	-.05+ (.03)
Age	.04 (.12)	-.05 (.08)	-.05 (.06)
Reside in South	.11* (.05)	.06* (.03)	.00 (.02)
Unemployed	-.16+ (.08)	-.13 (.09)	.08 (.05)
R squared	.13	.15	.11
N	374	372	379

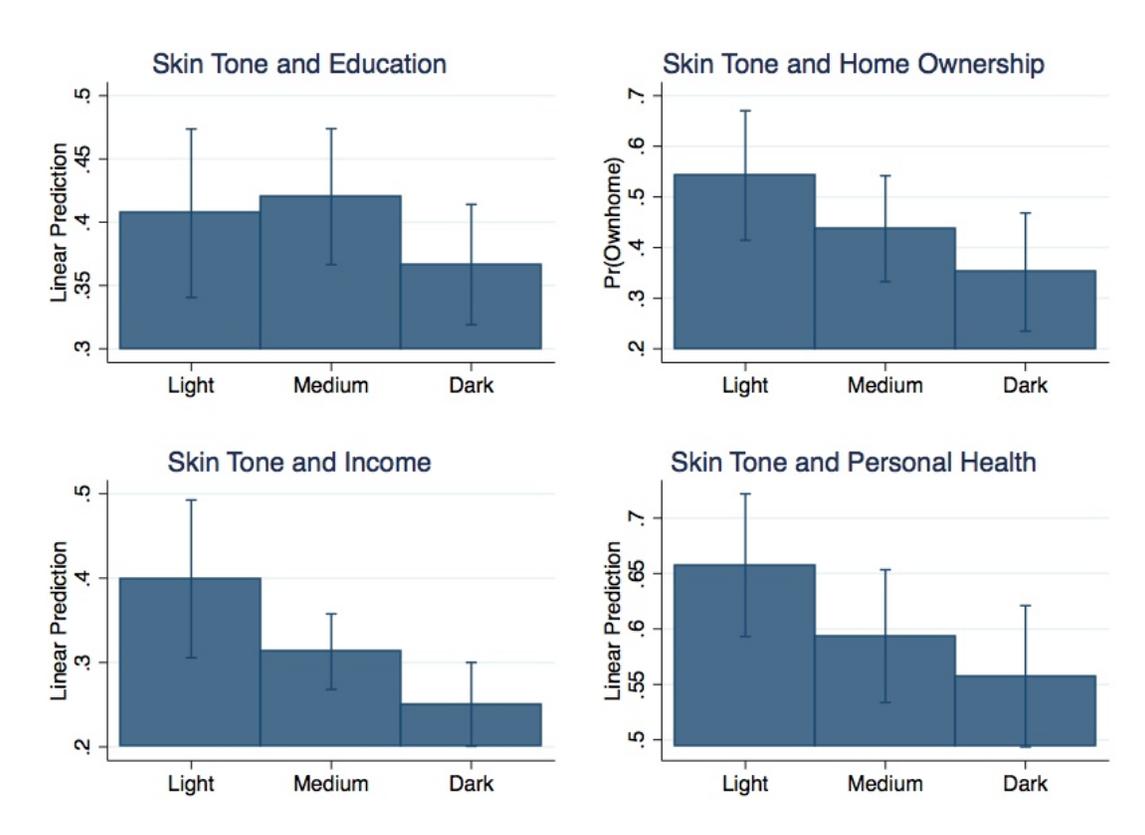
*Notes:* +  $p \leq .10$ ; \*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  for two-tailed test. All variables coded 0-1. Results are based on weighted data and incorporating survey design effects. Egalitarianism, ideology, party identification, racial group importance, and linked fate are included as controls.

Figure 1. Skin Color Scale

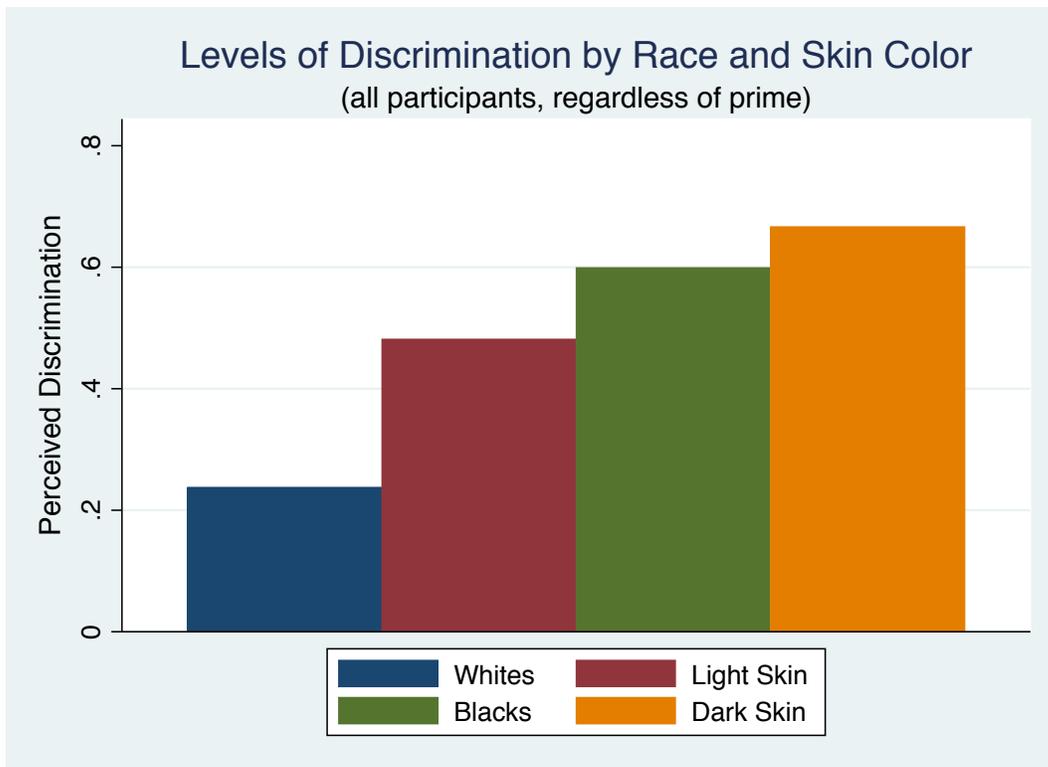
Scale of Skin Color Darkness



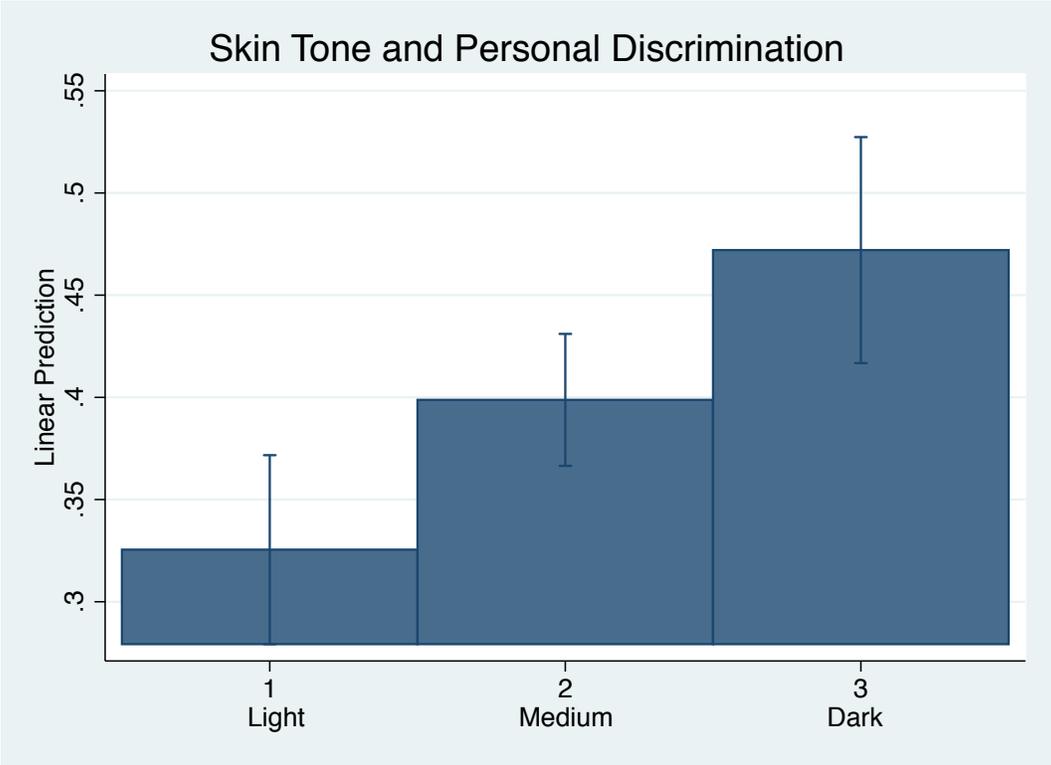
**Figure 2. The Impact of Skin Color on Socioeconomic Outcomes**



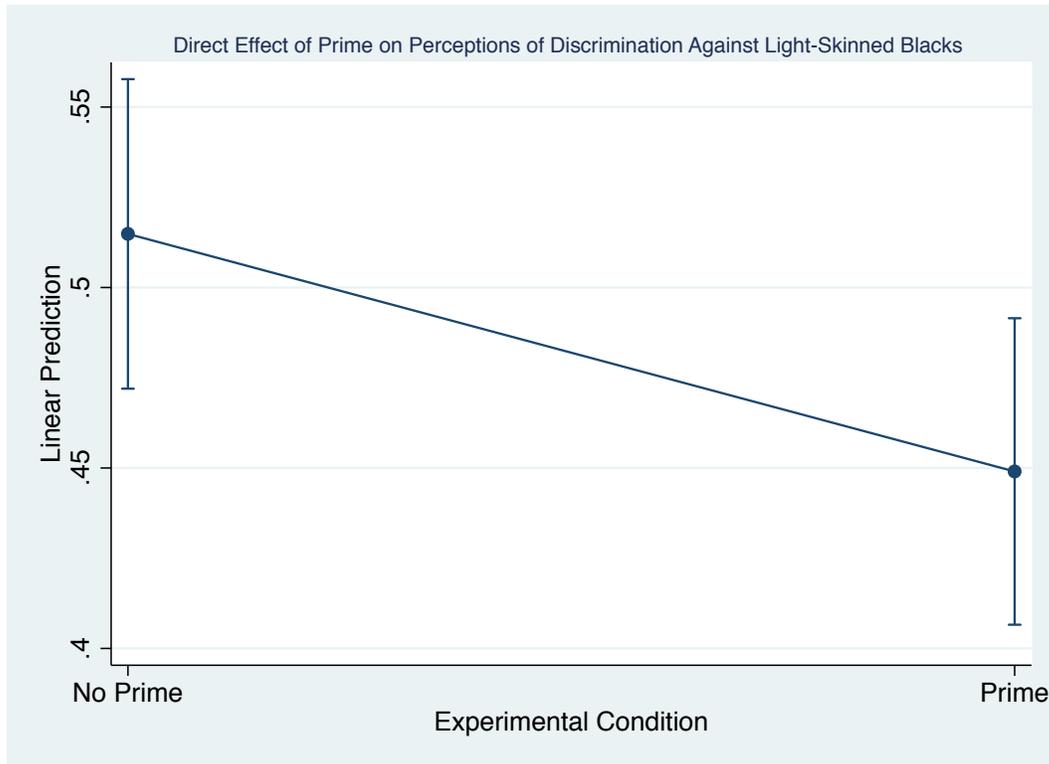
**Figure 3. Perceptions of Discrimination Against Different Groups based on Race and Skin Color**



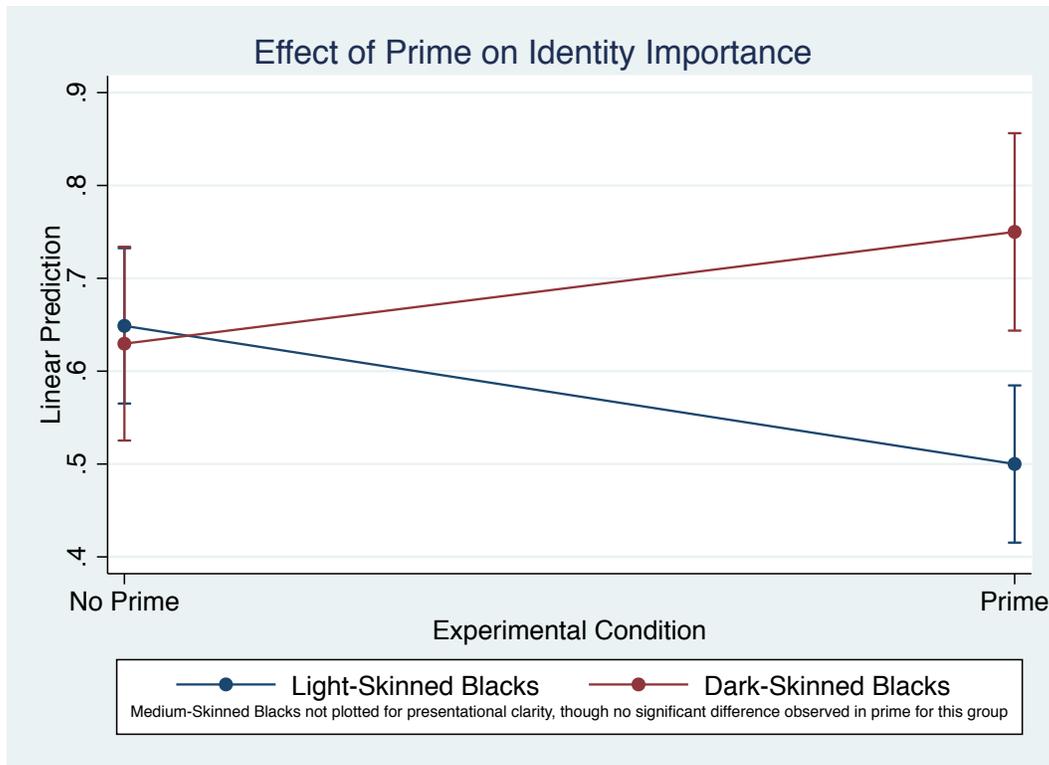
**Figure 4. Relationship Between Self-Identified Skin Color and Perceptions of Personal Discrimination Based on Skin Color**



**Figure 5. Relationship Between Experimental Treatment and Perceptions of Discrimination Against Light Skinned Blacks**



**Figure 6. Relationship between Experimental Treatment, Skin Color, and Racial Group Importance**



## Appendix

### **Linked Fate:**

Do you think what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

Yes  
No

If respondent answers yes:

Will it affect you a lot, some or not very much?  
A lot  
Some  
Not very much

### **Identity Importance:**

How important is being Black or African-American to your identity?  
Extremely important  
Very important  
Moderately important  
A little important  
Not at all important

### **Discrimination:**

How much discrimination is there in the United States today against each of the following groups? Blacks

A great deal  
A lot  
A moderate amount  
A little  
None at all

How much discrimination have you personally faced because of your ethnicity or race?

A great deal  
A lot  
A moderate amount  
A little  
None at all

### **Welfare Spending**

Thinking about public expenditures on welfare benefits, should there be  
Much more than now  
Somewhat more than now  
The same as now  
Somewhat less than now  
Much less than now

**Services:**

Some people think the government should provide fewer services even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.

Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Government should provide many fewer services
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Government should provide many more services

**Education:**

Thinking about public expenditures on education, should there be:  
Much more than now  
Somewhat more than now  
The same as now  
Somewhat less than now  
Much less than now

**Reducing Income Inequality:**

Please say to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.” Do you  
Agree strongly  
Agree somewhat  
Neither agree nor disagree  
Disagree somewhat  
Disagree strongly

**Affirmative Action in the Workplace:**

Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose allowing companies to increase the number of black workers by considering race along with other factors when choosing employees? [Strongly Favor and Strongly Oppose are branched options]

Strongly Favor

Favor

Neither Favor nor Oppose

Oppose

Strongly Oppose

**Immigration:**

Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be

Increased a lot

Increased a little

Left the same as it is now

Decreased a little

Decreased a lot

**Black Stereotypes:**

Where would you rate blacks in general on this scale?

1. Hard-working

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7. Lazy

Where would you rate blacks in general on this scale?

1. Intelligent

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7. Unintelligent

The following are unique questions included in the instrument for the priming experiment:

**Skin Color Discrimination:**

How much discrimination is there in the United States today against dark skinned Blacks?

A great deal  
A lot  
A moderate amount  
A little  
None at all

How much discrimination is there in the United States today against light skinned Blacks?

A great deal  
A lot  
A moderate amount  
A little  
None at all

How much discrimination have you personally faced because of your skin color (e.g. light, medium, or dark)?

A great deal  
A lot  
A moderate amount  
A little  
None at all