

*African Americans in the Republican Party:  
Taking the Road Less Traveled*

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While most African Americans identify with the Democratic Party, a small minority chooses to identify and support the party of Lincoln. However, very little is known about the demographic make-up or policy preferences of these individuals. Utilizing the 1992-2002 American National Election Studies, we provide a multivariate analysis of the demographic characteristics and policy leanings of African American Republicans. Our analysis suggests several systematic patterns regarding African Americans' Republican Party identification. First, as with the general population, we find they are more likely to be male, from the South and to identify themselves as conservatives. However, unlike the general population, we find they are not more likely to maintain upper or middle incomes or to view religion as an important guide in their life. Third, we find African Americans born after 1950 are more likely to identify themselves as Republican. Fourth, we find African American Republicans feel less warmth toward blacks than the majority of their brethren and are less likely to view race or social welfare issues as significant problems in America. Ultimately, we conclude racial issues are still the key to understanding African American Partisanship.

*"A black man voting for the Republicans makes about as much sense as a chicken voting for Colonel Sanders."<sup>1</sup>*

*J.C. Watts, Sr.*

Among political scholars, the ideological and partisan identification of African-Americans has been nearly ignored. This neglect is largely due to the fact that most political scholars presume there is little partisan or ideological variation among African Americans in the American electorate (Tate 1993; Dawson 1994). This assumption is most likely based on the near unanimity with which African Americans identify with the Democratic Party and the strong liberal stance of most African-Americans with regard to civil rights and social welfare issues (Welch and Foster 1987). While the vast majority of African Americans do continue to identify with the Democratic Party, scholars must also recognize that a minority of African Americans choose to identify with and support the Republican Party. Unfortunately, due to the limited scholarship regarding African American partisan identification, very little is known about the demographic make-up and policy preferences of this unique minority of the American electorate.

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The purpose of this research is to address this omission in the literature by providing a multivariate analysis of African Americans who identify with the Republican Party versus those who identify with the Democratic Party. Specifically, our research examines what demographic characteristics, racial attitudes, and issue preferences differentiate African Americans who identify with the Republican camp from the large majority who identify with the Democratic camp?

In order to provide a deeper understanding of African American Republicans, our research begins with a discussion of the role of African Americans as a key-voting bloc in state and national elections. We then provide a brief history of the transition of African Americans from loyal Lincoln-Republicans to the most loyal partisans of the modern Democratic Party. Next, building on previous research we put forward several hypotheses regarding the relationships between several key political issues and demographic factors and black partisanship. Finally, we conclude our research with a series of bivariate and multivariate analyses of our hypotheses

### **The Role of African Americans as a Key-Voting Bloc**

Because African Americans are largely concentrated in about 20 states, they potentially hold substantial influence in national elections.<sup>2</sup> With regard to presidential elections, the 20 states which African Americans maintain a key-voting block represent a majority of Electoral College Votes (284 of 538). Moreover, African Americans currently represent over ten percent of the voting populations in 130 (30%) of the 435 Congressional Districts. Consequently their level of support is crucial in determining the outcome of not only state and local elections, but also a substantial proportion of Electoral College Votes and Congressional Elections.

While the support of African Americans is clearly important in political districts where they represent a substantial portion of the voting population, the support of a visible portion of African Americans may be just as critical in political districts with little or no African American population. As noted by Jonah Goldberg (2002) “white people, believe it or not, don’t like to think of themselves as racists” and therefore the Republican Party must maintain the support of at least a minimum number of African Americans in order to maintain the continued support of moderate swing voters. Goldberg notes:

This was the logic behind the 2000 GOP convention’s cavalcade of inclusiveness. All of those blacks and Hispanics were on stage not so much to get the votes of blacks and Hispanics (though that was certainly part of it). They were up there to demonstrate to moderate whites that it’s okay to vote for the GOP again.

Clearly the value of the African American vote noted in the above discussion has not gone unnoticed by the Republican Party. As noted by former RNC Chairman Lee Atwater, if the Republican Party could regularly attract just 20 percent of the African American vote, the party would assure itself of majority status in the country (Bolce et al. 1992). With this in mind the Republican Party has made numerous attempts to attract African Americans back to the Party of Lincoln. This was perhaps most vividly displayed throughout the 2000 Presidential Election when the Republican Party made a strong attempt to court African Americans. During their National Convention they included African Americans such as Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice to give their speeches during prime time and the party appointed U.S. Representative J.C. Watts of Oklahoma as a co-chair of the convention. Following the convention, the Republican Party also spent over \$1 million on radio advertisements targeting African American voters.

### **African Americans and Partisan Identification**

*“The Party of Lincoln hasn’t always carried the mantle of Lincoln.”*

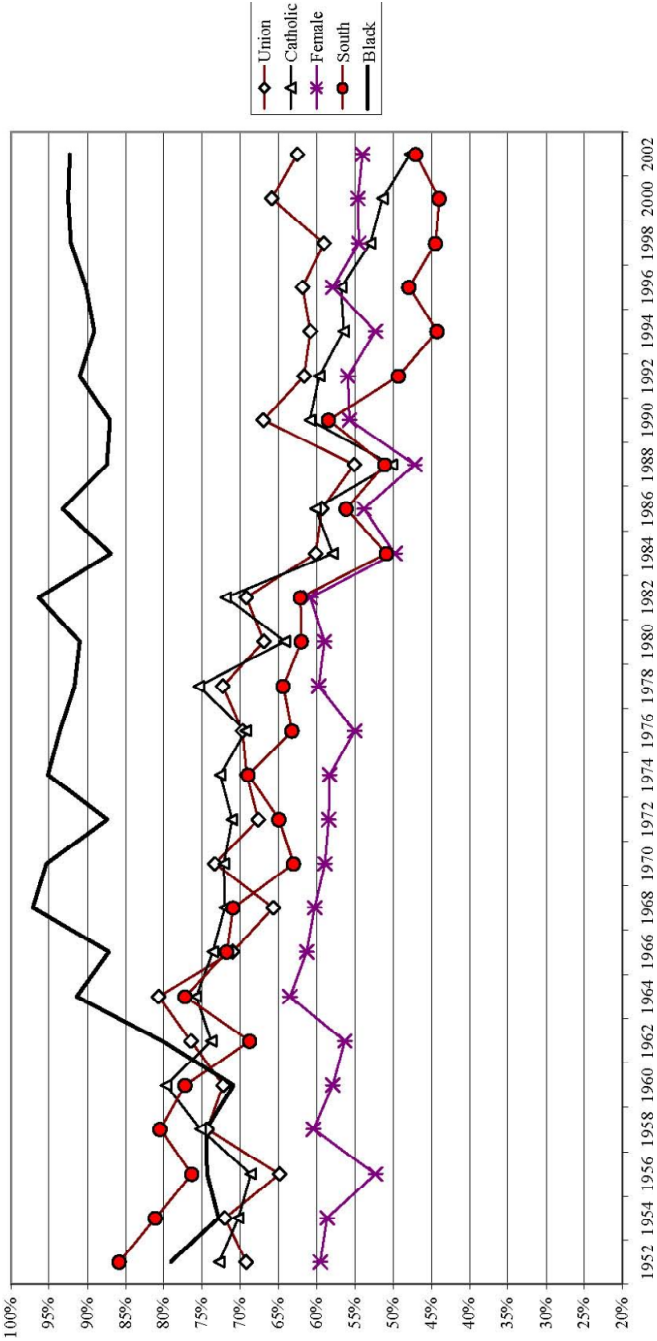
*George Bush, Republican Presidential Candidate  
2000 Annual Meeting of the NAACP*

Of all the partisan social groups in the United States, African Americans remain the most consistently loyal to their party (Niemi et al. 1986; Rosenstone et al. 1996). While the Republican Party has made significant inroads into core Democratic groups, such as Catholics, blue-collar workers, and white southerners, African Americans have actually become more loyal to the Democratic Party (see Figure 1) (Niemi et al. 1986; Bolce et al. 1992; Bolce et al. 1993; Rosenstone et al. 1996).

The Democratic Party has not always enjoyed the loyalty of African American voters. Following the Civil War the Republican Party enjoyed the strong support of African Americans. This support was owing to several factors, most notably Lincoln’s leadership during the Civil War, the Republican Congress’s efforts regarding Reconstruction, and Republicans’ support of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Following the Civil War the Republican Party welcomed the freedman and his newly acquired vote and the vast majority of African American voters responded in kind by becoming loyal Republicans.

African American’s support for the Party of Lincoln remained firm until the latter part of Republican Theodore Roosevelt’s administration (Walton 1972). His call for African Americans to accept white supremacy and his support of efforts aimed at replacing the integrated Southern wing of

Figure 1. Democratic Party Identification by Group by Year, 1952-2002



the Republican Party with an all-white branch started the decline of African American support (Walton 1972). This decline in support was also fueled with President Hoover's attempt's to attract white Southern voters at the expense of African Americans and his lack of a response to the growing economic depression across the country and particularly in African American communities (Dawson 1994). While Hoover's actions or lack of action set the stage for the further erosion of black Republican support, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, which substantially aided the African American community in addition to more symbolic gestures such as the administration's consultation with black leaders and the inclusion of black interests on the national agenda, initiated the first significant transferal of African American's loyalty from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party (Dawson 1994).<sup>3</sup> This shift in partisanship continued through the Truman administration, with one of the defining moments being the signing of an executive order that integrated the armed forces.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1950s both parties took relatively moderate stands on racial issues. However, due to the significant level of Southern Democratic hostility to the civil rights movement and the Eisenhower administration's *relatively* progressive civil rights record, Republicans reclaimed their position as being more progressive on civil rights. While black support for the Democratic Party declined throughout this period, electoral factors in 1960 allowed the Democratic Party to vigorously fight to regain the support of African Americans, particularly in large urban areas (Carmines and Stimson 1989).

Although there were little policy differences between the two parties' presidential candidates with regard to civil rights in 1960, Kennedy's symbolic call to Coretta King during the election helped to identify Kennedy and the Democratic Party as more supportive of African American issues (Dawson 1994). Following the death of Kennedy, President Johnson's public support and leadership with regard to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act strengthened African American identification with the Democrat Party. The realignment of African Americans into the Democratic Party was further solidified with Republican Presidential Candidate Barry Goldwater's racially charged campaign in which he condemned the 1964 Civil Rights Act and federal actions regarding desegregation.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Richard Nixon's "Southern Strategy" of winning the white South in 1968 completed the defection of African Americans to the Democratic Party (Bolce et al. 1992).

Since the 1960s, the Democratic Party's general support of civil rights, and an expanded social agenda, has played a pivotal role in gaining and preserving the allegiance of African Americans. In addition, the Republican Party has also played a role in maintaining African American's loyalty to the

Democratic Party. Katherine Tate (1989) argues the Republican Party's lack of support for numerous civil rights and racial issues has caused many to view the Democratic Party as pro-African American and the Republican Party as anti-African American. As argued by Streb (2001), for most, the Republican Party remains the party of David Duke, Trent Lott, Bob Barr, and Jesse Helms, politicians who are generally viewed as being less tolerant of African Americans and their goals.<sup>6</sup>

While most African Americans do identify with the Democratic Party, a small and consistent minority continues to support and identify with the Republican Party. Although several prominent scholars have discussed the possible or likely characteristics of African Americans who identify with the Republican Party, many of these discussions have typically not relied on any concrete data or survey analyses. Moreover, the vast majority of empirical analyses examining possible variation in their ideological and partisan preferences have focused primarily on African American "Conservatives" rather than African American "Republicans." Three notable exceptions are Bolce, DeMaio, and Muzzio's (1992) insightful work "Blacks and the Republican Party: The 20 Percent Solution," the seminal work of Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics* (1993), and finally Michael Dawson's *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in American Politics* (1994).

Although each of these studies has improved our understanding of black Republicans, their findings are somewhat at odds with each other and ultimately leave many questions regarding this important topic unanswered. Bolce et al.'s (1992) findings indicate Republican identifiers are most likely to be found among the most conservative and wealthiest African Americans; however their findings are based simply on *bivariate* analyses of the 1984 and 1988 ABC News Presidential election and congressional exit polls. On the other hand, Tate (1993) and Dawson (1994) multivariate analyses of the 1984 and 1988 National Black Election Studies find economic status has no effect on African American partisanship. Regarding ideology, Dawson's (1994) findings support those of Bolce et al. (1992), while Tate concludes ideology is not a significant factor in determining African American's partisanship. Tate (1993) also notes gender and age have a minimal effect. Finally, both Tate (1993) and Dawson's (1994) multivariate analyses indicate African American partisanship is strongly influenced by individual's racial identification.

While the findings of Tate (1993) and Dawson (1994) provide us with a foundation for understanding contemporary African American partisanship, there are substantial limitations to their two studies. First, their analyses are based on data collected during the 1980s. While African American partisanship has not substantially changed since this period, the parties have changed. In particular, the Republican Party has developed a solid base in

the Deep South where a large portion of African American's reside. Second, issues related to traditional Christian values have become key issues for the Republican Party over the last decade which has the potential to significantly increase the propensity of African Americans to identify with the Republican Party. Finally, we argue that the findings of Dawson and Tate are limited due to their research design. Their utilization of OLS regression analyses, considering the skewed distribution African American Partisanship, inadvertently results in their coefficients being driven primarily by variation within levels of Democratic partisan identification rather than between Democratic and Republican partisan identification.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the results of their analysis are more appropriately interpreted as indicators of the factors which differentiate strong Democrats from weak Democrats and independent-leaning Democrats rather than factors which differentiate Democrats from Independent and/or Republican identifiers.

### **Who are the African American Republicans?**

The following three sections address the core question of this research, who are the African American Republicans? Following previous research on partisan identification and more specifically African American partisan identification, our hypotheses focus on the influence of demographic characteristics, racial identification, religion, and issue preferences on individual's partisan identification.

#### **Demographics**

Taking into account previous research on general party identification and more specifically African American's political attitudes, several hypotheses can be developed regarding the likely demographic characteristics of African American Republicans. Among demographic variables, the influence of economic status has been one of the most common focuses of scholars interested in understanding individuals' partisan identification.<sup>8</sup> Correspondingly, during the late 1970s the Republican Party leadership saw the growing economic diversity of African Americans as a significant opportunity to welcome African Americans (Robinson 1982). Republican Party leaders felt they could attract a substantial proportion of the African American middle and upper class to the Republican family. This view was based largely on the idea that middle and upper income African Americans would gradually be more likely to identify with the Republican Party as their class interest began to supersede their racial interests. Unfortunately for Republicans, the growing economic diversity of African Americans has not led to an increase in their identification with the Republican Party.

According to Robinson (1982) the inability of the Republican Party to attract middle and upper income African Americans is likely due to the fact that their economic status is quite often the product of government actions designated to counter the traditional discriminatory practices of the free market. Additionally, as Gilliam and Whitby (1989) argue, many middle and upper income African Americans are employed in the public sector and consequently have philosophical as well as personal reasons to continue to identify and support the Democratic Party. Moreover, middle and upper class African Americans, as Elms and Luks (2000) contend, are more likely to recognize African American group interest and to understand the personal benefits of the Civil Rights movement. Finally, one could argue that the vast majority of African Americans, regardless of their income, have been so strongly affected by the politics of race that any economic or class differences are muted.<sup>9</sup> Considering these arguments and previous research regarding the influence of economic status on African American partisanship, we contend economic status will not have a significant impact on the partisan identification African Americans.

Gender is also a common focus of scholars interested in understanding individuals' partisan identification. In line with the arguments of Tate (1993), we contend African American males are more likely to identify with the Republican Party than females. This hypothesis is based on the findings of Tate (1993) and the generally stronger levels of support the Republican Party receives from males of all races. As noted by Greenburg (2000), male support for Republican Presidential candidates in recent elections has been more than 10 percent above the level of support provided by females.

While age is not a common focus of scholars examining partisan identification, we argue age is significant with regard to African Americans' partisan identification. More specifically, we hypothesize that African Americans who were not old enough to directly experience the Jim Crow era or the civil rights movement of the 1960s will be more likely to identify with the Republican Party. This hypothesis is based on the idea that individuals who did not experience first hand the civil rights movement and the partisan transformation of the vast majority of African Americans throughout the 1960s are less likely to feel as strong an allegiance or attachment to the Democratic Party. As Elms and Luks (2000) argue, the experience of many young African Americans with the contemporary Democratic Party has primarily been with the curtailment of social programs rather than the progress made for African Americans by the Democratic Party of the Civil Rights movement. For many, their Democratic Party experience has simply been that of a party that takes their support for granted.

Taking into account the tremendous growth of the Republican Party in the South over the past three decades and the importance of this region in the



contemporary leadership and direction of the Republican Party, we also include Southern Region as a fourth demographic variable (Ardoin and Vogel 2003). Although the South has provided the Republican Party with fertile ground for growth over the last several decades, we argue African Americans in the South will actually be less likely to identify with the Republican Party. This hypothesis is based on the lack of support and in some cases resistance of the Republican Party in the South regarding civil rights and the identification of the Republican Party in the South with racially divisive issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989).

### **Racial Identification**

Our next hypothesis addresses the influence of racial identification or rather racial “consciousness.” Specifically, we argue African American Republicans will display lower levels of racial consciousness than African American Democrats. This hypothesis builds on the findings of Tate (1993) and Dawson (1994), who found racial identification as a significant determinant of partisanship among African Americans. First, considering the tremendous loyalty African Americans have given the Democratic Party, we argue individuals who are willing to disregard this group activity are less likely to identify with the group. Second, considering the Democratic Party has long been considered the party most favorable to advancing civil rights and social welfare issues as well as the fact that the Republican Party is often characterized as intolerant on issues important to the African American community (Petrocik 1996; Streb 2001), it can be argued that African Americans who identify with the Republican Party will be less likely to identify with their racial community.<sup>10</sup>

### **Religion**

Religion, as Streb (2001) notes, may provide the Republican Party with its greatest opportunity for enlisting African Americans.<sup>11</sup> Few groups are more religious in this country than are African Americans. It is a vital part of the African American culture and plays a substantial role in African American politics. Moreover, most African Americans share the traditional Christian values espoused by the Republican Party. Streb (2001) notes Blacks are more likely to attend church, to oppose abortion, and to support school prayer than whites. Considering these findings and the Republican Party’s consistent support of traditional Christian values, we hypothesize African American Republicans will view religion as a more important guide in their lives than African American Democrats.

### **Issue Preferences**

Our final set of hypotheses examines possible variation in the issue preferences of African American Republicans and Democrats. Petrocik (1996) argues that both the Democratic and Republican Party “own” issues that are more likely to be favored by the public. For the Republican Party, these issues include civil and social order, defense issues, and big government. On the other hand, the Democratic Party’s issues include civil rights, social welfare, and labor issues. Considering the differences in issue ownership between the two parties, several hypotheses can be developed with regard to differences in the likely issue preferences of African American Republicans and Democrats. First, we argue that African Americans who identify social order or national defense and foreign affairs as the most important problem facing our nation are more likely to identify themselves as Republicans. Moreover, we hypothesize that African Americans who identify social welfare or civil rights issues as the most important problem facing our nation will be less likely to identify with the Republican Party. Third, considering the Republican Party’s views regarding a limited role for the federal government, we hypothesize that those who are less supportive of the federal government efforts dedicated to improving the social and economic positions of African Americans will be more likely to identify with the Republican Party.

Finally, research on the general electorate (Nexon 1971; Kweit 1986; Nesbit 1988; Clark et al. 1991) indicates a close linkage between ideology and partisanship with liberals substantially more likely to identify with the Democratic Party and conservatives substantially more likely to identify with the Republican Party. In line with research on the general electorate and more specifically African Americans (Dawson 1994), we contend the more conservative an African American is the more likely they will be to identify with the Republican Party.

### **Data and Methods**

While there are numerous reasons for the lack of research regarding African American Republicans, perhaps the most significant is the relatively small number of African American respondents polled in most national surveys and the even smaller number of actual African American Republicans polled. For instance, most national data sets have only 150 or so African American respondents (and less than 25 African American Republicans). Consequently, analyses of differences between African Americans are severely limited (Gilliam and Whitby 1989). The analysis of African American Republicans, a minority within this minority makes the hurdle even

more challenging. In order to overcome the challenge of a small N we have pooled the 1992-2002 American National Election Surveys conducted by the Center for Political Studies. By doing this we attain a large enough sample of African American respondents (1112) and more importantly African American Republicans (99) to reliably test our hypotheses.

It should be noted that we did consider employing the Black National Election Studies (BNES) and National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA) for our analyses which would provide a larger sample of African Americans. However, the NSBA has not been conducted since 1992 and the BNES has not been conducted since 1996, therefore they would not provide the authors with the ability to examine fully the impact of the Republican Party's recent growth in the South and their general movement toward a focus on socially conservative issues. While these two factors may be insignificant for some racial groups, they are particularly important to African Americans who represent a substantial portion of the population in most southern states and are significantly more conservative regarding religious issues than the general public.

The dependent variable in our model of partisan identification is dichotomous (Democrats = 0 and Republicans = 1), consequently the model cannot be estimated properly utilizing ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.<sup>12</sup> Instead, a weighted LOGIT procedure developed by King and Zeng (1999) is employed which allows one to estimate the predicted probabilities associated with the two outcomes reflected in the dependent variables. Given the parameter values obtained by the LOGIT model, it is possible to estimate the probability that each respondent will identify with the Democratic or the Republican Party. Because of the pooled nature of our data, we include dummy variables for the 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 surveys. The inclusion of these variables will control for any systematic difference in the partisan identification of African Americans between surveys. In addition, five separate models were estimated with the first including all six Bi-Annual American National Election Surveys (1992-2002) and the four subsequent models, each including three successive surveys (1992-1996, 1994-1998, 1996-2000, and 1998-2002). Finally, a detailed description of the variables used in our models of African American Partisan identification is provided in the Appendix.

### **Findings**

Prior to our discussion of the results of our multivariate LOGIT analyses, we present several bivariate analyses. In general, the results of the bivariate analyses reported in Table 1 support our hypotheses.

**Table 1. Demographics/Issues by  
Republican/Democratic Party Identification**

	Democrat	Republican	N
<b>Family Income Percentile***</b>			
0 to 16 percentile	84%	16%	258
17 to 33 percentile	95%	5%	204
34 to 67 percentile	94%	6%	236
68 to 95 percentile	91%	9%	152
96 to 100 percentile	83%	17%	12
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	90%	11%	427
Female	92%	8%	685
<b>Political South/Non-South**</b>			
Non-South	94%	7%	493
South	89%	11%	619
<b>Born 1950 or Later**</b>			
Born before 1950	94%	6%	450
Born 1950 or later	89%	11%	662
<b>Blacks Thermometer</b>			
Mean Blacks Thermometer Mean Scores	82	79	969
<b>How Much Guidance R Has From Religion</b>			
Not important	92%	8%	76
Some	91%	9%	128
Quite a bit	93%	7%	221
A great deal	91%	9%	658
<b>Most Important Problem Facing Country*</b>			
Social/racial problems not most important	90%	10%	793
Social/racial problems are most important	94%	6%	319
Defense/social order problems NOT most important	92%	8%	879
Defense/social order problems most important	89%	11%	233
<b>Ideology***</b>			
7 Point Ideology Scale	3.8	4.4	1112

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

We begin our bivariate analyses by first examining differences across income categories. Interestingly, the two income groups which are most likely to identify with the Republican Party are from the lowest and highest percentile categories. Identification with the Republican Party by lower income African Americans is as strong as their brethren on the upper end of the economic ladder. However, we must note the number of respondents in the highest income category is quite small (12) and therefore limits our ability to make any generalizations regarding this category. Our bivariate results also suggest males are slightly (2.6%) more likely to identify with the Republican Party than females. While the difference is not statistically significant, the results do suggest support for our hypothesis. The preliminary results for South/Non-South analysis are quite surprising. Our analysis indicates African Americans from the South are more likely to identify with the Republican Party. While the difference of 4.3 percent may seem relatively small, it is statistically significant (Chi-square .008). Finally, we also find a significant difference in the probability of identifying with the Republican Party between African Americans born after and before 1950. As we suggest above, individuals born after 1950 are more likely to identify with the Republican Party than those born prior to 1950.

Building on previous research on black partisanship, we expect African American Republicans will be more likely to display lower levels of racial consciousness than African American Democrats. While direct measures of racial identification are not available through the ANES, we argue the black thermometer question utilized by the ANES provides a reliable and valid measure of this concept. Although our bivariate analysis indicates Republicans feel less warm toward other African Americans; the difference (3.15) is not statistically significant.

Considering the importance of religion in the African American community, it is argued by many (Streb 2001) that this factor may provide the Republican Party with its greatest opportunity for attracting African Americans. While the theory behind this hypothesis is quite strong, our bivariate analyses fail to support this hypothesis. Neither African Americans who receive more guidance from religion nor those who attend religious services more often are more likely to identify with the Republican Party.

We next turn to the American National Election Study's question regarding the most important problem facing our country. The results of our analyses provide mixed support for these hypotheses. For those individuals who view social or racial problems as the most important facing our problem, the results suggests they are *significantly* less likely (4.1%) to identify with the Republican Party. While those who view defense or social order problems as most important are slightly more likely (2.3%) to identify with the Republican Party, the results are not statistically significant.

Our last bivariate analysis examines the relationship between ideology and partisanship. On the traditional 7 point ideology scale we find Republicans are significantly more likely to identify themselves as conservatives than Democrats. More specifically, Republicans on the 7 point scale are .6 points higher on average than Democrats.

In Table 2 we present the LOGIT parameter values for the results of our full model and the four additional limited models of African American partisan identification.<sup>13</sup> Overall, the full model's predictive ability only improves slightly on the predictive capabilities of a null model. However, this is expected considering the skewed distribution of the model. More importantly a review of the LOGIT coefficients reveals, with only a few exceptions, that our results are generally consistent with our hypotheses. Furthermore, the results remain relatively consistent across the four limited models and the full model (1992-2002), supporting the overall reliability of our models.

The results of our multivariate models indicate income does have a significant influence on partisanship. Surprisingly, the results are in the opposite direction as we hypothesize (and relatively consistent across the models). While the results suggest the influence of income is only minimally, they suggest the continued growth of an African American middle and upper class is not providing fertile ground for the Republican Party. These results not only fail to support our hypothesis and the previous findings of Tate (1993) and Dawson (1994), but directly challenge conventional wisdom and call for an explanation. In response we return to the arguments of Gilliam and Whitby (1989) and Elms and Luks (2000) which have noted the tendency of middle and upper income African American's to recognize group interest and their greater tendency to be employed in the public sector and therefore have philosophical as well as personal reasons to identify with the Democratic Party. Finally, as noted above, one could argue the vast majority of African Americans, regardless of their income, have been so strongly affected by the politics of race that traditional economic differences are muted.

With regards to gender the LOGIT coefficients for male in three of the five models are positive and significant. More specifically, the coefficient for the full model (1992-2002) indicate African American males, holding all other factors at their base values, are 9 percent more likely to identify with the Republican Party than females. While these results support our hypotheses and the earlier findings of Tate (1993), they indicate the presence of only a moderate gender gap among African Americans as compared to the substantial gender gap observed among whites. This is not necessarily surprising, considering that much of the gender gap observed between white males and females is largely due to the economic vulnerabilities of white

**Table 2. Re-Logit Model of Black Republican Party Identification**

Variables	Full Model				
	1992-2002	1992-1996	1994-1998	1996-2000	1998-2002
Constant	-3.265*** (0.711)	-3.241*** (0.928)	-3.080*** (1.110)	-2.054** (1.024)	-2.557*** (1.098)
Income	-0.260*** (0.127)	-0.156 (0.146)	-0.202 (0.155)	-0.377** (0.181)	-0.512** (0.240)
Male	0.382** (0.217)	0.518** (0.273)	0.582** (0.316)	0.391 (0.352)	0.097 (0.389)
Southern Region	0.355* (0.237)	0.305 (0.289)	0.720** (0.361)	0.800** (0.404)	0.686 (0.433)
Born after 1950	0.709*** (0.238)	0.792*** (0.297)	0.420 (0.319)	0.589** (0.349)	0.752** (0.401)
Social Issues	-0.662** (0.319)	-0.400 (0.336)	-1.074** (0.528)	-1.164** (0.597)	-1.345** (0.792)
Defense Issues	-0.091 (0.282)	-0.434 (0.348)	-0.031 (0.358)	0.352 (0.360)	0.470 (0.467)
Religious Guidance	0.028 (0.126)	0.042 (0.157)	0.300* (0.204)	-0.076 (0.177)	-0.049 (0.208)
Black Thermometer	-0.010** (0.006)	-0.011* (0.008)	-0.013** (0.008)	-0.016** (0.008)	-0.009 (0.009)
Ideology	0.433*** (0.086)	0.464*** (0.106)	0.409*** (0.133)	0.338** (0.146)	0.402*** (0.149)
Year 1992	0.546* (0.426)	0.245 (0.336)			
Year 1994	0.415 (0.468)	0.283 (0.359)	-0.098 (0.487)		
Year 1996	0.232 (0.429)		-0.252 (0.477)	0.181 (0.387)	
Year 1998	0.333 (0.513)			0.468 (0.506)	0.187 (0.662)
Year 2000	0.063 (0.438)				-0.255 (0.533)

**Classification Table for 1992-2002 Model**

	Observed	Predicted	Correct%
Democrat	0	1013	100%
Republican	97	2	2%

Pseudo R-Square = .0810 Probability > chi<sup>2</sup> = .00001

Dependent Variable Coding: Democrat = 0, Republican =1

Robust Standard Errors reported in parentheses below each LOGIT Coefficient

\*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

females. While African American females are also more economically vulnerable than their male counterparts, black males clearly face substantial economical risks (Greenberg 2000).

The findings for the Southern Region variable challenge our hypothesis and are also quite surprising. Specifically, our analysis suggests Southern African Americans have a slightly higher probability of identifying with the Republican Party. While the full model is significant only at the .10 level, the results are consistent across each of the models and attain more conventional levels of statistical significance for two of the limited models. In attempting to understand these results, we suggest they may be the product of the greater importance of traditional Christian values in the South and the strength of the Religious Right within this region. We note this may also be a consequence of the Republican Party's growth and greater attention to recruitment in this region. Clearly, these results are unexpected and necessitate additional analyses.

The results of our model provide strong support for our hypothesis regarding African Americans born after 1950. For all four of the five models, the LOGIT coefficients for "Born after 1950" are positive and statistically significant. Moreover, the LOGIT coefficients for the full model indicate African Americans born after 1950 are 16 percent more likely to identify with the Republican Party than those born prior to 1950. Clearly, this supports the dramatic influence of the 1960s civil rights movement on those individuals old enough to have experienced the movement first hand. Moreover, these results suggest the Republican Party's appeals to African Americans will be significantly more influential among younger African Americans.

With regard to racial consciousness our findings once again support our hypothesis.<sup>14</sup> As African American's feelings toward blacks' increase, their probability of identifying with the Republican Party significantly decreases. On the 0 to 100 Black feeling thermometer African Americans who identify their feelings toward blacks as only 50 are 9 percent more likely to identify with the Republican Party than those who identify their feelings as 100. Moreover, for every 25 point drop in the feeling thermometer toward Blacks, an African American's average probability of identifying with the Republican Party increases by five percent. While these results clearly indicate African American's with low racial identification are fertile ground for Republican recruiters, the results may provide Republicans with false hopes considering over 85 percent of African Americans report scores of over 50 for their thermometer feelings towards blacks.

Surprisingly, we find the role of religion does not have a significant impact on the partisan identification of African Americans.<sup>15</sup> While these results are surprising, we argue they may simply be the result of the lack of



variation within this variable. While there is substantial variation among white regarding religious guidance, the vast majority of African Americans find guidance from religion. More specifically, we find 80 percent of African American respondents indicate they receive quite a bit or a great deal of guidance from religion and with such a skewed distribution achieving statistical significance is extremely difficult.

While our models do not indicate a difference in the importance of social order and/or national defense issues (Defense Issues) between African American Republicans and Democrats, we do find substantial support for differences in the importance of social welfare and/or civil rights issues (Social Issues). Specifically, the LOGIT coefficients for the full model and three of the four limited models indicate African Americans who identify social welfare or civil rights issues as the most important problem facing the nation are significantly less likely to identify with the Republican Party. More interesting, the full model indicates that individuals who view social welfare or civil rights issues as the most important problem facing the country are 14 percent less likely to identify with the Republican Party than those who identify another issue as the most important facing our country.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the result for ideology in each of the models is significant and supports our hypothesis. Moreover, the results of the full model indicate ideology is the most substantial variable in understanding African American's identification with the Republican Party. Holding all other variables at their base, the LOGIT coefficients of the full model indicate African Americans who identify themselves as extremely conservative 36 percent more likely to identify with the Republican Party than those who identify themselves as extremely liberal.

### **Conclusion**

So who are the African American Republicans? Based on the above analyses, we can begin to answer this important question. First, like the general electorate, our analyses suggest they are more likely to be male and residing in the South. However, unlike the general electorate, they are not more affluent and do not view religion as a more important factor in their lives than their brethren. In addition, we find older African Americans, or rather those born prior to 1950 and therefore old enough to have experienced the critical civil rights movement of the 1960s, are significantly less likely to identify with the Republican Party than those born after 1950. Our analyses also indicate African American Republicans feel less warmth toward their race and are less likely to view racial or social welfare issues as the most important issues facing our nation. Finally, as one might expect, we find ideology to be the most substantial factor in predicting African American

partisan identification, with conservatives being significantly more likely to identify with the Republican Party than liberals.

Taken as a whole, the results of our research are generally in line with previous multivariate analyses (Tate 1993; Dawson 1994), which suggest the continuing importance of racial issues to African American partisanship. Of the nine variables included in our model of Republican partisanship, the three most closely associated with racial/civil rights issues were most important in understanding their identification with the Republican Party. The individuals most likely to identify with the Republican Party were those which did not experience the civil rights movement, felt only moderate warmth toward fellow African Americans, did not view race or social issues as important, and identified themselves as conservatives. Surprisingly, the two factors which many Republicans view as the most important in potentially attracting a greater number of African Americans, religion and the growing African American middle class, were not important. Ultimately, our findings suggest the Republican Party's hopes for attracting more African Americans back to the Party of Lincoln is primarily dependent on their ability to overcome their image of racial intolerance. The Republican Party's new ideas regarding economic development and emphasis on traditional Christian values are clearly issues which will continue to peak the interest of African American voters, but until they shake their image of racial intolerance their hopes for attracting more African Americans will be severely limited.

## APPENDIX

Variable	Coding
Party Identification	0 = Strong Democrat, Weak Democrat, Independent Democrat 1 = Strong Republican, Weak Republican, Independent Republican
Male	0 = Female, 1 = Male
Income	0 to 16 percentile (\$0-\$14,999) 17 to 33 percentile (\$15,000-\$34,999) 34 to 67 percentile (\$35,000-\$64,999) 68 to 95 percentile (\$65,000-\$124,999) 96 to 100 percentile (\$125,000+)
Southern Region	0 = Non Southern States 1 = The 11 Civil War States
Black Thermometer	I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person or group and I'd like you to rate that person using the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean

**APPENDIX** (continued)

Variable	Coding
Black Thermometer	(continued) that you feel favorably and warm toward the person; ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.
Defense or Social Order Problems	What do you think are the most important problems facing this country? 0 = Other problems 1 = Crime, drugs, civil liberties and non-racial civil rights, women's rights, abortion rights, gun control, family/social/religious/moral 'decay,' church and state, etc. . . . or foreign aid, defense spending, and the space program.
Race or Social Welfare Problems	What do you think are the most important problems facing this country? 0 = Other problems, 1 = Population, child care, aid to education, the elderly, health care, housing, poverty, unemployment, 'welfare' etc. . . . and civil rights issues and racial equality.
Religious Guidance	Would you say that religion provides (0) no guidance, (1) some guidance in your day-to-day living, (2) quite a bit of guidance, (3) or a great deal of guidance in your day-to-day living?
Ideology	We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 Extremely Liberal, 2 Liberal, 3 Slightly Liberal, 4 Moderate ('middle of the road'), 5 Slightly Conservative, 6 Conservative, 7 Extremely Conservative

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>J.C. Watts Sr., father of Representative J.C. Watts Jr., the African American Republican from Oklahoma. *U.S. News and World Report*, March 8, 1999.

<sup>2</sup>They represent over 15 percent of the voting age population in ten states and 10 percent of the voting age population in an additional ten states.

<sup>3</sup>It should be noted, however, while Roosevelt did reach out to the African American community, he was unwilling to take public positions in favor of anti-lynching legislation and numerous civil rights bills introduced in Congress. He argued that his support of these issues would lead to southern opposition to his entire economic recovery program (Freidel 1965).

<sup>4</sup>This was Truman's response to a threat by African American leader A. Phillip Randolph that he would organize a March on Washington to protest the treatment of African Americans throughout the country.

<sup>5</sup>Goldwater received the support of less than 10 percent of African American voters in 1964.

<sup>6</sup>As an illustration of the Republican Party's image problem in the South, Mathew Rees (1991) points to George Bush's use of the Willie Horton ads in 1988 as an example of this "demagoguery." Rees argues that George Bush made Willie Horton, an African American murder and rapist, a symbol for lawlessness, terror, and liberalism. Another example is provided with Jesse Helms' 1990 U.S. Senate Campaign commercial showing hands of a white man crumbling a rejection letter as a stern voice stated, "You needed that job, and you were the best qualified. But it had to go to a minority because of racial quotas."

<sup>7</sup>Tate (1993) and Dawson (1994) utilize the National Black Election studies to test a *linear regression* analysis of the components of African American partisan identification (strong Democrat, weak Democrat, independent Democrat, independent Republican, weak Republican, and strong Republican).

<sup>8</sup>Previous research on partisan identification of all races has found that as an individual's income increases their odds of identifying with the Republican Party increases.

<sup>9</sup>This argument is supported in Bolce et al. 1992 findings that indicate blacks of all income categories indicate problems of the poor as the most common important voting issue. Bolce et al. (1992) find that more affluent blacks are actually more likely to identify themselves as liberals and found no difference in partisan identification between economic groups.

<sup>10</sup>In order to test this hypothesis, we utilize the ANES feelings thermometer toward African Americans. Specifically, we contend, as an individual's feelings of warmth toward African Americans decrease, their propensity to identify with the Republican Party will increase.

<sup>11</sup>Streb (2001) also notes that that religion may be a particularly useful issue for Republicans to attract African Americans, since it will not alienate their white conservative base.

<sup>12</sup>The authors coded as Republican, respondents who identified themselves as Strong Republicans, Weak Republicans and Independent Leaning Republicans and likewise for Democrats (see Appendix). Duplicate analyses were also conducted with only Strong/Weak Republicans and Strong/Weak Democrats and Independents coded as missing. While the coefficients for these results were slightly different, the results were not substantially different and identical variables were found to be statistically significant. (The authors will provide these results at the request of the reader.)

<sup>13</sup>As noted in Endnote 12, duplicate analyses were conducted with independent-leaning Republicans/Democrats coded as missing. The alternate analyses did not provide substantially different results. The biggest difference with the alternate model was a slight decline in the levels of significance which was likely due to the decrease in sample size.

<sup>14</sup>While the ANES does not provide a direct measure of racial consciousness, several ANES survey questions address this issue indirectly. We argue the thermometer for feelings toward blacks provides the most reliable measure African American respondents racial consciousness or identity with their race. This is supported by principal components factor analyses which found the black thermometer index to most directly (.753) on the racial consciousness component. The feeling thermometer ranges from 0 to 100, with ratings from 0 to 50 representing unfavorable feelings and 51 to 100 representing favorable or warm feelings.

<sup>15</sup>Analyses were also conducted using "Religious Attendance" as a measure of religiosity and results once again failed to achieve statistical significance.

<sup>16</sup>We also note the relative importance of this variable's coefficient has increased in the more recent ANES surveys.

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