When Labor Goes Away, Who is Left?: Race, Class, and U.S. Voter Turnout 1972-2012

Laura C. Bucci

August 2, 2016

Abstract

Organized labor has been a major mobilizer for the Democratic Party, increasing turnout for low-income union members as well as other potential voters. As unions decrease in membership, are low-income people less likely to vote than they were previously? I argue that the decline of organized labor impacts demographic groups differently. Using a large-scale collection of individual level data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) on voter participation, I find that low-income whites drop out of the electorate when they were left without alternate mobilizing forces. In contrast, for low-income African Americans, consistent contact points potential voters to the Democratic Party. The difference in propensity to vote takes place primarily among low-income people. The overarching consequence of changing political participation is to shift the racial composition of the low-income segment of the Democratic electorate, impacting how the party sees and relates to low-income people.

Organized labor in the United States firmly nests itself under the Democratic Party, providing candidates financing, mobilizing voters, and staffing campaigns. Schattschneider (1956) states it is almost a member of the party itself. This association is a function of both political compatibility as well as historical practice, with labor's focus on redistribution, economic advantages for its members, and a robust welfare state corresponding with the Democratic Party's stances on the size and scope of government (Dark 1999). Both the Democratic Party and labor unions have the potential to increase participation among citizens, relating on economic grounds to those individuals with the highest barriers to entry. One common barrier to participation is limited economic resources. Organized labor, as well as the Democratic Party, could mobilize for low-income individuals, here defined as those with family incomes in the bottom 30% of the distribution of income[1] the first as a group looking to increase their economic standing and the second as a political party that does (Bartels 2008; Hajnal and Horowitz 2014).

Unions continue to function in bringing low-income Democrats into the voting booth, but are increasingly constrained by internal resources (Clawson and Clawson 1999).[2] As unions become smaller, current union membership is around 11% of the working public in 2012 (Hirsch and Macpherson. 2003)[3], mobilization efforts need to be more strategic, converging on the most likely Democratic voting bases. Yet there has been some concern that low-income whites are less consistent Democratic voters (Hacker and Pierson 2011; Frymer 2008). Choosing which individuals to mobilize is a calculation made using micro-targeted information that maximizes the benefit to the organization (Hersh 2015).[4] Union members continue to participate at rates greater than non-unionized peers *ceteris paribus*, but this benefit applies to fewer citizens. For individuals who were not union members, but would be contacted by union voter mobilization efforts, lower unionization rates have a differential impact on turnout by demographic. Low-income whites need a clear cue toward the Democratic Party which may be muddled without unions. Other mobilization sources may present messages toward low-income whites that are biased toward the political benefit of more moneyed segments of their population (Strolovitch 2007). This pattern differs for low-income African Americans, who, with or without unionization, receive a clear cue to

---

[1]This figure, in constant 2014 dollars, is any family making under $32,500 per year, though alternate specifications of low-income people produce similar results.

[2]But also see Dark (1999).

[3]My replication using the November supplement of the Current Population Survey places union membership at 12.1%, resembling Hirsch's estimate from the March supplement of the CPS.

[4]Catalist, one such micro-targeting vendor, is used by both the Democratic Party as well as labor unions in order to concentrate resources to the most favorable constituencies.

vote for the Democratic Party.[5]

What follows is a demonstration of differential turnout and the political benefits of unionization to one segment of voters. Low-income whites, no longer unionized and with fewer unions active around them, are less likely to vote than they were previously. The push to vote and instructions who to vote for are less consistent for low-income whites. Cues are more aligned for low-income African Americans who receive consistent messaging from churches, race-based groups, and communities than they are for low-income whites, whose race, class, and identity cues often suggest different candidates. The two groups maintain different rates of being contacted to vote in elections, indicating differential mobilization. In the time period examined, 1972-2012, low-income whites go from being more likely to vote than similarly situated African Americans to significantly less likely, as early as 1984. The divergence between white and African American voters is largest and most consistent for low-income people.

The analysis proceeds using a cumulative data set that spans eleven presidential election cross-sections of the November Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the U.S. Census Bureau from 1972-2012. This file contains nearly a million individual-level observations, allowing for a direct test of changing voting behavior of race and class groups, as well as providing evidence for unionization's impact on voter turnout. By using individual level data, as opposed to the aggregated CPS measures, this study resembles traditional survey research, but with a far greater number of respondents. It also avoids problems of ecological inference, generating more certain conclusions (King 1997). The main strength of the CPS is its ability to scale to the U.S. as well as state level populations, even for groups that are often under-sampled in other survey work. To bolster my claims about differential mobilization, I use the American National Election Study's (ANES) cumulative file that includes self-reported voting contact rates.

Theories of Class and Race Based Turnout

Traditional models of participation emphasize individual level socioeconomic (SES) factors as key to voting; citizens with higher incomes, more years of education, or who are older vote more than those who do not because they are thought to hold the civic skills

---

[5]Unions played some role in pushing African Americans toward the Democrats, but these impacts were often inconsistent across unions. Some local unions simply replicated racial hierarchies consistent with the preferences with their racially conservative membership, leading to a limited political involvement of African Americans (Nelson 2001; Frymer 2008; Lichtenstein 2012).

necessary to vote (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). While not absolute, low-income people should be less likely to vote than their wealthier peers. The emphasis of this branch of research is on the characteristics of the individual that would indicate the time, ability, and skill to participate in politics.

Barriers to participation can be overcome through the involvement of mobilizing institutions (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Groups may encourage low-income people to vote based on their class identity. Labor unions emphasize class and the importance of participating in politics as well as providing the civic skills and information necessary to vote (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Additionally, unions push individuals to vote for the Democratic Party. Studies demonstrate that union members, across race, are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates than individuals not in a union (Sousa 1993), more likely to vote (Rosenfeld 2014; Leighley and Nagler 2013; Francia and Bigelow 2010; Radcliff and Davis 2000; Radcliff 2001; Leighley and Nagler 1992), and that this pattern extends across income levels (Leighley and Nagler 2007). Individuals most helped by union efforts tend to be low-income (Kerrissey and Schofer 2013). Some mobilization stems directly from one's work context (Anzia and Moe 2015; Flavin and Radcliff 2011; Flavin and Hartney 2015), whereas union organizations are also capable of mobilizing outside groups that include non-members (Rosenfeld 2014). Overall, unions serve to increase voter turnout, but questions remain as to which groups are the primary beneficiaries.

With the exception of labor unions, mobilization for low-income whites is often mixed in partisan direction or varies between election cycles. Low-income whites lack the cue to vote for the Democratic Party. This trend may be because low-income people may have moved away from the Democratic Party (Frank 2007), leaving little reason for Democratic organizations to mobilize the group, though others have countered that low-income people continue to strongly favor Democratic candidates over Republicans (Bartels 2008). Mobilizing groups that emphasize other aspects of low-income white identity focus less on class interests, catering to the wealthiest of low-income voters (Strolovitch 2007). Religious organizations, when they bring up politics, are often inconsistent about a preferred party, or present more economically conservative voting preferences which may run counter to their economic standing (Layman 2001; Putnam, Campbell and Garrett 2012). Where unions once encouraged low-income whites to vote in their economic self-interest, lessened union presence results in fewer cues of who to vote for, and cues less consistent with their economic well-being.

Unions can push low-income whites toward the Democratic Party, helping individuals that are unlikely to vote toward the polls. For other racial and ethnic minorities, SES models of participation have been criticized for failing to capture how contexts empowers people to participate (Gay 2001; Bobo and Gilliam Jr 1990; Gilliam Jr 1996). For low-income minorities, seeing a co-ethnic candidate, or living in competitive constituencies may increase their likelihood of voting (Leighley 2001; Barreto 2010; Fraga 2016). In each electoral context, low-income African Americans are pushed toward voting for Democratic candidates.

As an additional push for low-income African Americans to vote, they may be empowered through mobilization in churches or race-based organizations, like the NAACP. These groups emphasize voting based on one's racial identity. For African Americans, both mobilization sources point toward the Democratic Party. Historic black churches play a key role for low-income African Americans by encouraging them to vote for the Democratic Party (Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh 2001; Liu, Austin and Orey 2009). Church environments have been shown to increase political engagement particularly among African Americans, by increasing social capital among members (McClerking and McDaniel 2005; Reese and Brown 1995; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Harris 1994; Tate 1993). Some suggest civic engagement is directed toward supporting the Democratic Party, matching individuals' racial identities to the political party more closely associated with civil rights (Black 2004). By attending churches, low-income people are better able to direct their attention toward politics and the Democratic Party. Additionally, African Americans may be directly approached by groups emphasizing their identity in voting. The NAACP and other race-based groups hold Get Out the Vote or other mobilization events (Green 2004; Frymer 2008) which increase the likelihood of voting. Losing any one cue of who to vote for matters less for low-income African Americans in the presence of alternate cues to vote for the Democratic Party.

The relationship between African Americans and unions has depended on location. Labor unions sometimes offered political information to African American workers, but this tendency varied across unions and geographic locales, often depending on the racial conservatism of membership (Frymer 2008; Katznelson 2013). Unions were capable of helping mobilize low-income African Americans, and many unions did, but this mobilization was one cue among several to vote for the Democratic Party.

Low-income African Americans have consistent and multiple cues pointing toward the Democratic Party, but low-income whites have inconsistent cues outside of those from labor unions. More research is needed that examines the overlapping relationship between race,

class, unionization, and voter turnout. Some have posited a relationship between union decline and participatory and economic inequality (APSA 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2011; Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012), but provide little empirical examination of its consequences on the behavior of citizens. Union decline is important for understanding inequality, but which individuals are being impacted? Freeman (2003) emphasizes that union members continue to participate in politics, but does not further subdivide by race or income level. Francia and Orr (2014) examine how unionizing Latinos increases their political involvement, but neglect the impact of class. Leighley and Nagler (2007) tackle union membership and class directly, concluding that most of the impact unions have is on middle and low-income groups, but rely on data from the American National Election Study that contains a very limited number of respondents, especially when looking at race, class, and unionization. Therefore racial and class based differences are obscured due to under-sampling within the ANES.

The present analyses looks to build on previous research by examining the intersection of race, class, and union membership as determinants of voter turnout. Voting by race and income group may differ over time and in ways not demonstrated by existing research that focuses on only one demographic distinction. By disaggregating low-income individuals into by racial groups, I am able to explain whether voting propensities differ across groups. To validate the mechanism of differential mobilization, this research uses the American National Election Study's questions on self-reported contact to vote during an election. This research also improves on existing data sets by creating a cumulative CPS which allows for more nuanced comparisons of smaller subsamples of the population.

Race, Union Membership, and Turnout

The decline of organized labor is expected to be less detrimental to the voting behavior of low-income African Americans than it is for whites. This expectation derives from the ability of African Americans to receive consistent cues. As such:

Hypothesis 1. *Low-income African American turnout will increase over time relative to similarly situated white turnout.*

Low-income African Americans may be more likely to vote because it is in the strategic incentive of labor unions and the Democratic Party to mobilize individuals more likely to support Democrats. Low-income whites may still be more likely to be Democrats than

higher or middle-income whites (Bartels 2008), or more likely to be Democrats than they are Republicans. However, low-income whites are not more likely to be Democrats than low-income African Americans. The choice to focus on low-income African Americans as more certain Democratic voters is logical on the part of rational elites, but shifts who receives contact to vote.

Unions, unlike other groups that can bolster social connection, provide political information, and foster the civic skills necessary to vote (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Putnam 2000, 2004), have the added benefit of directing individual attention toward one political party. Clear instructions and a preferred candidate lessen the informational costs to voting, even for those lowest on socioeconomic indicators. While other scholars have demonstrated that union membership increases the individual propensity to vote (Schlozman, Verba and Brady 2012; Rosenfeld 2014), I demonstrate that this benefit remains consistent over time even as unions lose membership.

Hypothesis 2. *Union members are more likely to vote than those individuals not in a union.*

Under this expectation all racial groups belonging to a union should turn out at similar rates. Despite the racialized history of labor in the United States, the organization functions as one mechanism to foster political understanding. While many unions empowered conservative white working class memberships (Teixeira and Rogers 2001; Frymer 2008; Lichtenstein 2012), unions were also key to civil rights struggles and joined whites and African Americans together.

Hypothesis 2a. *Among union members, there should be no difference between racial groups in the likelihood of voting.*

Strategic Demographic Mobilization

Union members may be more likely than those not in a union to vote, but as this population shrinks toward 10% of working adults, are unions able to increase voter turnout for nonmembers? With fewer members, unions cannot rely on members building networks of participation among friends, family, and neighbors (Rolfe 2012) because this would not amount to as many people voting as it once did. Looking to Figure 1, union membership for white and black people has declined rapidly from the 1980s forward. For white union members, however, an alternate mobilizing institution was not present.

Figure 1: Union Membership Rates By Race

Source: CPS November Supplement Cumulative File, 1984-2014

Labor organizations, under internal constraint as well as external attacks from business owners, need to use resources effectively (Goldfield 1986). As other studies of campaigning have demonstrated, contact is key to increasing individual participation (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Gerber and Green 2000). One method of increasing turnout is to target demographic groups that tend to be favorable toward your preferred candidate, while minimizing contact with those who are less favorable (Axelrod 1972; Holbrook and McClurg 2005; Burden et al. 2014; Hersh 2015). For unions, so firmly nested within one party, the focus is to get individuals to vote for Democrats.

We might expect labor unions to first target their membership, before moving on to the most likely Democratic supporters. As unions decline in membership, those remaining tend to be better off financially. Average family incomes for union members have trended upwards over time, indicating that though there is a difference in white and African American union members, both groups are doing better in absolute economic terms[6]. Though many union members are middle class, my suggestion is that these individuals had already overcome the barrier to voting, in a way that low-income whites had not.

Individuals in the bottom thirty percent of the income distribution, those with family incomes under $32,500 per year, though they have higher barriers to voting, do turnout.[7]

---

[6]For a further demonstration of income levels, see Figure 7 in the Appendix.

[7]I use the bottom 30% of earners because of how income is coded in the CPS, though results are consistent if income is divided into income thirds.

These individuals tend to vote for Democratic candidates (Bartels 2008; Gelman et al. 2008), thereby increasing the likelihood that Democrats will win the election. The effort to mobilize low-income citizens also engages many unions' missions of redistribution and social activism (Western and Rosenfeld 2011; Ahlquist and Levi 2013). Overall, for unions to continue to increase voter turnout in their desired direction, they need to direct their attention to more than just their membership.

For low-income whites and African Americans unionization rates have changed over time. However, this decline has proven especially consequential for the participation of low-income whites. The percentage of white union members who are low-income has halved since 1984, hitting their lowest in 1996 and never recovering.[8] Figure 2 demonstrates that union members now compose a smaller percentage or the total income group. The remaining union members tend to have higher incomes than in previous points of time. This change among the composition of union members is important as low-income white union members may be the most likely group to need a union in order to participate in politics.

Figure 2: Breakdown of White Union Members in Each Income Category
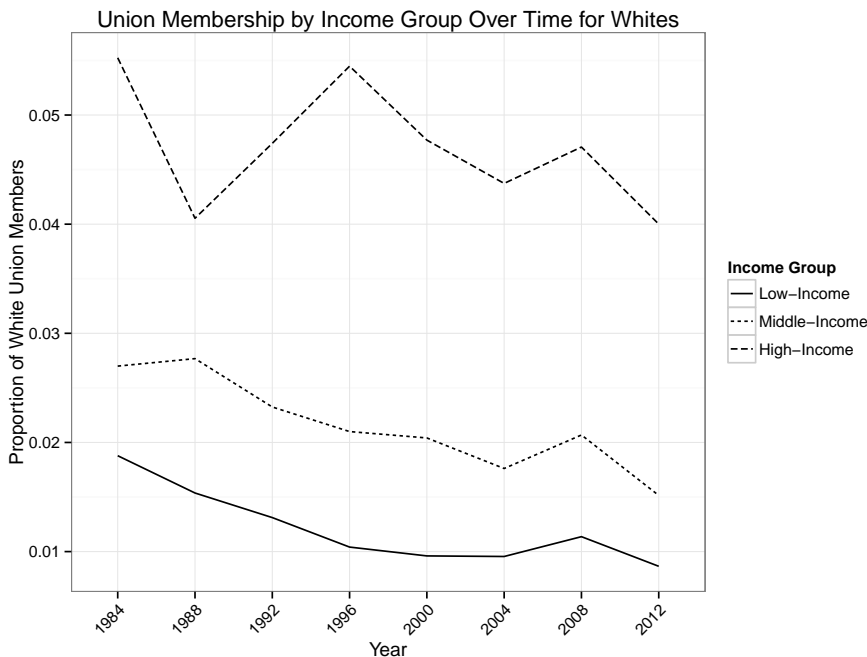
Source: CPS November Supplement Cumulative File, 1984-2014

While low-income individuals are a likely target of organized labor, not all low-income people are equally likely to vote for the Democratic Party. Low-income whites and low-income African Americans participate differently in the electorate. The two groups of people

---

[8]See Figure 8 for the composition of income groups within white union members.

think of themselves differently (Bobo 1983; Teixeira and Rogers 2001; Frank 2007; Frymer 2008), have different propensities to vote for Democratic candidates or policies (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Edsall and D. 1991; Hood III, Kidd and Morris 2012), and are influenced by different mobilizing organizations (Hood III, Kidd and Morris 2012). If the overall goal of a mobilizing effort is to get the most likely Democratic voters, then those voters who are less predictable in their partisanship will be left behind.

Data

Current Population Survey The data is constructed by creating a cumulative file of the November, or voting, supplement of the Current Population Survey delivered by the U.S. Census Bureau. This file contains individual responses for election years from 1972 through 2012. For these analyses, I focus on Presidential years, as they have the largest mobilization efforts. In each year, black and non-Hispanic white citizens of voting age[9] constitute between 53,000 and 107,000 unique individuals, with most years containing around 80,000 observations. Using individual level turnout from the CPS, as opposed to aggregated measures of turnout by demographic, or smaller national surveys like the American National Election Study (ANES), allows for a more nuanced and precise distinction between demographic categories that may be too small to be sampled.

Observations from the Current Population Survey are individual self-reports of voting behavior. A common concern of this type of data is that individuals often "misremember" having voted, leading to reported voting turnout that we know is too high. Therefore because of inaccurate self-reporting, demographic groups thought to be more likely to vote might only be those more likely to lie about having voted (Ansolabehere and Hersh 2012). While the CPS is not free of overreporting, studies show that overreporting is less than other political surveys like the American National Election Study (Holbrook and Krosnick 2010), largely because individuals act as though the Census is an official government document and are less likely to lie.[10] They are also more likely to respond to all questions, lessening

---

[9]The 1972 CPS uses different questions about race than in other years of the survey, asking whether one is Black, White, or Other. Because the survey similarly does not ask about Hispanic Status, I am unable to differentiate between the two groups. Race is modeled by including Other under the White category, though this amounts to a small percentage of the overall sample. In essence, only in 1972, is race modeled as Black and Non-Black respondents.

[10]The CPS correction developed by Michael McDonald places the misreporting error at 3.2% in 2012, whereas the American National Election Study has a reported turnout rate of 78% (*http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/cps-methodology.*). For additional information about applying corrections to the CPS see Hur and Achen (2013). Later analyses do not use this correction, but effects remain consistently larger than corrected voter turnout.

unit nonresponse problems (Clausen 1968).[11] Self-reported voting is certainly higher than validated voting, but this problem is lessened in the CPS versus other public opinion sources.

American National Election Study To look at mobilization across groups, I supplement the CPS using the American National Election Study (ANES) cumulative file. From 1984 forward[12], the ANES includes a question asking whether an individual was asked to vote. I compare non-Hispanic whites and African Americans by income thirds. The ANES also asks respondents about their union membership, allowing for a test of whether union members vote more than those not in a union. This data is imperfect for two main reasons: first, it uses self-reported contact without asking *which group* is doing the mobilizing. Second, the ANES uses a relatively small sample, especially when it is subdivided by race and income. The ANES can be thought of as assisting in the analysis of the larger and more representative CPS sample, providing support for differential mobilization among race and class groups.

Data Construction Individual level voter turnout is thought of as a function of personal characteristics as well as how those characteristics may appear useful to elites building electoral constituencies. The decision to vote is a personal one, but as an individual becomes more desirable to an organization, interested parties can push someone more firmly into voting. Individual propensities to vote can change through personal choice, as well as socially and institutionally, with state laws, rules, and informal norms regarding the ease and necessity of voting.

The likelihood for an individual to vote is modeled as a function of demographic factors. In this way, it is reminiscent of "canonical models of voter turnout using CPS data" (Alvarez, Bailey and Katz 2011) including race, income, age, education, gender, and union membership, all generated using the cumulative file. Union membership is measured by individual belonging, not being a "union household".[13] For further descriptive statistics of the variables used, see Tables 5 and 6 provided in the Appendix. Partisanship, while important in mobilization by political parties as well as labor unions, is not asked by the CPS. Therefore, turnout is modeled using demographics.

Turnout is the strategic mobilization of some low-income individuals over others. This

---

[11]For example, in my cumulative file, among voting age citizens, family income is among the most common variable omitted, and in this sample is only dropped 8.7% of the time.

[12]The question was not asked in 2004.

[13]While mobilization likely extends to individuals in a household with a union member, personal membership is the most direct test of how union membership is connected to voting.

process is expected to take place only among citizens of voting age, and all analyses are restricted to this population. Because we are comparing low-income black and white citizens, as key constituencies, the data is further subset to only white and black respondents. Income is mean centered in each category, based on family income, and in constant 2014 dollars. Low-income is constructed to be the bottom 30% of the distribution of income, all individuals with family incomes that are less than \$32,500 per year.[14] High-income is constructed to be the top 20% of the income distribution or families making over \$97,000 dollars per year. For income, the baseline category are those who fall in the middle fifty percent of the income scale, \$32,500 to \$97,000 per year.

Union membership is asked in some months in the CPS's sampling scheme and not others. Each respondent, upon entering the survey is eligible for four months, ineligible for eight, and then comes back into the survey for another four months before leaving permanently. Questions about whether one is unionized, or is covered by a union contract[15], are only asked in months four and eight of the eligible sample. Individuals not asked about unionization were dropped for these analyses, limiting the total number of individuals in each year to between 9,000 and 12,000 individuals.

Estimation Strategy and Results

In each presidential year, I perform a logistic regression predicting individual level propensity to vote.[16] Rather than pool the data across years, I model each year separately to avoid artificial smoothing in trends over time (Katz 2001). Because race is thought to be the key way organizations mobilize low-income people, I explicitly model this strategy by interacting all variables with being African American (Nagler 1991; Franzese and Kam 2009). I expect income to work differently for African Americans and whites, and other traditional determinants of participation may also behave differently.

Turning to Hypothesis 1, the theoretical expectation is that low-income African Americans were more likely to vote than low-income whites. The cost of mobilizing low-income whites is too high for too unsure of an electoral result. Tables 1 and 2 show that African Americans were once less likely to vote than whites, but as early as 1984 this trend starts to

---

[14]Though results hold if low-income people are considered to be those individuals the bottom third, quarter, or fifth of all incomes.

[15]For my purposes, I treat union coverage and union membership as though they are equally union members. Those that are covered by a union contract are only a small subset of my population of interest, and excluding the group makes no substantive changes to any of the models.

[16]These models are survey weighted (Carnes 2013).

shift so that African Americans are more likely to participate.[17] Low-income individuals are less likely to vote than middle or high-income individuals, but this trend is driven in part by the race of respondents. There is a positive main effect of being African American and voting, meaning that middle income African Americans also show increased turnout. However, the effect of race on turnout is greatest among low-income African Americans. While low-income African Americans are less likely to vote than middle-income African Americans, the difference is not as large as that between low-income and middle-income whites.

As support for Hypothesis 1, looking at the interaction term on being low-income and African American indicates a positive, and often statistically significant, relationship. Low-income African Americans, all else equal, start to vote more regularly than low-income whites. This result is not consistent as early for other groups. Being black and high-income, relatively few people in the cumulative file[18], does not present a clear pattern. High-income whites and African Americans tend to participate at similar rates. We would expect given the model of participation generated in Tables 1 and 2, that white and African American individuals who are considered high-income should vote around 80% or 81% of the time in 1972, respectively, and by 2012, black and white high-income voters participate around 74% for whites and 78% for African Americans. These models suggest that there is a distinctive relationship taking place among low-income whites and African Americans that is different from the decision to vote of anyone above the 30 percentile of income earners.

---

[17]A pooled model with election cycle fixed effects appears in the Appendix Table 8, and yields substantively similar conclusions.

[18]Due to the size of the cumulative file, *relatively few* ranges between 280 in 1976 and 1212 in 2012.

Table 1: Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1972-1992

	Vote					
	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992
Black	−0.704***	−0.851***	−0.379*	0.598***	0.114	0.359
	(0.204)	(0.210)	(0.198)	(0.203)	(0.233)	(0.221)
High-Income	0.347***	0.270***	0.313***	0.291***	0.289***	0.353***
	(0.025)	(0.032)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Low-Income	−0.435***	−0.482***	−0.465***	−0.483***	−0.531***	−0.547***
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Education	0.683***	0.658***	0.693***	0.682***	0.664***	0.729***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Female	0.100***	0.108***	0.113***	0.107***	0.103***	0.078***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Age	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.0005***
	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)
Age Squared	0.004	0.075***	0.097***	0.131***	0.103***	0.129***
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.020)
Black X High-Income	0.024	0.012	0.111	−0.135	0.087	−0.081
	(0.121)	(0.159)	(0.097)	(0.130)	(0.162)	(0.137)
Black X Low-Income	−0.090	0.055	0.151***	0.094	0.195***	0.024
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.065)
Black X Education	−0.102***	−0.113***	−0.137***	−0.187***	−0.125***	−0.194***
	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Black X Female	0.042***	0.038***	0.021***	0.004	0.006	0.001
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Black X Age	−0.0005***	−0.0004***	−0.0002***	−0.0002*	−0.0001	−0.00005
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Black X Age Squared	0.042	0.057	0.187***	0.203***	0.110*	0.158***
	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Constant	−3.234***	−3.602***	−3.899***	−3.819***	−3.892***	−3.244***
	(0.066)	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.077)	(0.079)
Observations	84,203	74,301	101,662	90,224	84,939	83,574

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2: Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1996-2012

|			Vote		
	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
Black	0.356	0.349	0.715***	0.970***	0.747***
	(0.231)	(0.237)	(0.234)	(0.243)	(0.199)
High-Income	0.374***	0.223***	0.343***	0.279***	0.336***
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.026)
Low-Income	−0.494***	−0.587***	−0.570***	−0.534***	−0.492***
	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.023)
Education	0.618***	0.647***	0.693***	0.672***	0.570***
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Female	0.076***	0.068***	0.036***	0.034***	0.047***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Age	−0.0004***	−0.0003***	−0.0001*	−0.0001*	−0.0002***
	(0.00003)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)	(0.00003)
Age Squared	0.135***	0.140***	0.133***	0.195***	0.117***
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.019)
Black X High-Income	0.183*	0.103	−0.120	−0.468***	−0.125
	(0.111)	(0.120)	(0.104)	(0.136)	(0.094)
Black X Low-Income	0.189***	0.179**	0.208***	0.266***	0.315***
	(0.067)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.061)
Black X Education	−0.110***	−0.147***	−0.259***	−0.195***	−0.151***
	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.032)
Black X Female	−0.002	0.010	0.006	0.002	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Black X Age	−0.00003	−0.0002*	−0.0002	−0.0001	−0.0001
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Black X Age Squared	0.212***	0.203***	0.228***	0.205***	0.238***
	(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.067)	(0.055)
Constant	−3.608***	−3.407***	−2.511***	−2.388***	−2.776***
	(0.083)	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.089)	(0.076)
Observations	68,592	61,865	70,342	64,856	81,305

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Low-income African Americans are more likely to vote than low-income whites. These results are in keeping with a story of strategic mobilization that targets low-income African Americans and not low-income whites. In constructing predicted probabilities, I run 1000 simulations in each election year of the propensity to vote varying race, holding income groups constant in turn, and all other variables at their mean or modal values.[19] I plot the average of these 1000 simulations, as well as the confidence interval around the estimate, in the following figures.

For those in the middle fifty percent of income, individuals we might consider middle class, there are racial differences in the propensity to vote, but the pattern is dissimilar from low-income individuals. Looking to Figure 3 both whites and African Americans participate at fairly similar rates up until 2008. We might expect white turnout to remain consistent while middle-income African American turnout to spike because of the candidacy of the first African American president. In Obama's reelection in 2012, we see a gap between middle-income whites and African Americans continue. However, before 2008, both white and African American were about 70% likely to vote.

Figure 3: Expected Probability of Voting Among Middle-Income People in Presidential Years by Race

Likelihood of Voting By Race Among Middle–Income People

For Presidential Election Years
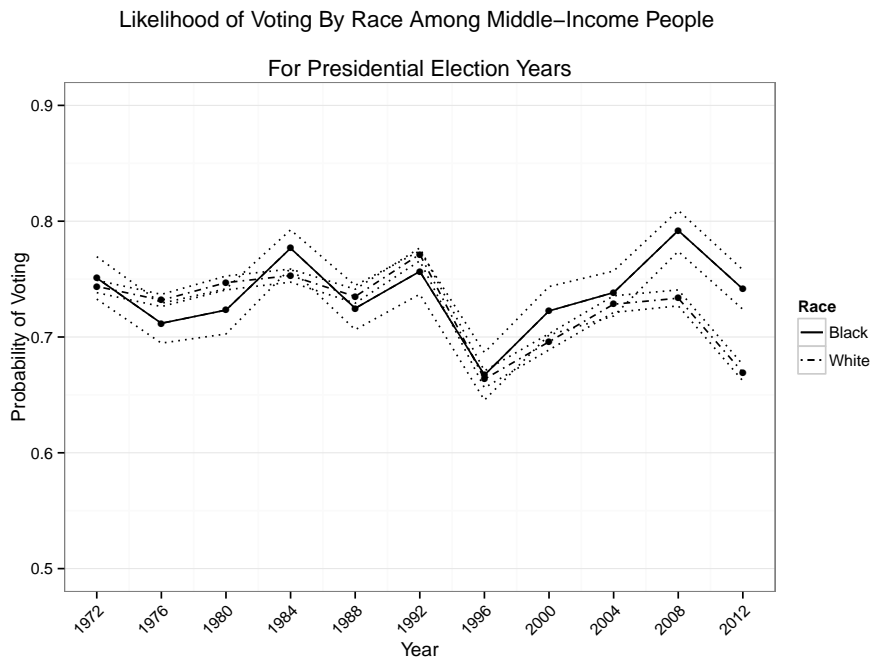
Source: CPS Cumulative File, 1972-2012

Low-income people show the clearest differences by racial group. Black and white low-income people, all else being held constant at its mean or modal values, look statistically

---

[19]A pooled model for each racial group is included in the Appendix Table 7.

different as early as 1984. The pattern is consistent from 1996 forward. In 1996, African Americans are 4% more likely to vote than whites, but this pattern grows to 15% more likely in 2012. Where African Americans seem to be growing in their political participation, low-income whites, held equal on all other variables, are dropping out of the electorate. This shift in participation means that low-income African Americans are not only increasing in their likelihood of voting, they look to be even more likely to vote when compared with their white counterparts are participating less.

Figure 4: Expected Probability of Voting for Low-Income People in Presidential Years by Race

Likelihood of Voting By Race Among Low–Income People

For Presidential Election Years
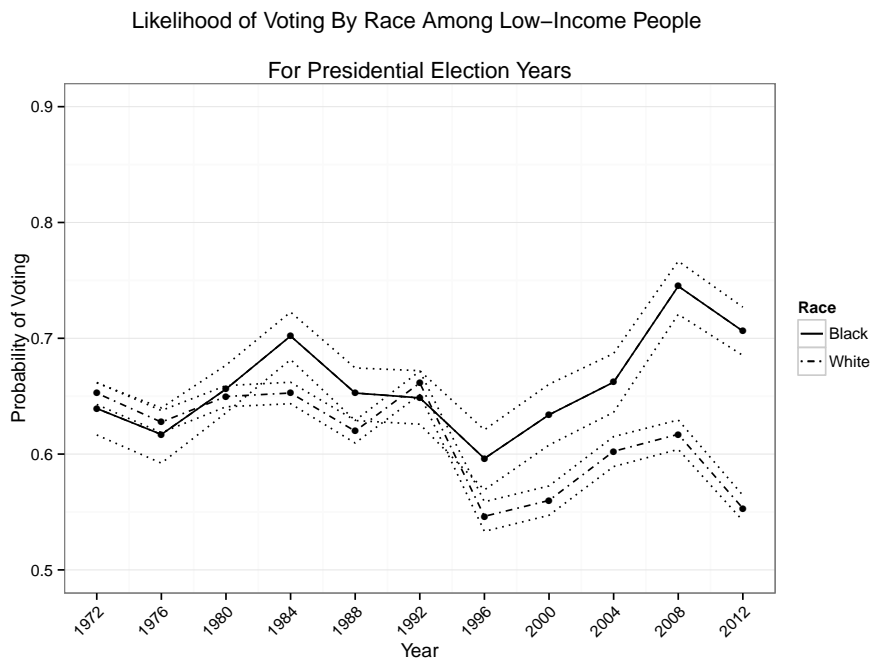
Source: CPS Cumulative File, 1972-2012

The mechanism leading low-income whites to drop out of the electorate is a decline in the sources of political mobilization. To test whether low-income whites are contacted, I look at whether an individual thought they contacted to vote. Figure 5 shows that African Americans of all income groups indicate that they are more likely to be asked to vote than whites. For both whites and African Americans, there is an increase in mobilization over time, though the increase in contact begins earlier in time and continues at a steeper rate for African Americans. In 1984 around 40% of low-income African Americans said they were contacted to vote, and around 30% of low-income whites said the same. Over time, gains for low-income African American trend upwards and by 2012 over 65% of low-income African Americans said that they had been contacted to vote compared with around 45% of low-income whites. Comparing earlier time points, low-income white people are generally less likely to say they were contacted to vote than low-income African Americans. From

Figure 5: Individuals Contacted to Vote by Race and Income Level
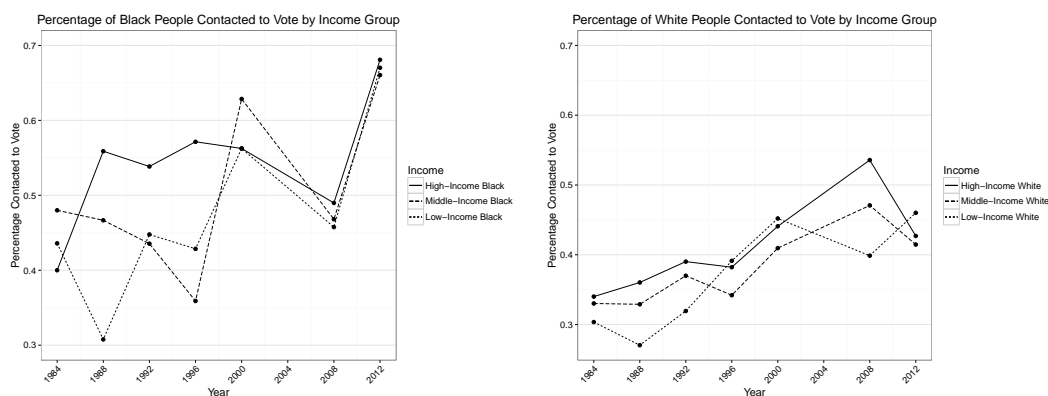
Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File, 1984-2012

2000 forward, low-income whites say they are contacted about 15% less than low-income African Americans.

The logit results shown in Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate support for Hypothesis 2, that union members continue to vote more than those not in unions.[20] Union membership remains a strong and significant predictor across all presidential years with the exception of 2008. The effect of being a union member on the likelihood of voting does not show a downward trend as unionization has decreased. Union members participate as much as they have in the past.[21] Union membership, matters for African Americans as well, though only in 1984 does the interaction of union membership and being African Americans play a role above being either a union member or African American.

Among low-income union members there are only statistically significant differences in the probability of voting across racial groups in one of the eight election years.[22] In 1984, low-income African American union members are more likely to vote than low-income white union members. The difference between the groups remains very close to zero. Overall, this figure demonstrates support for Hypothesis 2a, that within union members, racial groups should be equally likely to vote. Union members vote at relatively equal rates across racial groups.

---

[20]Appendix Table 11 contains a random intercept model of voter turnout within each state and year. Effects of this model also demonstrate that union members are more likely to vote within a state in a given year, but African American union members are less likely to vote than white union members.

[21]A pooled year model is included in Appendix Table 9. A second model that also interacts being low-income with other variables is also included in Appendix Table 10. The positive coefficient on the low-income and union interaction indicates that low-income unionized people are more likely to vote than low income people not in a union.

[22]See Figure 10.

Table 3: Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1984-1996

	1984	1988	1992	1996
Black	−0.252	1.121	0.180	0.648
	(0.764)	(0.754)	(0.826)	(0.806)
High-Income	0.242***	0.532***	0.211***	0.363***
	(0.068)	(0.096)	(0.076)	(0.065)
Low-Income	−0.471***	−0.526***	−0.518***	−0.493***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.069)	(0.080)
Union Member	0.234***	0.322***	0.225***	0.368***
	(0.070)	(0.077)	(0.082)	(0.077)
Education	0.709***	0.686***	0.799***	0.679***
	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Female	0.065***	0.054***	0.034***	0.039***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.014)
Age	−0.0002	−0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)
Age Squared	0.287***	0.230***	0.266***	0.138***
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.053)
Black X High-Income	0.487	0.533	0.940**	−0.568**
	(0.350)	(0.541)	(0.414)	(0.246)
Black X Low-Income	0.295	0.231	−0.007	−0.010
	(0.185)	(0.178)	(0.198)	(0.193)
Black X Education	−0.133	−0.136	−0.367***	−0.021
	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.098)	(0.097)
Black X Female	0.024	−0.052	0.038	−0.016
	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Black X Age	−0.0004	0.001	−0.0005	0.0001
	(0.0005)	(0.0005)	(0.001)	(0.0005)
Black X Age Squared	0.281*	0.318**	0.116	0.372**
	(0.154)	(0.156)	(0.170)	(0.160)
Black X Union Member	0.400*	0.204	0.084	−0.309
	(0.232)	(0.256)	(0.256)	(0.217)
Low-Income X Union Member	−0.086	−0.241	−0.004	0.346
	(0.159)	(0.178)	(0.195)	(0.281)
Black X Low-Income X Union Member	0.059	0.095	0.505	0.471
	(0.373)	(0.412)	(0.480)	(0.523)
Constant	−3.261***	−3.188***	−2.633***	−3.193***
	(0.242)	(0.251)	(0.254)	(0.276)
Observations	12,364	11,741	11,563	9,871
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 4: Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 2000-2012

	2000	2004	2008	2012
Black	0.412	0.720	0.323	1.669**
	(0.777)	(0.800)	(0.869)	(0.801)
High-Income	0.169**	0.275***	0.256***	0.411***
	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.077)	(0.065)
Low-Income	−0.644***	−0.396***	−0.432***	−0.277***
	(0.084)	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.075)
Union Member	0.187**	0.273***	0.058	0.334***
	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.092)	(0.087)
Education	0.647***	0.719***	0.660***	0.585***
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.031)
Female	0.039***	0.016	−0.007	0.052***
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Age	−0.00004	0.0002	0.0004**	−0.0003*
	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)
Age Squared	0.152***	0.251***	0.185***	0.177***
	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.053)
Black X High-Income	0.133	0.377	−0.110	−0.121
	(0.275)	(0.249)	(0.325)	(0.247)
Black X Low-Income	0.132	0.220	0.115	0.096
	(0.197)	(0.206)	(0.212)	(0.190)
Black X Education	−0.121	−0.423***	−0.215**	−0.144
	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.105)	(0.098)
Black X Female	−0.001	0.027	0.035	−0.045
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.044)	(0.039)
Black X Age	−0.00004	−0.0005	−0.001	0.0005
	(0.0005)	(0.0005)	(0.001)	(0.0005)
Black X Age Squared	0.263	0.174	0.058	0.276*
	(0.161)	(0.171)	(0.180)	(0.159)
Black X Union Member	−0.087	0.005	0.058	0.110
	(0.246)	(0.249)	(0.306)	(0.268)
Low-Income X Union Member	0.541	−0.272	0.334	−0.005
	(0.345)	(0.278)	(0.274)	(0.260)
Black X Low-Income X Union Member	0.154	0.109	0.162	0.170
	(0.573)	(0.610)	(0.601)	(0.577)
Constant	−2.779***	−2.300***	−1.577***	−2.995***
	(0.274)	(0.257)	(0.273)	(0.254)
Observations	9,315	10,550	9,378	10,930

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

One reason that union members tend to vote more than those not in a union has to do with mobilization and increased contact. Figure 6 shows that for both white and African American respondents, union members are more likely to say they were contacted to vote. Because the number of union members included in the ANES is often fairly small, this figure uses all union members without dividing groups by income. Overall, union members regardless of race tend to vote more, and also tend to be contacted to vote more. Those individuals least likely to report they were contacted to vote are white people who are not in a union. This trend is fairly consistent from 1984 through 2012, deviating only in 2008.

Figure 6: Individuals Who Contacted to Vote by Race and Union Membership

Percentage Who Say they Were Contacted to Vote
by Race and Union Membership
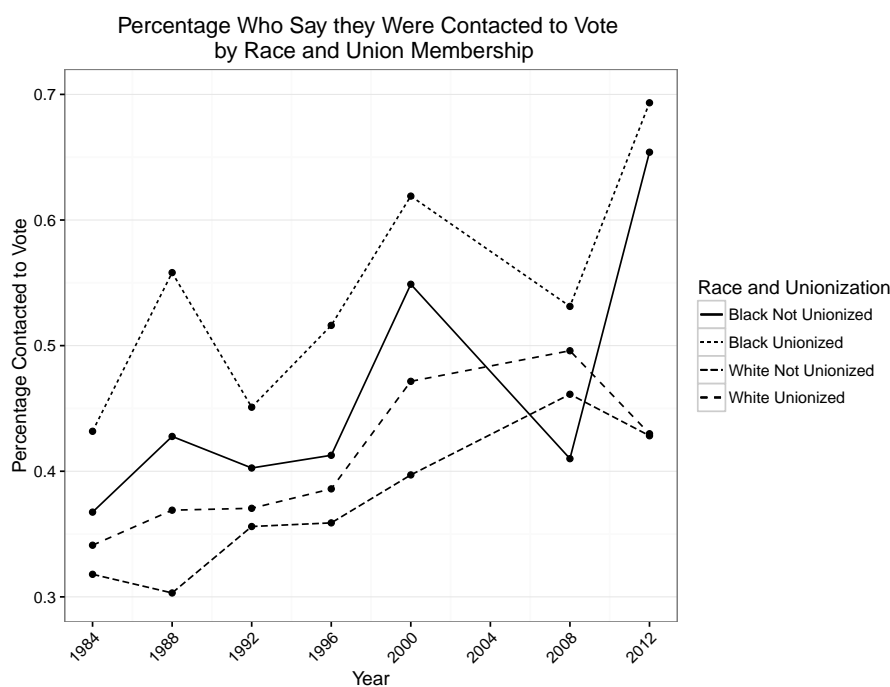
Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File, 1984-2012

Conclusion and Implications

The 2008 presidential election marked the first time where overall black voter turnout surpassed that of whites. However, I have demonstrated that racial differences in voting have been present for low-income people going back to the 1990s because low-income whites were less likely to be mobilized by labor unions. A change in the 1990s predates the candidacy of Barack Obama, and indicates a structural shift in who is voting. The size of the divergence between low-income whites and African Americans is much larger than other income groups. Voting differences among middle-income whites and African Americans began in the Obama Era, but in the same period differences in voting propensities among low-income people were around three times the size. As I have demonstrated, a reason for this voting gap is that low-income whites have lost a major mobilization source. As such, a decline in union membership results in fewer low-income white voters.

Low-income union membership among whites halved in 1996, and has not recovered since. Though declines in union membership have taken place for African Americans, low-income whites needed organized labor to bring them to the Democratic Party in a way that other groups needed less. For individuals with the highest barriers to voting, mobilization is key to increasing turnout. When low-income whites lose a major mobilizing source, turnout declines. As I have demonstrated, union members remain more likely to be contacted to

22

vote, while whites not in a union remain the least likely to be asked to vote. Similarly, low-income whites remain less likely to be mobilized throughout the period. The shift in the union composition impacts who is likely to vote in future elections. Unions have made strong moves to increase their influence in low-income Latino communities, and because of this involvement turnout among Latinos is expected to increase.[23]

While it is possible that low-income whites simply became low-income Republicans, individuals are less likely to vote at all. We do not see low-income white turnout growing or maintaining itself over time. Analyses presented here indicate low-income white turnout has declined, suggesting that if low-income people are changing allegiances, alternate groups are not as effective in mobilizing low-income whites as unions are. Overall, fewer low-income whites are participating than when unions held more power.

The absence of low-income whites from political life has consequences for who the party sees and values as the "poor," and for the construction of the Democratic Party's coalition. Low-income voters are more likely to be black than they ever have been. This empirical reality suggests that when the party thinks of, or tries to recruit, the most likely low-income voter, it *should* think of an African American. As the pattern continues the process becomes more cyclical, with increases in voting producing more calls to recruit these individuals. Because individuals vote more, they should be mobilized more, in order to preserve the party's electoral prospects. Overall changes within the party coalition tend to reinforce each other over time, as low-income whites opt out of voting, and low-income blacks participate more, as unions are less present and other groups are more present.

Insofar as democratic participation is a normative good for American democracy, the absence of the white working class is problematic. Declining participation may encourage low-income whites to feel resentful toward the Democratic Party, or to African Americans, the Democrats have wooed African Americans at their expense. This resentment could remain as a persistent attitude, with low-income whites no longer voting or moving toward an environment that is perceived as more favorable. The focus of the Democratic Party to act in their strategic electoral interests may ignore issues of class for African Americans, in a way that they did not for the white working class at the height of union power. Constituencies within the party, and policies meant to accommodate those groups, differ as organized labor becomes less of a mobilizing institution.

---

[23]A model looking at the impact of unionization on the turnout of Latino citizens is included in Appendix Table 12, and demonstrates that both unionized whites and Latinos show an increased likelihood of voting.

References

Ahlquist, John S and Margaret Levi. 2013. *In the Interest of Others: Organizations and Social Activism.* Princeton University Press.

Alex-Assensoh, Yvette and Akwasi B Assensoh. 2001. "Inner-City Contexts, Church Attendance, and African-American Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 63(3):886–901.

Alvarez, R Michael, Delia Bailey and Jonathan N Katz. 2011. "An Empirical Bayes Approach to Estimating Ordinal Treatment Effects." *Political Analysis* 19(1):20–31.

Ansolabehere, Stephen and Eitan Hersh. 2012. "Validation: What big data reveal about survey misreporting and the real electorate." *Political Analysis* 20(4):437–459.

Anzia, Sarah F and Terry M. Moe. 2015. "Public Sector Unions and the Costs of Government." *Journal of Politics* 77(1):114–127.

APSA, Taskforce. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4):651–66.

Axelrod, Robert. 1972. "Where the Votes Come From: An Analysis of Electoral Coalitions, 1952-1968." *American Political Science Review* 66:11–20.

Barreto, Matt A. 2010. *Ethnic Cues: The Role of Shared Ethnicity in Latino Political Participation.* University of Michigan Press.

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age.* Princeton University Press.

Black, Merle. 2004. "The Transformation of the Southern Democratic Party." *Journal of Politics* 66(4):1001–1017.

Bobo, L. 1983. "White's opposition to busing: symbolic racism or realistic group conflict?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45(6):1196–1210.

Bobo, L. and F.D. Gilliam Jr. 1990. "Race, sociopolitical participation, and black empowerment." *The American Political Science Review* pp. 377–393.

Burden, Barry C, David T Canon, Kenneth R Mayer and Donald P Moynihan. 2014. "Election Laws, Mobilization, and Turnout: The Unanticipated Consequences of Election Reform." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(1):95–109.

Carmines, Edward G. and James A. Stimson. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Carnes, N. 2013. Logit Survey. In *Zelig: Everyones Statistical Software, 2007.* Imai, Kosuke and King, Gary and Lau, Olivia pp. 2–8.

Clausen, Aage R. 1968. "Response Validity: Vote Report." *Public Opinion Quarterly* pp. 588–606.

Clawson, Dan and Mary Ann Clawson. 1999. "What Has Happened to the U.S. Labor Movement? Union Decline and Renewal." *Annual Review of Sociology* pp. 95–119.

Dark, Taylor E. 1999. *The Unions and the Democrats: An Enduring Alliance.* Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.

Edsall, Thomas Byrne and Mary D. 1991. *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics.* New York: Norton.

Flavin, Patrick and Benjamin Radcliff. 2011. "Labor Union Membership and Voting Across Nations." *Electoral Studies* 30(4):633–641.

Flavin, Patrick and Michael T Hartney. 2015. "When Government Subsidizes Its Own: Collective Bargaining Laws as Agents of Political Mobilization." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(1).

Fraga, Bernard L. 2016. "Candidates or Districts? Reevaluating the Role of Race in Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):97–122.

Francia, Peter L and Nathan S Bigelow. 2010. "Polls and Elections: What's the Matter with the White Working Class? The Effects of Union Membership in the 2004 Presidential Election." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40(1):140–158.

Francia, Peter L. and Susan Orr. 2014. "Labor Unions and the Mobilization of Latino Voters Can the Dinosaur Awaken the Sleeping Giant?" *Political Research Quarterly* 67(4):943–956.

Frank, Thomas. 2007. *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America.* Macmillan.

Franzese, Robert and Cindy Kam. 2009. *Modeling and Interpreting Interactive Hypotheses in Regression Analysis.* University of Michigan Press.

Freeman, Richard B. 2003. What Do Unions Do... to Voting? Technical report National Bureau of Economic Research.

Frymer, Paul. 2008. *Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party.* Princeton University Press.

Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 95(3).

Gelman, A., D. Park, B. Shor and J. Bafumi. 2008. *Red state, blue state, rich state, poor state: why Americans vote the way they do.* Princeton University Press.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Personal Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94.

Gilliam Jr, Frank D. 1996. "Exploring Minority Empowerment: Symbolic Politics, Governing Coalitions and Traces of Political Style in Los Angeles." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 56–81.

Goldfield, Michael. 1986. "Labor in American Politics - Its Current Weakness." *Journal of Politics* 48:2–29.

Green, Donald P. 2004. "Mobilizing African-American Voters using Direct Mail and Commercial phone banks: A Field Experiment." *Political Research Quarterly* 57(2):245–255.

Hacker, Jacob S and Paul Pierson. 2011. *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer–and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class.* Simon and Schuster.

Hajnal, Zoltan L and Jeremy D Horowitz. 2014. "Racial Winners and Losers in American Party Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(01):100–118.

Harris, Frederick C. 1994. "Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African-American Political Activism." *Journal of Politics* 56(1):42–68.

Hersh, Eitan D. 2015. *Hacking the Electorate: How Campaigns Perceive Voters.* Cambridge University Press.

Hirsch, Barry and David A Macpherson. 2003. "Union Membership and Coverage Database from the Current Population Survey: Note." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 56(2):349–54.

Holbrook, Allyson L and Jon A Krosnick. 2010. "Social Desirability Bias in Voter Turnout Reports Tests Using the Item Count Technique." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74(1):37–67.

Holbrook, Thomas M and Scott D McClurg. 2005. "The Mobilization of Core Supporters: Campaigns, Turnout, and Electoral Composition in United States Presidential Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(4):689–703.

Hood III, MV, Quentin Kidd and Irwin L Morris. 2012. *The Rational Southerner: Black Mobilization, Republican Growth, and the Partisan Transformation of the American South.* Oxford University Press.

Huckfeldt, Robert and John Sprague. 1992. "Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass." *American Political Science Review* 86(01):70–86.

Hur, Aram and Christopher H Achen. 2013. "Coding Voter Turnout Responses in the Current Population Survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly* p. nft042.

Katz, Ethan. 2001. "Bias in Conditional and Unconditional Fixed Effects Logit Estimation." *Political Analysis* 9(4):379–384.

Katznelson, Ira. 2013. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time.* Liveright.

Kerrissey, Jasmine and Evan Schofer. 2013. "Union Membership and Political Participation in the United States." *Social Forces* pp. 895–928.

King, Gary. 1997. *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Layman, Geoffrey. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Leighley, Jan E and Arnold Vedlitz. 1999. "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations." *The Journal of Politics* 61(04):1092–1114.

Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler. 1992. "Individual and Systemic Influences on Turnout - Who Votes, 1984." *Journal of Politics* 54:718–740.

Leighley, Jan E and Jonathan Nagler. 2007. "Unions, Voter Turnout, and Class Bias in the US Electorate, 1964–2004." *Journal of Politics* 69(2):430–441.

Leighley, Jan E and Jonathan Nagler. 2013. *Who Votes Now?: Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States.* Princeton University Press.

Leighley, J.E. 2001. *Strength in numbers?: the political mobilization of racial and ethnic minorities.* Princeton University Press.

Lichtenstein, Nelson. 2012. *State of the union: A century of American labor.* Princeton University Press.

Liu, Baodong, Sharon D Wright Austin and Byron D'Andrá Orey. 2009. "Church Attendance, Social Capital, and Black Voting Participation." *Social Science Quarterly* 90(3):576–592.

McClerking, Harwood K and Eric L McDaniel. 2005. "Belonging and doing: Political Churches and Black Political Participation." *Political Psychology* 26(5):721–734.

Nagler, Jonathan. 1991. "The Effect of Registration Laws and Education on United-States Voter Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 85:1393–1405.

Nelson, Bruce. 2001. *Divided We Stand-American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality.* Princeton University Press.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D. 2004. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community.* Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D, David E Campbell and Shaylyn Romney Garrett. 2012. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* Simon and Schuster.

Radcliff, Benjamin. 2001. ""Organized Labor and Electoral Participation in American National Elections." *Journal of Labor Research* 22:N2:405–414.

Radcliff, Benjamin and Patricia Davis. 2000. "Labor Organization and Electoral Participation in Industrial Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 44:132–141.

Reese, Laura A and Ronald E Brown. 1995. "The Effects of Religious Messages on Racial Identity and System Blame among African Americans." *The Journal of Politics* 57(01):24–43.

Rolfe, Meredith. 2012. *Voter Turnout: A Social Theory of Political Participation.* Cambridge University Press.

Rosenfeld, Jake. 2014. *What Unions No Longer Do.* Harvard University Press.

Rosenstone, S. and J.M. Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy.* New York: Macmillan.

Schattschneider, Elmer Eric. 1956. "United States: The Functional Approach to Party Government." *Modern Political Parties: Approaches to Comparative Politics* pp. 194–215.

Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba and Henry E Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy.* Princeton University Press.

Sousa, David J. 1993. "Organized Labor in the Electorate, 1960-1988." *Political Research Quarterly* 46(4):741–758.

Strolovitch, Dara Z. 2007. *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics.* University of Chicago Press.

Tate, K. 1993. *From protest to politics.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Teixeira, Ruy A and Joel Rogers. 2001. *America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters.* Basic Books.

Verba, S. and N.H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America.* Harper & Row New York.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Western, Bruce and Jake Rosenfeld. 2011. "Unions, Norms, and the Rise in US Wage Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 76(4):513–537.

Wolfinger, Raymond E. and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Appendix (Online)

Table 5: Summary Statistics for All Respondents in Presidential Years

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote	0.659	0.474	0	1
Black	0.114	0.318	0	1
High-Income	0.196	0.397	0	1
Low-Income	0.302	0.459	0	1
Education	2.505	1.026	1	4
Female	0.529	0.499	0	1
Age	45.306	17.869	18	99

Note: High-Income respondents have a family income above $97,000 per year, low-income have a family income below $32,500. Education runs from one to four, with one being less than a high school education, two is a high school graduate, three is a respondent with some college or an Associate's Degree, and four is a college graduate.

Table 6: Summary Statistics for Respondents Asked about Unionization

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote	0.671	0.470	0	1
Black	0.102	0.303	0	1
High-Income	0.235	0.424	0	1
Low-Income	0.194	0.396	0	1
Education	2.797	0.951	1	4
Female	0.493	0.500	0	1
Age	39.783	13.087	18	90
Unionized	0.171	0.376	0	1

*Note:* Unionized respondents are those who are union members, or are covered under a union contract. High-Income respondents have a family income above $97,000 per year, low-income have a family income below $32,500. Education runs from one to four, with one being less than a high school education, two is a high school graduate, three is a respondent with some college or an Associate's Degree, and four is a college graduate.

Figure 7: Average Family Income for White and African American Workers

Average Family Income in 2014 Dollars for White and African American
Union Members
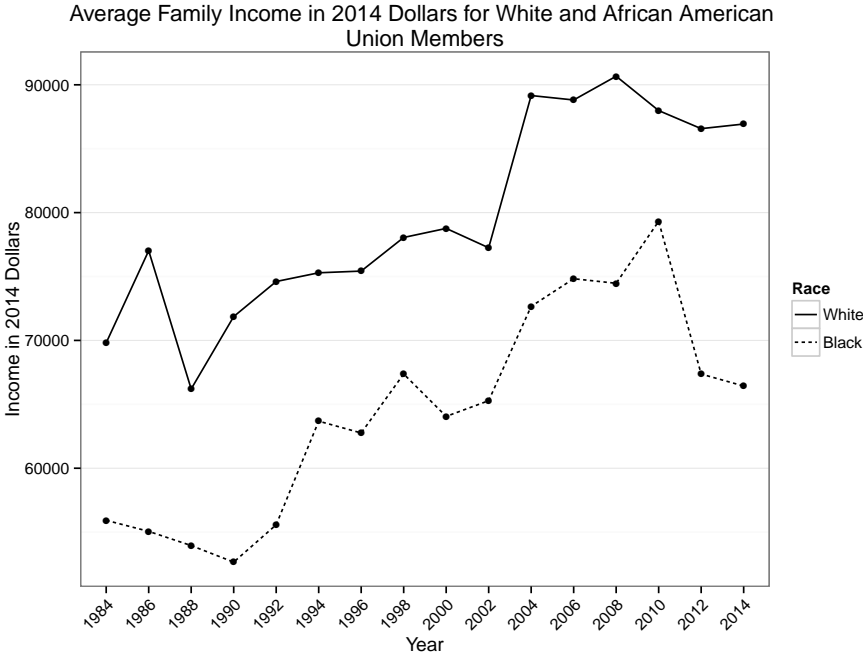
Source: CPS Cumulative File, 1972-2014

Figure 8: Income Composition of White Union Members

Income Composition for Unionized Whites Over Time
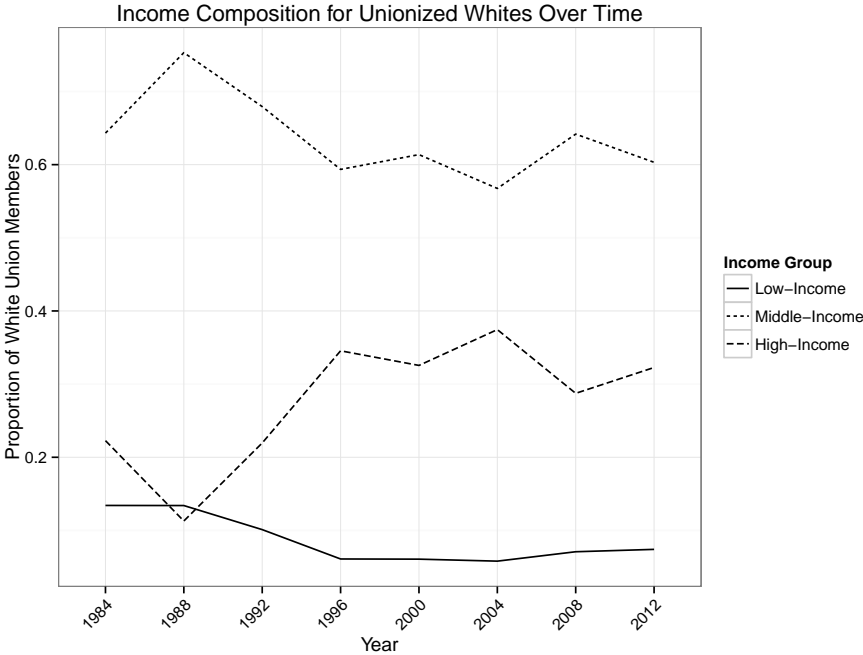
Source: CPS November Supplement Cumulative File, 1984-2014

Table 7: Participation Models Estimated Separately by Ethnic Group

	Black	White
High-Income	0.332***	0.299***
	(0.101)	(0.025)
Low-Income	−0.292***	−0.467***
	(0.059)	(0.025)
Union Member	0.387***	0.258***
	(0.070)	(0.027)
Education	0.481***	0.673***
	(0.032)	(0.011)
Female	0.037***	0.042***
	(0.013)	(0.004)
Age	−0.0001	−0.0001
	(0.0002)	(0.0001)
Age Squared	0.451***	0.204***
	(0.055)	(0.019)
1988	−0.312***	−0.167***
	(0.097)	(0.035)
1992	0.049	0.085**
	(0.103)	(0.035)
1996	−0.509***	−0.592***
	(0.100)	(0.036)
2000	−0.373***	−0.475***
	(0.101)	(0.037)
2004	−0.179*	−0.214***
	(0.109)	(0.038)
2008	0.022	−0.275***
	(0.112)	(0.039)
2012	−0.112	−0.633***
	(0.104)	(0.037)
Constant	−1.931***	−2.520***
	(0.271)	(0.093)
Observations	8,785	76,927

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This model echoes Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) by looking at racial and ethnic groups in separate models. Unionization is important for both the participation of whites and African Americans, and that being low-income negatively impacts participation.

Table 8: Pooled Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1972-2012

	Dependent variable:
	Vote
Black	0.287***
	(0.048)
High-Income	0.220***
	(0.006)
Low-Income	−0.503***
	(0.005)
Education	0.570***
	(0.002)
Female	0.089***
	(0.001)
Age	−0.001***
	(0.00001)
Age Squared	0.064***
	(0.004)
Black X High-Income	−0.037
	(0.024)
Black X Low-Income	0.160***
	(0.014)
Black X Education	−0.077***
	(0.007)
Black X Female	0.001
	(0.002)
Black X Age	−0.0001***
	(0.00002)
Black X Age Squared	0.174***
	(0.013)
Constant	−3.403***
	(0.030)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	1,677,416
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9: Pooled Weighted Logistic Regression for Respondents Asked about Unionization in Presidential Years 1984-2012

	Dependent variable:
	Vote
Black	0.442**
	(0.195)
High-Income	0.241***
	(0.016)
Low-Income	−0.424***
	(0.018)
Union Member	0.299***
	(0.018)
Education	0.589***
	(0.008)
Female	0.058***
	(0.003)
Age	−0.0002***
	(0.00004)
Age Squared	0.135***
	(0.013)
Black X High-Income	0.046
	(0.062)
Black X Low-Income	0.151***
	(0.045)
Black X Education	−0.171***
	(0.023)
Black X Female	0.007
	(0.009)
Black X Age	−0.0002
	(0.0001)
Black X Age Squared	0.244***
	(0.040)
Black X Union Member	−0.021
	(0.050)
Constant	−2.697***
	(0.066)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	174,637
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 10: Weighted Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1984-2012

|	Vote
Black	0.276
	(0.198)
High-Income	0.248***
	(0.016)
Low-Income	0.255*
	(0.140)
Union Member	0.283***
	(0.019)
Education	0.566***
	(0.008)
Female	0.070***
	(0.003)
Age	−0.0003***
	(0.00004)
Age Squared	0.135***
	(0.013)
Black X High-Income	0.056
	(0.062)
Black X Low-Income	0.186***
	(0.046)
Black X Education	−0.193***
	(0.023)
Black X Female	0.018*
	(0.010)
Black X Age	−0.0003**
	(0.0001)
Black X Age Squared	0.247***
	(0.040)
Black X Union Member	−0.037
	(0.050)
Low-Income X Union Member	0.105**
	(0.050)
Low-Income X Education	0.126***
	(0.018)
Low-Income X Age	−0.053***
	(0.007)
Low-Income X Age Squared	0.001***
	(0.0001)
Constant	−2.874***
	(0.073)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	174,637

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

This model interacts being a low-income respondent with remaining variables. A positive coefficient on low-income X union indicates that low-income union members also show an increased propensity to vote when compared with other low-income people. Unlike previous models, the low-income main effect is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Table 11: Random Intercept Logistic Regression Presidential Years 1984-2012

	Dependent variable:
	Vote
Black	0.016
	(0.029)
High-Income	0.052***
	(0.003)
Low-Income	−0.096***
	(0.003)
Union Member	0.059***
	(0.003)
Education	0.121***
	(0.001)
Female	0.009***
	(0.0001)
Age	0.028***
	(0.002)
Age Squared	0.004
	(0.010)
Black X High-Income	0.030***
	(0.008)
Black X Low-Income	−0.034***
	(0.004)
Black X Education	0.006***
	(0.001)
Black X Female	−0.0001***
	(0.00002)
Black X Age	0.054***
	(0.007)
Black X Age Squared	0.001
	(0.008)
Black X Union Member	−0.133***
	(0.008)
Observations	172,558
Log Likelihood	-124,564.5
Akaike Inf. Crit.	249,164.9
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	249,346.0
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 9: Income Composition of Black Union Members

Union Membership by Income Group Over Time for African Americans
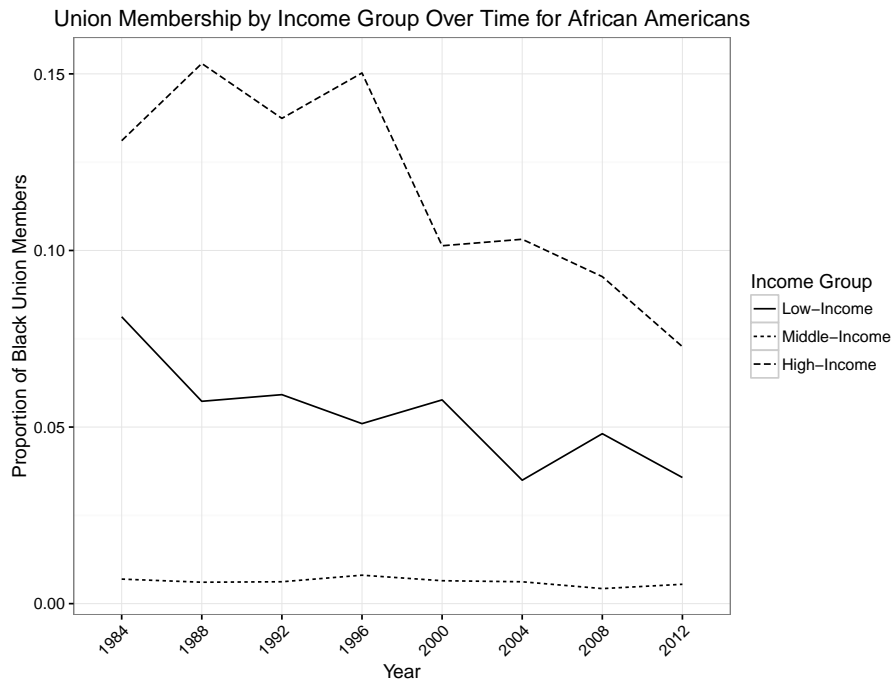
Source: CPS November Supplement Cumulative File, 1984-2014

Figure 10: Differences in the Probability of Voting by the Race of Union Members

Differences between Low−Income Union Members

in Presidential Election Years
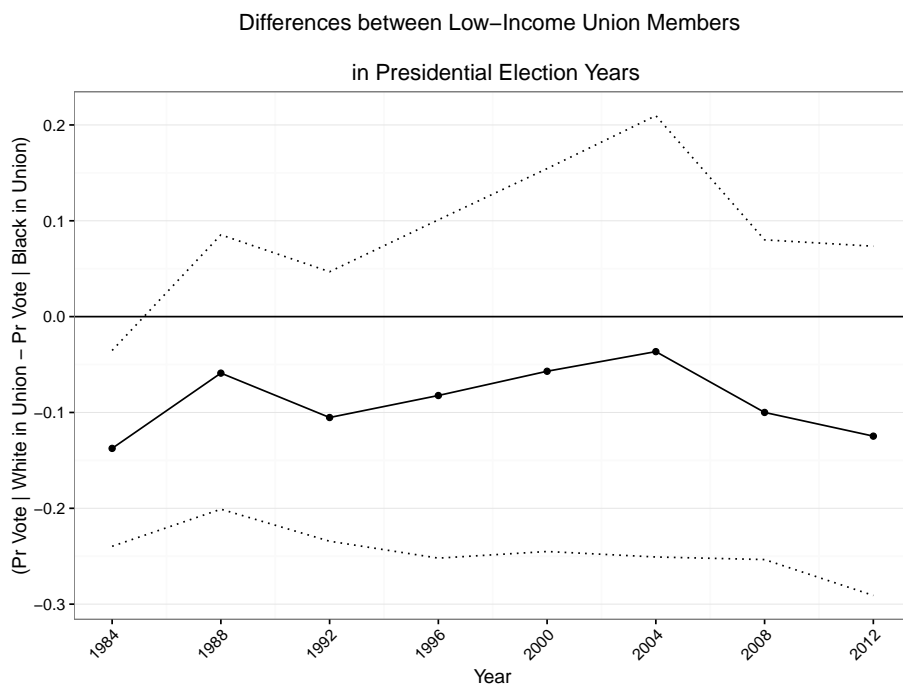
Source: CPS Cumulative File, 1984-2012

Table 12: Weighted Logistic Regression in Presidential Years Including Latinos, 1984-2012

Black	0.442**
	(0.195)
Latino	−0.052
	(0.233)
High-Income	0.240***
	(0.016)
Low-Income	−0.424***
	(0.018)
Union Member	0.299***
	(0.018)
Education	0.590***
	(0.008)
Female	0.058***
	(0.003)
Age	−0.0002***
	(0.00004)
Age Squared	0.135***
	(0.013)
Black X High-Income	0.047
	(0.062)
Black X Low-Income	0.151***
	(0.045)
Black X Education	−0.171***
	(0.023)
Black X Age	0.007
	(0.009)
Black X Age Squared	−0.0002
	(0.0001)
Black X Female	0.243***
	(0.040)
Black X Union Member	−0.021
	(0.050)
Latino X High-Income	0.051
	(0.066)
Latino X Low-Income	0.0002
	(0.058)
Latino X Education	−0.064**
	(0.026)
Latino X Age	0.001
	(0.012)
Latino X Age Squared	−0.0001
	(0.0001)
Latino X Female	0.079*
	(0.048)
Latino X Union Member	0.158**
	(0.064)
Constant	−2.694***
	(0.066)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes
Observations	186,031

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01