**Turned Out or Turned Off? Black Voter Apathy in Presidential Elections**

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**Abstract**

 The Black electorate consistently turns out at the highest rate of any other racial group for the Democratic party. Yet the Democratic party does not strongly act on the policy demands that Black voters prioritize. This study seeks to deal with this disconnect by exploring the role of vote capture on Black political behavior. Specifically, it explores whether this pattern is greater amongst Black young people given the high rates of political alienation and disinterest in voting as a method of political participation. Consistent with prior work, I expect vote capture to occur when a politically relevant group has no choice but to remain in that party even when their interests may be neglected. I evaluate vote capture’s influence on Black adults’ presidential vote intention and support for a non-Democratic political candidate. Using an original survey experiment of Black voting-age adults (N=1448), I prime vote capture through a news story about Black-Democrat political relations (compared to a control article). I uncover a positive and significant relationship between exposure to treatment and support for a non-Democratic candidate. I also find some support that Black young people express a decrease in vote intention when vote capture is framed.

**Introduction**

In popular news media, the framing of Black voter turnout is decidedly mixed. Although some articles highlight voter disenfranchisement and suppression that keep Black people from voting [(Ray 2020; Ray and Whitlock 2019)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?31CG8b), other articles discuss the consistently high turnout of the Black electorate lauding them as the savior of democracy with turnout sometimes rivaling whites [(Munoz and Manthey 2022; Ray 2020; Ray and Whitlock 2019; Wiltz 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?ROBAz3). Additionally, the Black electorate is constantly linked with the Democratic party due to over 90 percent of Black voters identifying as Democrats consistently from the Civil Rights Era (Frymer 1999). And, Black voters, more specifically Black women, are described as the savior of the Democratic party [(Munoz and Manthey 2022; Ray 2020; Ray and Whitlock 2019)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?jzverA) while in the 2022 midterm elections, young people and people of color were described as preventing the “Red Wave” [(Aylward 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?uGrENh).

The wide-ranging framing of Black turnout is significant due to the Black electorate’s contentious history with voting given the anti-Black racism experienced within enslavement, Jim Crow, and even modern-day disenfranchisement and voter suppression. Despite all those factors, Black voters have been and continue to be a political force within indigenous organizations as well as within electoral politics with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the extension of suffrage to women with the 19th Amendment [(Cohen 1999)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?LP21Ur). Tate (1994) discusses the greater inclusion of Black Americans within American politics during the 1980s and 1990s which is referred to as political incorporation. This greater inclusion suggests a transition from investment in non-violent protests and marches within the Civil Rights Movement to electing Black officials to leadership in Congress as well as presidential candidacy. This era of political incorporation seeks to reach the goal of racial equality through voting and political means and would explain the drive, resilience, and consistency Black voters have to get to the polls [(Tate 1994)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?Urt1wW).

However, when looking at the Black electorate’s reasoning for supporting the Democratic party, the explanation becomes confusing, especially considering the political issues that the Democratic party is prioritizing and their mismatch with the preferences of Black voters. In the 2020 CMPS, Black voters identified stopping racial and ethnic discrimination and criminal justice, respectively, as issues they want to focus on. However, significant action has not been taken at the presidential or congressional level on said issues. Another glaring example of the mismatch is the issue of student debt relief. Student loan forgiveness is a campaign promise that Joe Biden ran on during the Presidential election that saw significant support from Black voters [(Turner 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?U5s8Yh). According to a national poll of Black voters, 84% of Black respondents support a full or partial reduction of student debt [(Color Of Change Poll 2021)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?UwiqKN). Also, according to the US Census, Black Americans are the highest percentage of loan borrowers of any other racial group at 21.3% [(Bennett, King, and Klee 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?SbaQCM). Despite significant support by this consistent portion of the Democratic party’s voting bloc, little to no policy or action has been taken on the political issue of loan forgiveness. These examples of the mismatch between the Black electorate and the Democratic party lead me to inquire if the lack of alignment between the Democratic party and the Black community is discussed would it then change intention to vote and who Black voters support in future elections.

Similar to Black Americans being discussed as the savior of the Democratic party, within the recent 2022 midterm elections, young people were widely discussed in the media as responsible for preventing the Red Wave, or the Republican party having a majority in both the House and the Senate [(Aylward 2022)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?qrOtXY). This wide support amongst young people for the Democratic party is notable given that young people are often described in the extant literature as less likely to traditionally participate (Dalton 2015; Wattenberg 2002). However, it becomes even more complicated when we begin thinking about youth voter participation at the intersection of race, more specifically amongst Black voters. It is complicated because Black voter turnout for the Democratic party is consistently high at rates of 90 percent or higher while young people are said to engage less in voting (Frymer 1999; Levine 2015). Scholars who have discussed the political participation of Black young people find they engage in political activities other than voting at a higher rate and experience higher levels of political alienation than other racial groups [(Cohen 2012; Levine 2015)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?eEPFw3). This raises the question if Black young voters engage in voting at lower rates and if it is solely because of their age, racial identity, or a combination of both.

To answer those inquiries, I conducted a survey experiment with a fictitious newspaper treatment that frames Paul Frymer’s conception of vote capture. This experiment allows me to test a shift in vote intention and support for a non-Democratic candidate in the 2024 Presidential election as well as a greater shift in vote intention among Black young people aged 18-29. I find support that in response to the vote capture treatment Black respondents express increased support for a non-Democrat candidate. Additionally, I find minimal support that Black young voters will decrease vote intention when vote capture is framed. These findings are relevant to improve the understanding of how the disparate framing of Black voter turnout can influence Black political participation, how vote capture affects Black voter turnout, and how Black young people behave politically. To begin to answer the inquiries at hand, I start with unpacking relevant theories that discuss the relationship between Black people and the Democratic party.

***The Relationship Between the Black Electorate and the Democratic Party***

According to Paul Frymer, vote capture is a historic relationship and constant electoral support by a group that feels like their interests cannot be represented in another party (Frymer 1999). The prominence that Black voters began to have in the 1960s allowed them to become significant members of the Democratic voter base. However, this move to support the Democratic party by Black voters made other groups from the Democratic coalition move to the Republican coalition. The Great Party Realignment shifted the policy priorities of the Republican party away from Black interests to more of what we see today, which allows Black voters only one probable option within the United States' two-party system. This means that Black voters have few options but to remain in the Democratic party even when their interests are not prioritized. Black voters are historically linked to the Democratic party following party realignment but have not had significant substantive policy change specifically in their favor. This unwavering support can be seen in the relationship between the Black electorate and the Democratic party from the Civil Rights Era to today with over 90 percent of Black voters identifying as Democrats consistently (Frymer 1999).

Other scholars have also discussed the relationship between the Democratic party and the Black community. Within the extant literature, there has been difficulty in identifying specific reasons why a majority of Black people identify as Democrats, especially given the decline in party participation [(Tate 1994; Wattenberg 2002)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?XMrDwe). Democratic party identification is found to be relatively stable across income, region, and gender. Lewis and Schneider (1983) find that Black respondents with differing socioeconomic status have different reasons for identifying with the Democratic party. Those with lower socioeconomic status support the Democratic party because of their economic status and higher socioeconomic status support the Democratic party due to their beliefs in racial liberalism. Tate (1994) finds that self-identified liberals and poor Black respondents are not more likely than self-identified conservative and higher-income Black respondents to identify as Democrats. The relationship between the Democratic party and the Black community that is theorized within vote capture will be disentangled further as a test of this theory has not been conducted, especially one that is experimental in nature.

***Black Partisan and Ideological Identities***

Increasing partisan sorting and polarization in the United States [(Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Hill and Tausanovitch 2015)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?1wheA8) has increased intrigue into the mismatch between Black partisan and ideological identities. Many scholars suggest that Black voters’ preference for the Democratic party cannot be explained by socioeconomic status or ideology measured on a liberal-conservative scale and that this is different from any other social group [(Abramowitz 2010; Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson 2017)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?xlKEZd). Tasha Philpot discusses this at length and argues that Black conservatives are truly ideologically conservative, but their Black racial group identity supersedes other identities within their identity repertoires [(Philpot 2017)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?7VxUb6). Jefferson continues on this argument with ideological identity and the Black community by asserting that the 7-point measure of ideology does not have validity for the Black community and is often misconstrued by Black respondents when asked on a survey [(Jefferson 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?xDmHfZ). Given that Black voters are overwhelmingly Democratic, it is important to acknowledge ideological labels as the extant literature has proven and ideology will be operationalized in this study using the 7-point scale discussed in the extant literature.

Other scholars have focused on the socialization and psychology of Black voters to better understand their partisan identification. According to White and Laird, Black voters go against their self-interest by continuing to turn out for the Democratic party because of racialized social constraint, which says there are greater social rewards for aligning with the Black community [(White and Laird 2020)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?uc6Zfn). This was tested using a series of lab experiments that placed respondents in conditions under social pressure by another Black person or within a historically Black college or university’s campus newspaper to observe if it influenced their vote choice. This finding identifies that being aligned with the Black community is a more significant priority to Black voters than identifying with the policies of the party or submitting to party mobilization and prove relevant to this inquiry and the usage of experiments to answer inquiries about Black political participation.

***The Role of Age on the Political Participation of Black Voters***

Within the extant literature, there is also a relevant discussion about the political participation of young people regardless of race that is relevant to this project. Some authors argue that young people are largely contributing to low voter turnout because youth is correlated with decreased turnout [(Boyd 1981)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?4I96a6). In the literature, however, it is found the amount of nonvoting that young people express is not significant enough to account for the substantial decrease in voter turnout seen since the 1960s [(Dalton 2015; Wattenberg 2002)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?8A0B6j). More analysis finds that younger generations are just politically engaged by protesting and volunteering rather than voting (Dalton 2015). Also, being a part of the “Know Nothing Generation”, or the generation of young people that grew up in the era of the Internet and social media that does not center politics as well as having political media not being catered to them decreases their mobilization to vote (Wattenberg 2002). The findings of these scholars are pertinent to this project. However, this analysis focuses on youth participation at the intersection of race so that literature must be explored as well.

When focusing on Black youth participation, Levine (2015) finds that Black young people have higher levels of civic engagement on several measures than other racial groups despite lower levels of education and income. These measures include volunteering and raising money for charities rather than participating in national elections. In their electoral participation, Black young people trail their white counterparts [(Levine 2015)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?WoxoVZ). Cohen (2012) contradicts this finding by showing how Black young people feel about the political system despite participation and in fact, show strong feelings of political alienation. Political alienation is conceptualized with three dimensions: government orientation, political community, and equal opportunity. The early socialization of being distrustful of the government as well as the pathologizing of Black youth lead to greater feelings of these dimensions [(Cohen 2012)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?NX5Nd5). However, with the candidacy of President Barack Obama, which Black young people fully embraced, Cohen describes that there was great disbelief that there were ways to fundamentally change their feelings of alienation. This disbelief led to decreasing engagement in political activities like voting, attending a protest, boycotting, and buycotting. The results of the Black Youth Project by Cohen report that almost one in three Black young people did not engage in any of the political activities listed but were more likely to electorally participate in 2008 due to the election of President Obama, which was identified as a potential outlier. This discussion within the literature about Black young people and political alienation is what leads me to my age cohort hypothesis.

**Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses**

 Acknowledging the extant literature on Black political participation and Black young people, I argue that Black voter turnout in support of the Democratic party is largely due to both vote capture and racialized social constraint. However, the narrative of Black voters as being captured or taken for granted in the Democratic party is not thoroughly framed in the media. The prevalent political narrative is instead that the Black voting bloc is instrumental to Democratic party success. However, the bloc is not prioritized when it comes to being policy demanders, or the amalgamation of various interest groups within the party that decides what policies are prioritized [(Bawn et al. 2012)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?dXGCGf). Given the captured nature of Black voters, these negative sentiments may reflect on voting as a whole because Black voters feel no position as policy demanders within the Republican party or other party groups either. This leads me to hypothesize that framing vote capture within the Democratic party to Black voters will result in a decrease in political participation in Presidential elections **(H1A, vote capture hypothesis).** I focus on vote intention as a measure of political participation within this project because the extant literature finds that vote intention is found to be more stable than behavior [(Petty and Krosnick 2013)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?IePPcO). If Black voters saw the discussion of vote capture and the negative effects vote capture could have on their political capabilities as party demanders within the Democratic party, they may express negative sentiments towards the Democratic party and a decrease in party support in turn. I hypothesize that framing vote capture within the Democratic party to Black voters will result in the increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democrat **(H1B, vote capture hypothesis).**

 Also, based on theories related to Black young people and their feelings of political alienation, I argue that the political incorporation of Black Americans that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in subsequent age cohorts feeling increased alienation in response to the US Government and voting. Black young people are placed in a difficult position because the framing of both the Black electorate and Gen Z as the savior of the Democratic party places a lot of responsibility on their shoulders. I argue that rather than rise to the occasion of that responsibility Black young voters choose to disengage with both the Democratic party and voting. Instead, they rather engage in other political activities other than voting that decrease feelings of political alienation. This alienation is based on a lack of positive government orientation, an inclusive political community, and equal opportunity for Black Americans within politics as Cohen (2012) conceptualized. I believe this alienation in this increasingly polarized political environment is strong enough to negatively affect racialized social constraint that socializes Black people to continue to support the Democratic party. Additionally, I believe this alienation is significant enough to cause age to moderate the relationship between the framing of vote capture and vote intention and support of a Democratic candidate. This is why I hypothesize that Black people under 29 years of age will express the largest decrease in voter turnout and increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democrat (**H2, “age cohort hypothesis”)** (Cohen 2012, Tate 1994).

**Research Design and Methods**

For this survey experiment, I utilized an original survey experiment with a sample of N=1,448 Black respondents randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions disseminated online via Prolific Academic, a participant recruitment company for academic research. Respondents were presented with a treatment of a (fictitious) newspaper article that frames that the Black vote is “captured” by the Democratic party. Framing was specifically chosen because it is meant to influence attitudes by altering the weights respondents give to different alternatives [(Chong 2013; Iyengar and Kinder 1980)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?VeskNa). Additionally, other scholars have recently employed media framing to evaluate Black participants' intended political behaviors as well as attitudes [(Bonilla and Tillery 2020; Chin et al. 2022; Haider-Markel, Delehanty, and Beverlin 2007)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?PENZYb).

The dependent variables are the intention to vote in the 2024 Election and the intended increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democrat. Vote intention was measured with respondents answering their level of agreement (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) with the statement: “Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following: I intend to get out to vote in the 2024 Presidential election.” Intended increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democratic candidate manipulated a measure of what party the respondent intended to vote for in 2024 and coded the Democratic party as 0 and Republican, Independent, or Something Else as 1. The independent variable is the framing of vote capture based on the treatment condition assignment. The controls are socioeconomic status, gender, educational attainment, and political ideology.

 The sample for the experimental data included 1448 Black adult respondents with 636 men and 800 women. Respondents mostly self-identified as Democrats and included more master’s degree or high school diploma recipients. Regarding the treatment, the script **(Appendix A)** was presented as a fictitious newspaper article from the Associated Press that discusses past and present examples of presidents supporting policies that were oppositional to what the Black community wanted. The past example referenced Former President Bill Clinton and his positions on crime and welfare and the present example referenced President Joe Biden’s position on defunding the police. Present and past examples of vote capture were used to show that this has occurred more than once and to resonate with both young and mature voters. Two white Democrats were also chosen in the treatment to avoid spillover racialization or previous affinities towards President Obama [(Tesler 2012)](https://www.zotero.org/google-docs/?NxCzY1). The script also makes the specific claim in the title and the closing sentence that the Democratic party does not “show up for” Black people and does “the bare minimum”. The control condition featured an article about giraffes’ social interactions. Using the experimental data, I used multivariate analysis to analyze the effect of the vote capture treatment on vote intention in the 2024 Presidential election and support for non-Democrats to test the vote capture hypothesis. Related to the age cohort hypothesis, I created a dummy variable for 18-29 respondents and used multivariate analysis to analyze the interaction of the treatment and the 18-29 dummy variable for both dependent variables.

**Results**

Related to the data from the experiment, **Table 1** observes individuals who were placed in the treatment condition and passed the manipulation and the treatment’s effect on vote intention in the 2024 Presidential election. The effect of the treatment on vote intention in the 2024 election produced a positive, but insignificant coefficient meaning that the treatment was not strong enough to negate the high vote intention that Black voters have. Interestingly, there was a positive and significant effect related to all controls, which shows that vote intention increased if respondents identified as female, Democrat, more Conservative, and with increasing income and educational attainment.

 **Table 2** presents the effect of the treatment condition on change in vote choice to a non-Democrat. The treatment effect was positive and significant, which means that the treatment made respondents more likely to support a political party that was either a Republican, Independent or something else. The Democrat, income, and ideology variables were all negative and significant in this model which shows that intention to support a non-Democrat is negatively correlated amongst self-identified Democrat respondents as well as respondents with higher incomes and that identify as more conservative. The findings in Table 1 and Table 2 show mixed support for the vote capture hypothesis.

| **Table 1: Effect of Vote Capture Treatment of 2024 Vote Intention** |
| --- |
|  |
|  | 2024 Vote Intention |
|  |  |
|  | X2024voteintention |
|  |
| Treatment | 0.047 |
|  | (0.053) |
|  |  |
| Female | 0.135\*\* |
|  | (0.054) |
|  |  |
| Democrat | 0.404\*\*\* |
|  | (0.055) |
|  |  |
| Income | 0.046\*\*\* |
|  | (0.010) |
|  |  |
| Educational Attainment | 0.061\*\*\* |
|  | (0.021) |
|  |  |
| Ideology | 0.048\*\*\* |
|  | (0.017) |
|  |  |
| Constant | 3.460\*\*\* |
|  | (0.098) |
|  |  |
|  |
| Observations | 1,184 |
| R2 | 0.128 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.124 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.907 (df = 1177) |
| F Statistic | 28.865\*\*\* (df = 6; 1177) |
|  |
| *Note:* | \*p\*\*p\*\*\*p<0.01 |

| **Table 2: Effect of Vote Capture Treatment on Intention to Support Non-Democratic Candidates** |
| --- |
|  |
|  | 2024 Intended Shift to Non-Democratic Party Support |
|  |  |
|  | X2024partysupport |
|  |
| Treatment | 0.101\*\* |
|  | (0.045) |
|  |  |
| Female | -0.048 |
|  | (0.047) |
|  |  |
| Democrat | -0.456\*\*\* |
|  | (0.047) |
|  |  |
| Income | -0.063\*\*\* |
|  | (0.008) |
|  |  |
| Educational Attainment | 0.017 |
|  | (0.018) |
|  |  |
| Ideology | -0.094\*\*\* |
|  | (0.015) |
|  |  |
| Constant | 3.107\*\*\* |
|  | (0.085) |
|  |  |
|  |
| Observations | 1,129 |
| R2 | 0.191 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.187 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.758 (df = 1122) |
| F Statistic | 44.252\*\*\* (df = 6; 1122) |
|  |
| *Note:* | \*p\*\*p\*\*\*p<0.01 |

Moving to analyze the age cohort hypothesis, **Table 3** shows a model with an interaction of the 18-29 age group and the treatment featuring the baseline model and the model with controls. The interaction of the 18-29 age group and the vote capture treatment produces a negative, but insignificant coefficient for the baseline and with the controls. Lack of statistical significance aside, both coefficients are negative, which offers some support for the age cohort hypothesis. Interestingly, the coefficient for the 18-29 age group in the baseline model is negative and statistically significant, which shows that controlling for treatment the assignment that respondents within the 18-29 age group expressed negative vote intention. **Table 4** is a similar model to Table 3 with the difference being the dependent variable of change in vote choice to a non-Democrat. While insignificant, the interaction of the 18-29 age group and the treatment is negative, which means that amongst the 18-29 age group, there was no shift to a non-Democrat candidate, which does not support the age cohort hypothesis.

| **Table 3: Effect of Vote Capture Treatment Interacted with 18-29 Age Category on 2024 Vote Intention** |
| --- |
|  |
|  | 2024 Vote Intention |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | Baseline | With Controls |
|  | (1) | (2) |
|  |
| Treatment | 0.066 | 0.078 |
|  | (0.060) | (0.061) |
|  |  |  |
| 18-29 Age Group | -0.252\*\*\* | 0.051 |
|  | (0.093) | (0.094) |
|  |  |  |
| Female |  | 0.136\*\* |
|  |  | (0.055) |
|  |  |  |
| Democrat |  | 0.402\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.056) |
|  |  |  |
| Income |  | 0.046\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.010) |
|  |  |  |
| Educational Attainment |  | 0.059\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.021) |
|  |  |  |
| Ideology |  | 0.048\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.017) |
|  |  |  |
| Treatment\*18-29 | -0.113 | -0.119 |
|  | (0.129) | (0.126) |
|  |  |  |
| Constant | 4.527\*\*\* | 3.457\*\*\* |
|  | (0.040) | (0.106) |
|  |  |  |
|  |
| Observations | 1,338 | 1,181 |
| R2 | 0.018 | 0.128 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.016 | 0.122 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.966 (df = 1334) | 0.908 (df = 1172) |
| F Statistic | 8.124\*\*\* (df = 3; 1334) | 21.540\*\*\* (df = 8; 1172) |
|  |
| *Note:* | \*p\*\*p\*\*\*p<0.01 |

| **Table 4: Effect of Vote Capture Treatment Interacted with 18-29 Age Category on Intention to Support Non-Democratic Candidates** |
| --- |
|  |
|  | 2024 Intended Shift to Non-Democratic Party Support |
|  |  |
|  | X2024partysupport |
|  | Baseline | With Controls |
|  | (1) | (2) |
|  |
| Treatment | 0.067 | 0.084 |
|  | (0.052) | (0.052) |
|  |  |  |
| 18-29 Age Group | 0.239\*\*\* | -0.076 |
|  | (0.081) | (0.080) |
|  |  |  |
| Female |  | -0.047 |
|  |  | (0.047) |
|  |  |  |
| Democrat |  | -0.459\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.048) |
|  |  |  |
| Income |  | -0.064\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.008) |
|  |  |  |
| Educational Attainment |  | 0.017 |
|  |  | (0.018) |
|  |  |  |
| Ideology |  | -0.095\*\*\* |
|  |  | (0.015) |
|  |  |  |
| Treatment\*18-29 | 0.076 | 0.073 |
|  | (0.112) | (0.108) |
|  |  |  |
| Constant | 2.108\*\*\* | 3.134\*\*\* |
|  | (0.035) | (0.091) |
|  |  |  |
|  |
| Observations | 1,280 | 1,126 |
| R2 | 0.023 | 0.191 |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.020 | 0.185 |
| Residual Std. Error | 0.824 (df = 1276) | 0.758 (df = 1117) |
| F Statistic | 9.903\*\*\* (df = 3; 1276) | 33.000\*\*\* (df = 8; 1117) |
|  |
| *Note:* | \*p\*\*p\*\*\*p<0.01 |

**Summary of Findings and Implications**

With the aforementioned analysis, my vote capture hypothesis produced mixed results. Hypothesis 1A suggested that if vote capture within the Democratic party was framed to Black voters, then there would be a decrease in voter turnout. Table 1 presents positive and significant coefficients that produce little support for this hypothesis. In general, the data does show that it is difficult to negate Black voter turnout perhaps due to the strong racialized social constraint that existed in the Black community. This may call for my treatment in my experiment to be stronger to go against the strong force to turnout to vote within the Black community. Additionally, the lack of treatment effect regarding the experimental data could shed light on the reason Black people vote in the first place. Rather than the reasoning being making a political change or because a specific party best represents their beliefs and values, Black people could choose to vote to represent a sense of duty that is only activated in special political circumstances like the election of a Black president or going against a candidate that has engaged in racist rhetoric.

Regarding Hypothesis 1A, which stated that framing vote capture within the Democratic party to Black voters will result in a shift of vote choice from Democrat to non-Democrat, there was support. According to Table 2, there was a positive correlation when the treatment was regressed on the increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democrat variable. This finding suggests that the negative framing was successful in moving Democratic support and could have an influence on Black voter turnout despite racialized social constraint that brings them to the ballot box at consistently high rates.

Support for the age cohort hypothesis was also mixed due to the findings in both Table 3 and 4. Table 3 showed somewhat promising results with the interaction of the 18-29 age group dummy variable and the treatment variable being negative, but not statistically significant in its effect on vote intention in 2024. This finding suggests that younger Black voters in comparison to older age cohorts could be more affected by this negative framing potentially due to experiences of alienation they feel within the American political system. As the young Black members of the electorate grow older, the alienation they experience could have lasting impacts on their turnout as well as how they socialize future age cohorts voting behavior. Table 4, however, has positive correlations for the interaction of the treatment and 18-29 dummy variables on increased likelihood of supporting a non-Democrat, which does not support the age cohort hypothesis. This finding about Black young people could present a negative sentiment toward voting as a way of expressing political behavior and a preference for non-traditional means of political behavior rather than issues with the Democratic party.

**Future Directions**

In the future, I plan to continue observing the generational effect found in this paper. I plan to argue that this effect is due to the increased political incorporation that Black Americans experienced in the decades since the 1980s and the subsequent feelings of political alienation amongst younger people born following this incorporation. As the young Black members of the electorate grow older, the alienation they experience could have lasting impacts on their turnout as well as how they socialize future generations voting behavior. To further this inquiry, I will first conduct a similar model with the 2020 CMPS and add measures on the 2024 CMPS instrument that directly ask the questions I am interested in rather than seeking out proxy variables.

Additionally, I plan to develop a novel psychological measure of Black voter apathy that I believe is a racialized emotional experience that is tied to vote capture. This measure would pull on concepts of political alienation, political disinterest, and racial group efficacy to establish a 7-point scale that can determine the level of racialized apathy the Black electorate is experiencing. Developing the concept of Black voter apathy and the aforementioned model will be the basis of my dissertation project including both experimental and qualitative interviews. This project seeks to amplify the experiences of underrepresented Black members of the electorate; it will be used to inform political parties and interest groups on how they can improve their outreach and policy aimed at Black people. The findings of this project can improve the outlook of democracy and civil liberties within the American two-party system, especially those that have been continuously underrepresented and captured.

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Appendix A: Treatment Script

**BLACK AMERICANS SHOW UP FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTY, BUT DEMOCRATS DO NOT SHOW UP FOR THEM**

**-Associated Press (AP)**

In recent Presidential elections, more than 90 percent of the Black vote went to a Democratic candidate. However, when Democratic presidents’ policies were observed who were elected to office because of Black electoral support it was found that the policies were oppositional to the Black Democrats’ policy preferences. President Bill Clinton, for example, supported harsher policies on crime and welfare that disproportionately impacted Black Americans. President Joe Biden advocated for increased funding to police departments during his presidential campaign and a national call to defund the police. Also, when you look at Black support for bills in Congress, the greater support of policies by Black Americans lead to lowered likelihood of passage by Congress. It seems that the Democratic party can get away with doing the bare minimum for Black voters in comparison to the Republican party.