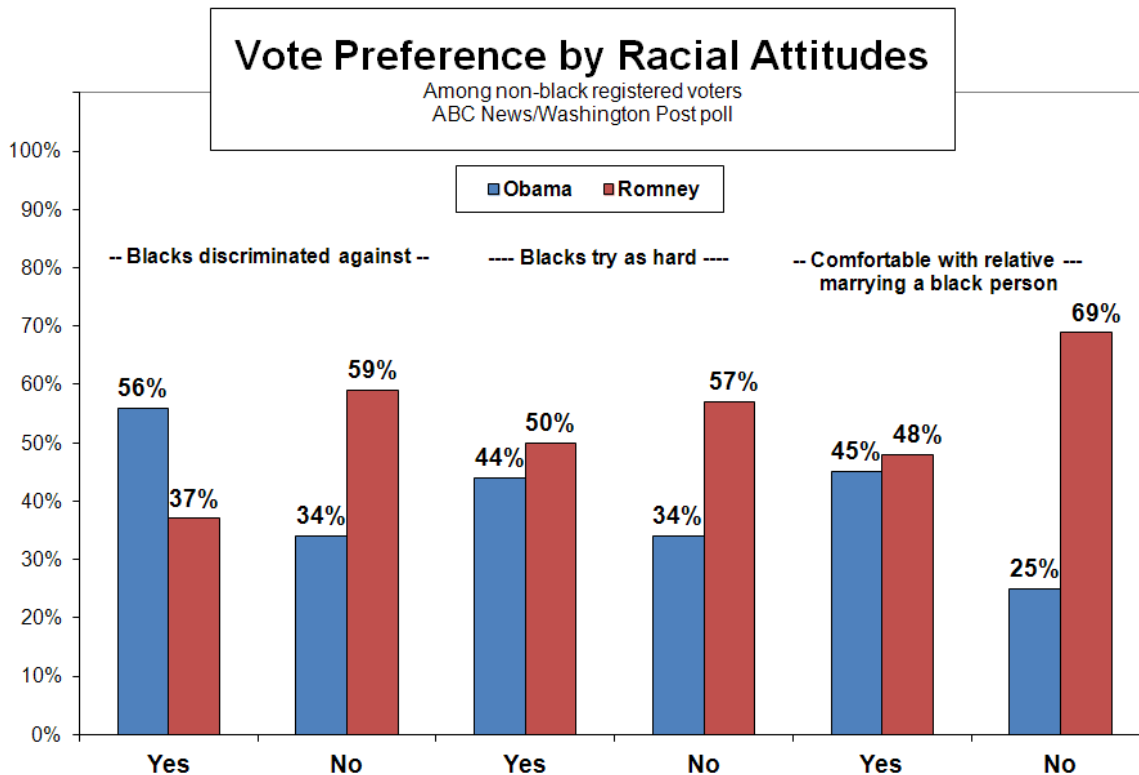


Race, Religion and Politics: A Look at the Election Impacts

Racially insensitive attitudes toward blacks cost Barack Obama some votes, and, to a lesser extent, negative views on Mormonism hurt Mitt Romney politically. But those are countered by a favorable tilt toward the candidates among Americans who express more awareness of racial discrimination or who hold favorable views of Mormons.

The racial effect is the larger one, showing strongly in views of whether or not blacks are discriminated against. Sixty-two percent of non-blacks in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think blacks in their community don't experience racial discrimination (a view at odds with what most blacks themselves report). Among non-black registered voters who see no such discrimination, Romney leads Obama by 25 percentage points, 59-34 percent. Among non-blacks who do see discrimination, by contrast, Obama leads, 56-37 percent. (Blacks themselves support Obama nearly unanimously.)

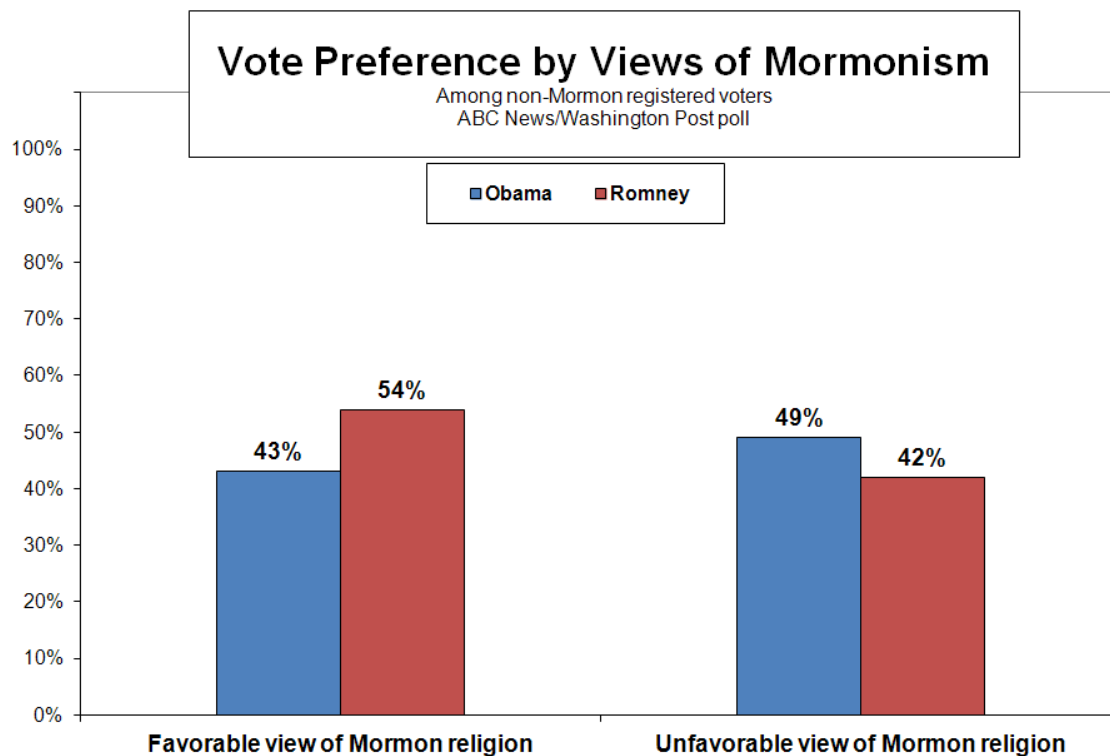


Effects in vote preference also appear among non-blacks based on their views of whether or not blacks in their community try as hard as people of other races to get ahead – 19 percent think not. In that group 34 percent of registered voters support Obama; among those who do think blacks try as hard, he gets 44 percent support.

In a third example, 81 percent of non-blacks in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), say they'd be comfortable with a close relative of theirs marrying a person who is black; fewer, 65 percent, would be “entirely” comfortable with this. Registered voters who are uncomfortable with this idea are more apt to support Romney by a wide margin – 69 percent, vs. 48 percent for him among those who are comfortable with it.

The effects of views on discrimination and trying to get ahead are significant even when other factors – political partisanship, ideology, and demographic characteristics – are held constant. Views on racial intermarriage, however, don't independently predict vote preference.

In terms of religious views, the effect is much less pronounced, but still present. Thirty-one percent of non-Mormon Americans express an unfavorable view of Mormonism, while 38 percent see it favorably (the rest have no opinion). Romney has 54 percent support among registered voters in the positive group, vs. 42 percent among those who see Mormonism negatively, a 12-point gap. This, again, is statistically significant when controlled for other factors.



Comfort among non-Mormons with a relative marrying a Mormon is lower than is comfort among non-blacks with a relative marrying a black person; 74 percent of non-Mormons say they'd be comfortable with a close relative marrying a Mormon, and just 49 percent say they'd be entirely comfortable with it. In this case, there's no effect on vote choices.

The political impact of racial perceptions holds on measures of the candidate beyond vote preference. Views of whether blacks suffer discrimination also predict Obama's job approval rating and assessments of him on personal attributes, including whether or not, compared with Romney, he's more likable, better understands Americans' economic problems, is the stronger leader or is more likely to stand up for what he believes in.

Similarly, views of the Mormon religion also independently predict attitudes toward Romney on some of these same attribute questions – empathy and standing up for his beliefs.

In another measure, of personal exposure, this poll finds that 39 percent of non-blacks say that few or no blacks live in their community. And 53 percent of non-Mormons say there are few or no Mormons where they live. An additional 25 percent don't know.

GROUPS – There are notable group differences in racial perceptions. Compared with non-black conservatives and Republicans, non-black liberals and Democrats are 16 and 13 points, respectively, more likely to say that blacks in their communities experience racial discrimination; and 19 and 12 points more likely to say that they'd be comfortable with a close relative marrying a black person.

Education also matters. Non-blacks with more than a high school diploma are more likely to think that blacks experience discrimination, compared with their less-educated counterparts (38 vs. 28 percent). And college graduates are 9 points more likely to say that blacks try as hard as people of other racial backgrounds, and to say they'd be comfortable with a relative marrying a black person.

Women also are more apt to say they'd feel comfortable with a close relative marrying a black person than men (85 vs. 76 percent). So, by a much wider margin, are adults age 40 or younger compared with seniors, 92 vs. 63 percent.

Opinions on Mormonism differ across groups as well, though not sharply (given that three in ten overall don't have an opinion of the religion). The largest difference is that evangelical Protestants feel the most uneasy about a close relative marrying someone who is Mormon – 62 percent are comfortable with the idea, vs. 78 percent of other adults.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 5-8, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4 points for the full sample (and the same for non-blacks and FOR non-Mormons). The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

All regression analyses described in this report controlled for sex, age, education, income, region, race, partisanship and ideology, along with the variables on racial and religious sentiment. The regressions on racial sensitivity also included interviewer race as a control, while the regressions on religious sensitivity controlled for respondents' religion.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1-20 previously released.

21. Thinking about people of different racial backgrounds, how many blacks, if any, live in your community - a lot, some, just a few, or none?

	--- A lot/some ---			--- Just a few/none ---			
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	Just a few	None	No opinion
7/8/12	59	33	26	38	33	5	3
7/8/12 Non-blacks	58	30	28	39	33	6	3

22. (IF BLACKS IN COMMUNITY) Do you think blacks who live in your community experience racial discrimination, or not? (IF YES) Do you think it happens often, occasionally, or rarely?

Among non-blacks only:

	----- Yes -----				No	
	NET	Often	Occas.	Rarely	No	opinion
7/8/12	34	8	17	9	62	5
1/16/09*	45	14	25	7	53	2
9/14/08	46	16	22	8	51	3
6/15/08	50	16	26	8	47	3
1/20/03	43	10	27	6	54	3

*1/16/09 and previous asked of all. Results exclude those who said (vol.) there were no blacks in their community.

23. (IF NOT BLACK AND BLACKS LIVE IN COMMUNITY) Generally speaking, do you think blacks in your community try as hard as people of other races to get ahead, or don't try as hard? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Try harder/as hard -----				--- Don't try as hard ---			No
	NET	Try harder (vol.)	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
7/8/12	72	*	53	19	19	9	10	9

24. (IF NOT BLACK) Imagine that a close relative of yours marries a person who is black, is that something you'd be entirely comfortable with, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable or entirely uncomfortable?

	----- Comfortable -----			----- Uncomfortable -----			No
	NET	Entirely	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Entirely	opinion

7/8/12 81 65 16 15 8 6 5

25. How much does it matter to you that a candidate for president shares your religious beliefs - does it matter a great deal, somewhat, not so much, or not at all?

	---- Matters -----			-- Does not matter ---			
	NET	Great deal	Smwt	NET	Not so much	Not at all	No opinion
7/8/12	37	18	19	63	15	47	*
3/10/12	42	17	24	58	17	41	1
2/4/12	38	18	20	62	16	46	*

26. Would you say you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Mormon religion? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

Among non-Mormons only:

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
7/8/12	38	12	26	31	17	14	31
12/9/07	42	8	34	40	25	14	19

27. Thinking about people of different religious backgrounds, how many Mormons, if any, live in your community - a lot, some, just a few, or none?

Among non-Mormons only:

	--- A lot/some ---			--- Just a few/none ---			
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	Just a few	None	No opinion
7/8/12	22	9	13	53	29	24	25

28. (IF NOT MORMON) Imagine that a close relative of yours marries a person who is a Mormon, is that something you'd be entirely comfortable with, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable or entirely uncomfortable?

	----- Comfortable -----			----- Uncomfortable -----			No opinion
	NET	Entirely	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Entirely	
7/8/12	74	49	25	20	13	7	6

29-32 held for release.

*** END ***