Political Trust among Black American Democrats and Support for International Institutions

Dr. A. Hannibal Leach
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Discipline Coordinator, African American Studies
Coordinator, Electives Studies
Department of History & Political Science
Fisk University
United States of America

Abstract

Compared to other race groups within the Democratic Party, Black Democrats exhibit higher levels of support for strengthening international institutions. However, there is a dearth of research that seeks to explain the Party's cleavage along racial lines towards this issue. Employing data from the 2010 Global Views national survey by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, this research examines political trust to test how it influences support for international institutions among race groups within the Democratic Party. The results show that within the Democratic Party, different levels of political trust correlate strongly with diverse levels of trust among race groups for supporting strengthening international institutions. The article also illustrates that regardless of the level of political trust Black Democrats exhibit, they are still more likely to demonstrate greater levels of support for strengthening international institutions than co-party members of different races.

In a system of government where the people are charged with choosing their leaders, playing an active role in creating legislation and adhering to an independent judiciary, political trust is essential. Trust increases one's sense of civic duty such as voluntary compliance with laws and paying taxes – each essential functions and basic pillars of orderly democratic government (Tyler and Degoey, 1995; Scholz and Lubbell, 1998). According to Barber (1983) trust increases stability in democracies and lowers citizen angst. Numerous research attests that democracies function better if citizens trust their government (Arneil, 2006; Dahl, 1956; Hetherington, 2005; and Uslaner, 2002). In essence, without political trust democratic society is unlikely to progress (Dahl, 1971). Research on political trust has shown that it affects people's attitudes regarding intergovernmental distributions of power (Hetherington and Nugen, 2001). It also affects the level of support individuals give towards liberal domestic polices and political agendas (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn, 2000; Rudolph and Evans, 2005). Besides this, political trust gives political leaders the flexibility necessary, to place "collective interests ahead of parochial concerns when allocating scarce resources" (Rahn and Rudolph, 2005; Bianco, 1994). A function and responsibility at the heart of any representative governmental system.

Political trust can also affect many facets of a citizen's social, economic, and political life (Miller, 1974). According to Miller, when such support wanes "underlying discontent is the necessary result and the potential for revolutionary alteration of the political system is enhanced" (p.951). A lack of political trust may also cause individuals to view important government actions with suspicion, to lose faith in the policies set forth by government, and to withdraw completely (or at least as much as possible) from politics (Citrin, 1979).

From a domestic standpoint, such a position is a consequential and very costly step in a system of government where power ultimately resides with the people.

An often overlooked but quite important factor to consider however, is how political trust influences citizen's attitudes toward the nation's surfeit of international obligations and commitments? This becomes a uniquely interesting question in regard to African Americans especially when one considers their long and eclectic histories with both domestic and international political structures. As Carol Anderson (2014) majestically chronicles in her insightful book on the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) anticolonial struggles – *Bourgeois Radicals* – African American's international activities has been a sustained process for quite some time. In fact, despite popular thinking that African Americans are too consumed with their own problems at home to think about those of other people's abroad, Anderson highlights their opposition to White supremacy and their anticolonial struggles in South Africa, Eritrea, Libya, Somalia, and even Indonesia in rebuttal to these claims. Her book documents African American's petitions to the US State Department as well as international institutions such as the United Nations in order to promote self-determination for countries seeking freedom from European domination.

Even throughout the Cold War, Anderson notes that the "NAACP risked the wrath of powerful governments, the destruction and ostracism that came with the "epithet" Communist and Communist sympathizer, and their respectable status in society to ensure that the atrocities of the apartheid regime would not go unnoticed" (p. 131).

This article considers how political trust is aligned inside the political party in America that's often thought to be the home of minorities as well as the middle and lower classes – the Democratic Party. Namely, the question I address here is how does political trust affect attitudes toward international institutions among race groups within the Democratic Party? In particular, I focus on whether African Americans share similar attitudes as their co-party members in this regard.

I focus on the political attitudes of Blacks within the Democratic Party for several reasons. First, since around the time of its championing of civil rights during the "second Reconstruction" period, the Democratic Party has been the political party that African Americans have chosen to formally represent their interests at different levels of government (Frymer, 1999). Almost 90 percent of the African American vote in presidential elections over the past several decades has been cast for the Democratic candidate. Although there are many African Americans that occupy prominent positions within the Republican Party, their dismally low numbers are more reminiscent of tokenism rather than substantive representation. The second reason has to do with practical considerations. Because many national public opinion surveys contain only a trace number of minorities, the number of minorities within minority groups (Black Republicans in particular) are usually too low for scholars to conduct any meaningful examination about them. As Table 1 shows, of the 248 African Americans included in this study, only 18 (or 7 percent) identify with the Republican Party in comparison to 196 (or 79 percent) that identify with the Democratic Party. Too often scholars assume public opinion to mean Black public opinion as well. When researchers take the time to examine Black public opinion properly however, in many cases they find that it sharply diverges from the broader public. I assume here that Black public opinion is a distinct phenomenon and that our understanding of it may benefit from independent scholarly focus and attention. For comparative purposes, I observe White and Hispanic attitudes in several areas throughout this article.

Table 1. Summary Statistics of Political Parties

	Black	White	Hispanic
N	248	1,970	156
Democrat	196	712	116
% Democrat	79	36	52
Republican	18	841	44
% Republican	7	43	20

This study makes five significant contributions to the study of American Politics, African American Studies, and International Relations. First, it adds to the growing body of research that concludes the relationship between race and international affairs is more profound and nuanced than depicted in early work on such topics. Second, although views toward foreign policy is an individual and personal process, it is also significantly influenced and shaped by one's context and sociological factors.

Hence, while studying public opinion towards international affairs, it is necessary to consider both the individual and the political/sociological factors that affect its development. Third, the theoretical argument presented here explains variation in attitudes toward international institutions across the Democratic Party's national landscape. Fourth, I highlight how individuals perceive issues, shapes how they understand their own personal interests and identify their preferences.

Fifth, I add to the literature on political trust showing a unique relationship between trust in domestic institutions and attitudes toward international institutions.

In what follows, I briefly outline the relevant literatures concerning political trust and Black identity politics, and also describe the relationship between the two. I then develop a model incorporating my assumptions as they relate to attitudes toward international institutions. Next, I present my empirical analysis of the relationship between political trust and public opinion among Black Democrats when it comes to supporting international institutions. I conclude with a discussion of my findings' larger implications for the influence of domestic political context on mass viewpoints related to international affairs.

Political Trust

Political trust (or mistrust) can manifest itself in many forms, however, I follow Avery's (2007) example and adopt the definition of political trust as, "a basic evaluative orientation toward the government based on individuals' normative expectations" (Hetherington, 1998; Miller, 1974). Since at least the early 1970s however, scholars have attributed political trust as emanating from either an evaluation of the political system (Miller, 1974), or of an analysis concerning incumbent office-holders/political leaders (Citrin, 1974). A spirited intellectual and empirical debate thus ensued since this early scholarship, and researchers still seem to be quite transfixed with uncovering the source of political trust in democratic systems. For instance, political trust may be influenced by people's appraisals that public officials are dishonest (Black and Black, 1994). Abney and Hutcheson's (1981) research on political trust in the city of Atlanta, GA inched us closer to the understanding that political trust is at least somewhat based on the type of officeholders that are in power. Their research demonstrated that after the election of a Black mayor in Atlanta (from a white mayor), the political trust of Blacks within the city increased relative to the level of political trust exhibited by Blacks at the national level. They also showed that following this election, there was a decline in political trust among White residents of the city in comparison to Whites at the national level. Research by Keele (2005) also illustrates how political leaders matter for political trust. He shows that partisan's level of political trust fluctuates with the parties' changing electoral fortunes, and in particular, according to which party occupies the White House. He looks at levels of political trust between 1964-2002. This is a useful timeframe to examine because both Democratic and Republican presidents occupied the White House throughout this period. Democratic partisans were shown to be more trusting of government when a Democratic president occupied the White House, and vice-versa with Republican partisans. Keele bases his argument on the idea that the political process, or institution, is held constant when changes in leadership occurs.

As an illustration of how an evaluation of the political system may affect one's level of political trust, Avery (2006) conducted a study centered on perhaps one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions in decades – Bush v. Gore (2000). Using the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey, Avery was able to analyze the effects that this Supreme Court decision, as well as other leading variables (race and partisanship in particular) had on political trust. Interestingly, the study showed that although Whites did not exhibit a significant change in their level of political trust following the decision in Bush v. Gore, African-Americans exhibited a significant decline in political trust after the decision. There was a decrease in political trust among White Democrats (Democrats were the losers of the Court's decision), but this loss was offset by an increase in the level of political trust among White Republicans. A major point of this study was the role that race played in the level of political trust. African-Americans of each major political party (Republican/Democrat) exhibited declines in political trust following the Court's decision. As noted, this was not the case for Whites. Thus, and as the authors mention, "despite the conventional wisdom, levels of political trust among whites and African Americans respond differently to changes in the political environment that cannot be explained by differences in partisanship or evaluations of the president, the economy, or satisfaction with public policy" (Avery, 2007, p.340). Inappropriate influence of conflicting priorities and special interests have also been attributed for generally low levels of political trust (Blendon et al. 1997). Research by Hetherington and Globetti (2002) also demonstrates that people's level of trust is affected by particular types of government policies.

Namely, policies that may negatively affect an individual while simultaneously promoting the benefit of others, may cause levels of political trust among the adversely affected group to decrease.

With political sovereignty divided between the federal government and the states, and with citizens routinely adhering to the dictates of governing institutions from at least two different levels, scholars have also inquired into how political trust operates in regards to our unique federal system. Gershtenson and Plane (2010) look into this notion by examining levels of political trust that citizens in the state of Kentucky, place in the federal, state, and local levels of government.

Utilizing survey data from the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center (UKSRC), they find that on the whole, citizens place the most amount of political trust in local government. They also show that citizens have the highest amount of approval for their State Supreme Court. Weinschenk and Helpap (2015) model trust as a function of 9 independent variables in an effort to examine which factors influence political trust at the state level. They show that state fiscal conditions, unemployment, corruption, and state ideology have statistically significant effects on trust. Interestingly, they also show that polarization was not a statistically significant predictor of trust. This finding seems to go against the argument that political trust is largely predicated on political leaders.

Despite the rich literature concerning race and political trust however, only little research has been done which directly and empirically assesses the role that political trust may play in influencing the attitudes of race groups toward important governing entities at the international level. This paper seeks to fill this gap. There are a number of theoretical reasons to expect why specific elements stemming from race may inform people's level of confidence and proclivity to rely on international institutions. In the following sections, I develop a set of hypotheses about features of race (in particular African Americans) and political trust and their relationship to ideas regarding international institutions. I then test these hypotheses using data provided by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. A discussion of the findings and concluding remarks follows the results.

Black Identity and International Affairs

A factor that has been associated with influencing the attitudes of African Americans and other race/ethnic groups in terms of international affairs is the idea of group consciousness. Group consciousness has been defined in many ways by scholars, but its most common components usually consist of: "group identification (the individual identifies as a member of a racial minority group), polar affect (prefer interactions with the members of his or her racial group), polar power (compares the group's status and resources to that of other racial groups), and systematic blame (primarily blames a discrimination system for his or her racial group's position" (Wright Austin et al., 2012, p. 631). Among African-Americans, shared historical experiences rooted primarily in the Transatlantic slave trade, and further institutionalized discrimination practiced even after emancipation, helped to foster and exacerbate a heightened sense of group consciousness. Clemons (2010) also shows that African American's long history of repression has had a unique and important effect on the nature of the group's participation in global affairs. Scholarship on group consciousness suggests a positive relationship between group membership and political participation. The more connected people feel to their particular ethnic and social groups, the more likely they are to play an active role in politics. This idea is perhaps best expressed by Dawson (1994). In *Behind The Mule*, Dawson articulates the notion of "linked fate." Put simply, linked fate can be thought of as one's perception that an individual's fate is linked to that of the group (Dawson, 1994). Applying this concept more broadly, perhaps African-American's support for international institutions, can be seen as a mechanism through which they can more formally, manifest their support for other members of the African diaspora. For example, in a famous speech before the UN, former Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah, advocated strongly for African-Americans to adopt and embrace the ideals of Pan-Africanism. African-American leaders such as DuBois, Ralph Bunche, and many others, traveled widely throughout Africa and Europe to meet with leaders and other leading activists in efforts to advance the cause of Blacks both at home and abroad.

The concept of group consciousness is important in framing any discussion on the domestic and foreign policy attitudes of African-Americans. Also, because African-Americans overwhelmingly support the Democratic Party, evaluating the foreign policy attitudes of the Party as a whole yields significant benefits in an attempt to understand the role that race may play in the formation of public opinion on world affairs.

The literature linking public opinion to party preferences and policy outputs is robust, but not complete. Although public opinion studies have explored divisions in foreign policy preferences among many of the different segments (class, gender, etc.) throughout American society, analyses on public appraisals of international issues often neglect the racial and ethnic group dimensions of these evaluations. Public opinion literature also reveals that people's perceptions about government policy are greatly influenced by their partisan preferences (Zaller, 1992, Bartels, 2002). We know much less, however, about the foundations of foreign policy opinions that derive from an individual's ethno-racial group ties. Research by Feldman and Zaller (1992) show that most Americans can easily draw upon several elements of the U.S. political tradition in informing their attitudes toward government policy. As many scholars note, however, African Americans share a particular history that is quite distinct from other racial groups in the US (See Plummer, 1996; Shingles, 1981, Dawson, 1994). Though racial groups share certain similarities, their historical background may play a role in how they come to view the world. For this reason, I briefly outline the empirical literature on African-American's worldviews and attitudes toward American foreign policy.

In his work on the worldviews of American Southerners, Hero (1965) found that African-Americans displayed little concern for international issues. This finding, Hero pointed-out, was mainly due to a lack of political information, and interest in foreign affairs relative to other races within the region. In comparison to Southern Whites, Hero noted that African-Americans demonstrated higher levels of isolationism on world affairs, and also a general proclivity to focus on keeping resources at home.

Hero's findings did reveal that Southern Blacks tended to pay particular attention to news stories concerning developments in Sub-Saharan Africa. Twenty years later, Walton's *Invisible Politics* (1985), showed that on global issues African-Americans were both interested and informed. Evidence from his research also demonstrated that African-Americans were generally favorably disposed to give foreign aid to countries within Africa. Smith and Seltzer (2000) found that African-Americans are less likely to endorse the use of the U.S. military to solve international disputes. Stanford (1997) shows that African Americans have a long history of not only concerning themselves with foreign policy, but also of actively striving to influence it through the use of citizen diplomacy. She defines citizen diplomacy as the "diplomatic efforts of private citizens in the international arena for the purpose of achieving a specific objective of accomplishing constituency goals" (Stanford, 1997, p.7). According to Walton, Smith, and Wallace (2000), African American citizen diplomats have usually been: a) well-known domestic leaders, b) spokespersons for a specific issue, c) persons wanting to activate world public opinion, and d) citizens who want to reshape American foreign policy. Tillery (2011) demonstrated that just like any other leaders in the public arena, African-American elites approach foreign policy strategically. Citing evidence from roll call votes on the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) within the U.S. House of Representatives, he argued that African-American legislators supported this legislation in accordance with the views of their respective constituencies. Far from the view of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) being an international representative of world Blacks, his work showed that the CBC responded primarily to the needs of their own respective districts.

Solidarity

At the international level group consciousness among Black Americans may manifest itself in the form of solidarity (Durant and Sparrow, 1997). Solidarity that is, with oppressed peoples, the economically exploited, the politically powerless, and Black solidarity with African peoples including those scattered throughout the African diaspora. Blum (2007) points out that there are three different bases for solidarity: identity groups, shared experiences, and political commitments. As he describes, "Not all members of the same identity group necessarily share the same experiences of adversity; nor do they, nor those who do share those experiences, necessarily share political values about what to do about that adversity" (p. 69). With identity-based solidarity, Blum contends that mere shared identity, and not particularly the perspectives or experiences associated with it, is the basis for solidarity. In this sense, then, just being African American, Muslim, or gay may prompt one to feel solidarity with that particular group(s). This is not to say, however, that all members of an identity group will share the same sense of solidarity. Some members may identify with a group to a large extent, some to a lesser extent, and still some may not identify with a group at all. The absence of identification, Blum writes, means an absence of shared connections and thus little solidarity with the group in question. On the other hand, "Some persons feel a kind of connection, attachment, and even loyalty, to the abstract whole group that they may not to concrete members in known groups" (Blum, 2007, p. 58).

The second basis for solidarity is shared experiences or something undergone by each member of the group (Blum, 2007). Not every group member will undergo the same experience or to the same level of magnitude or intensity as other members. One example is discrimination. For instance, people of minority groups may experience discrimination, but they may experience it in different ways, forms, and shapes than other members of the group. For example, Black Americans under Jim Crow, the people of India under the British Raj, and South Africans under Apartheid each encountered discrimination. Though the magnitude of each form of discrimination may have been different, each group suffered greatly and did so at the hands of Whites. Thus, the African/Asian Bandung Conference and many Pan African Congresses were created as a way to illustrate and cement solidarity among the world's people of color. The third basis for solidarity Blum mentions is political commitments (political values and principles are also included in this third group). Solidarity can center on limited or large-scale political goals. Membership includes people of different identities and experiences but who share similar political commitments. Black internationalists often link their struggle for freedom at home with freedom struggles against foreign occupation, economic exploitation, and political/social injustice abroad. As Carol Anderson notes, NAACP often utilized the United Nation's political structure to help bring justice not only to Black Americans, but also to those suffering under imperialism and colonialism abroad.

Malcolm X would also bring his case against the American government before the United Nations and other international forums to place American crimes against its citizens on display before the world and to seek justice. Thus, this mode of solidarity is based on shared values such as notions of freedom, peace, and equality.
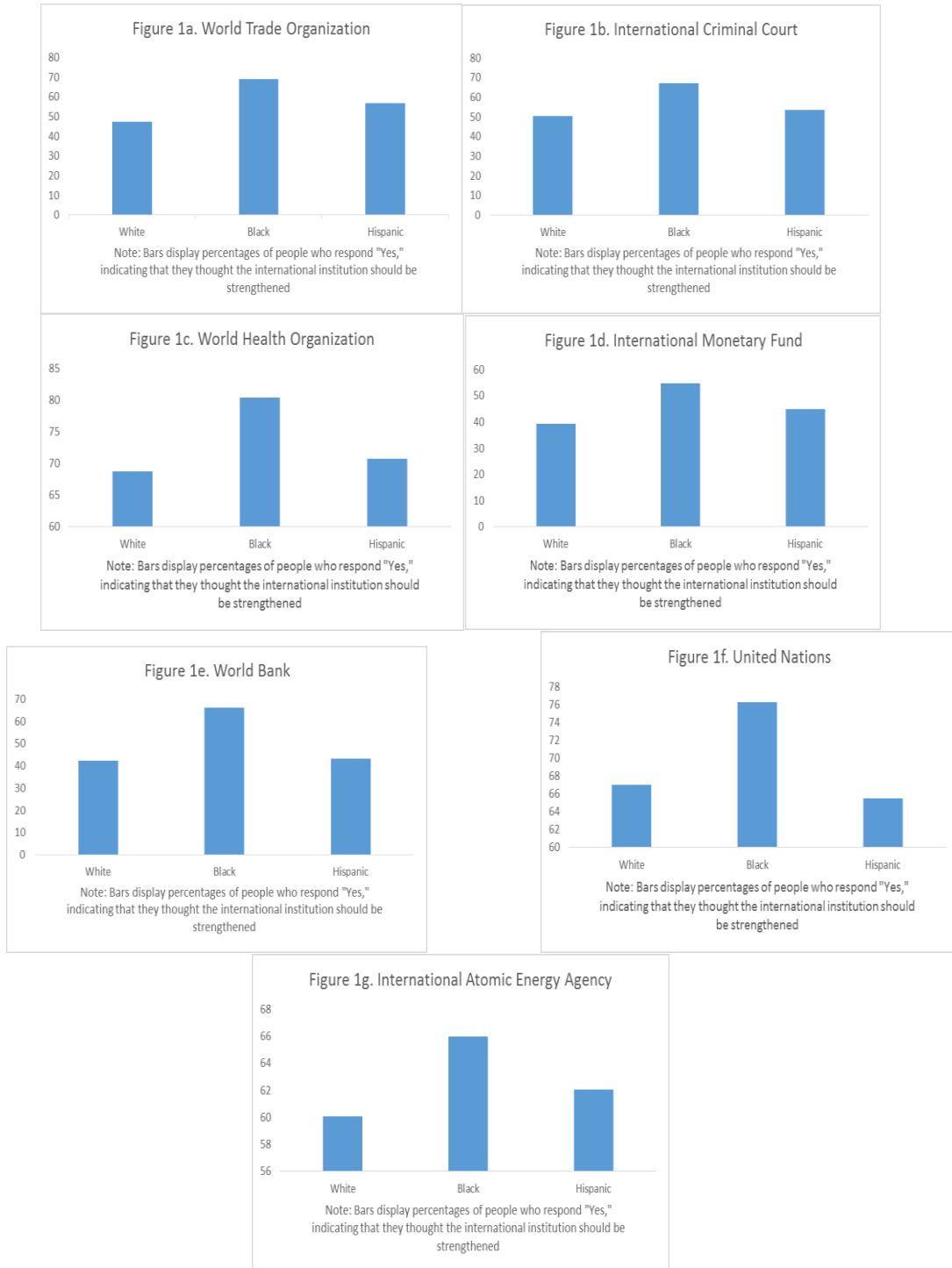
Understanding that the world's superpowers are predominately White, African Americans often look to international institutions as a way to serve as a check against the abuses of imperialism and exploitation. Even though many of the most popular and powerful international institutions are predominately headed by Western powers, they nonetheless provide a voice to peoples and states traditionally excluded from international decision-making and also a forum to engage formally within the international system.

This project seeks to advance our knowledge of the public opinion towards foreign affairs literature by exposing points of departure in attitudes among racial/ethnic groups within one of America's most impactful political institutions—the Democratic Party. In examining some of the raw data on how members within the Democratic Party feel toward strengthening international institutions, an interesting and revealing cleavage emerges. The 2010 Global Views study conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, asks respondents the following question:

> "Some say that because of the increasing interaction between countries, we need to strengthen international institutions to deal with shared problems. Others say that this would only create bigger, unwieldy bureaucracies. Here are some international institutions. For each one, please tell me if it needs to be strengthened or not: (World Trade Organization, International Criminal Court, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations, and the International Atomic Energy Agency)?"

As Figures 1a-1g reveal, the importance of race seems to be an underlying characteristic of the particular cleavage under discussion. A quick glance at Figures 1a-1g illuminates how divided race groups are toward strengthening international institutions within the Democratic Party. In particular, it shows how support from African Americans far outpaces that of other race groups within the Party. For each of the major international institutions included for this examination, the percentage of support among African-Americans for increasing its strength is well over 50 per cent. Additionally, although support for these institutions were also high among Whites and Hispanics, their level of support never surpasses that of African-Americans.

Figure 1. Support for Strengthening International Institutions within the Democratic Party, by Race

Figure 1a. World Trade Organization

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1b. International Criminal Court

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1c. World Health Organization

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1d. International Monetary Fund

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1e. World Bank

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1f. United Nations

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Figure 1g. International Atomic Energy Agency

Note: Bars display percentages of people who respond "Yes," indicating that they thought the international institution should be strengthened

Data and Methods

Based on the literature reviewed about the antecedents of African American political trust as well as the consequences of political trust in general, I construct a proposed model to examine the international implications of political trust. I hypothesize that Black Democrats will exhibit the most support to strengthen international institutions relative to other race groups within the Democratic Party. Race not only affects political trust among Blacks, but it also influences their attitudes toward international institutions. I also hypothesize that support for international institutions varies according to level of political trust.

In 2010, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) contacted a national sample of American households in order to better understand the foreign policy attitudes of the American people. Households for this "Global Views" study were selected by using random-digit dialing (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The Global Views 2010 survey is ideal for this study because of the extensive depth and range of foreign policy topics in which it covered. Respondents were asked over 100 questions on various issues regarding world affairs, U.S. international policy, attitudes toward other countries, among other topics. The report also included questions covering respondent's perceptions and attitudes toward various aspects of U.S. foreign policy. The Global Views 2010 survey is based on the results of a nationwide survey of 2,596 adults conducted between June 11 and June 22, 2010 (see Global Views 2010 for more details).

To test the hypotheses, I use logit regression on attitudes toward strengthening international institutions by race and level of political trust among race groups who identify with the Democratic Party.
Dependent Variables

The dependent variables are answers respondents give toward a battery of questions regarding some of the most well-known and influential international institutions in the world. Namely, the question operationalizing "Support for International Institutions," apply to the following international institutions: the World Trade Center, the International Criminal Court, the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations, and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Table 2 lists the specific question wording and coding.

Table 2 List of Questions Operationalizing Support for International Institutions Taken from the 2010 Global Views Study by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Support for Strengthening International Institutions	Some say that because of the increasing interaction between countries, we need to strengthen international institutions to deal with shared problems. Others say that this would only create bigger, unwieldy bureaucracies. Here are some international institutions. For each one, please tell me if it needs to be strengthened or not: 1. The World Trade Organization (WTO) 2. The International Criminal Court (ICC) 3. The World Health Organization (WHO) 4. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) 5. The World Bank (WB) 6. The United Nations (UN) 7. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) I recode each response as follows: 1= Yes, needs to be strengthened 0= No, doesn't need to be strengthened

Independent Variables

Race: One independent variable in this project is race. Race is accounted for by controlling for the particular race/ethnic group that each respondent identifies as belonging to. The particular race groups observed in this study among the Democratic Party are: White, Black, Hispanic, and other (Asian, etc.). Each race group is accounted for with dichotomous variables with White Democrats serving as the omitted (reference) group.

Political Trust: Another independent variable in this article are responses to a specific question on trust in government. Namely, the question operationalizing "Trust in Government" is: "How much do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?" The answers are re-scaled in the following manner: *High Political Trust*=0 Just about always and Most of the time, *Medium Political Trust*=1 Only some of the time, *Low Political Trust*=2 Never

Results

I discuss now a few summary statistics of political trust, race, and partisanship. To do so, I use both simple and partial correlation coefficients. I use simple correlations to examine the association between political trust and race, and partial correlation to measure the remaining association between the two when the contribution of partisanship is taken into account. The coefficient of correlation (r) varies from 0 (no association between independent and dependent variables) to 1.0 (one variable perfectly predicts the other). Positive correlations indicate a positive relationship while negative correlations indicate an inverse relationship. Keep in mind that although these measures help us to determine strength and direction of association between variables, correlations do not prove causation, tell us which variable is the "effect", nor tell us why variables are associated.

The coefficient of correlation between political trust and being White is –.16. This indicates a weak negative association between being White and political trust. In comparison, the coefficient of correlations between political trust and being Black is .15, a weak positive relationship. Interestingly, when I introduce controls for partisanship these associations become more nuanced. The partial correlation between political trust and being White is –.11 when Democratic partisanship is controlled. The measure is .11 between political trust and being Black when Democratic partisanship is controlled. A quick glance at the Republican side show similar results. The partial correlation between political trust and being White is –.12 when Republican partisanship is controlled. For Blacks the partial correlation is .12 when controlling for Republican partisanship. Thus, the tendency for political trust to decline among Whites does not disappear when we take into account partisanship, nor does it fail to increase among Blacks. These results seem to reverse decades of empirical research on political trust among the American people. Namely that Blacks are less trusting of the national government than Whites. These findings are confirmed however once we take into consideration the level of racism which still permeates the country's social fabric and also that president Barack Obama – the nation's first Black president – was in office during the time of the study. Thus, perhaps having a Black president in the White House increases political trust among Blacks and causes it to decline among Whites. Now that we have briefly outlined correlations between political trust, partisanship, and race, the question still remains, how does political trust operate in relationship to attitudes concerning international affairs?

Table 3 Predictive Margins of Race and Political Trust on Attitudes toward Supporting International Institutions

	WTO	ICC	WHO	IMF	WB	UN	IAEA
High White Trust	0.56***	0.76***	0.46*	0.76***	0.62***	0.61**	0.61***
	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Mid White Trust	0.58***	0.55***	0.77***	0.48***	0.48***	0.72***	0.62***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Low White Trust	0.54***	0.55***	0.72***	0.39***	0.44***	0.72***	0.63***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High Black Trust	0.73***	0.84***	0.67***	0.85**	0.88***	0.68***	0.73***
	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.21)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Mid Black Trust	0.74***	0.66	0.88***	0.63***	0.70***	0.78***	0.73***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Low Black Trust	0.72***	0.66***	0.85***	0.54***	0.67***	0.78***	0.74***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)
High Oth. Race Trust	0.56**	0.82***	0.66***	0.80**	0.64***	0.67***	0.51*
	(0.25)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)
Mid Oth. Race Trust	0.58***	0.64	0.88***	0.54***	0.50***	0.77***	0.51***
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.13)
Low Oth. Race Trust	0.54***	0.64***	0.85***	0.45***	0.46***	0.77***	0.53***
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
High Hisp. Trust	0.74	0.79***	0.55**	0.80***	0.76***	0.60***	0.84***
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.19)	(0.18)	(0.23)	(0.13)
Mid Hisp. Trust	0.75***	0.60**	.82***	0.54***	0.64***	0.71***	0.84***
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.07)
Low Hisp. Trust	0.72	0.60***	0.78***	0.45***	0.61***	0.71***	0.85***
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.07)
N	278	278	284	274	276	284	281

Standard Errors in parentheses. Note: *** p <.01, ** p < .01, * p < .05

I now turn to Table 3 which reports the statistical results of the model that test my main hypotheses. This table presents estimates of the average marginal impact of race and political trust on attitudes toward strengthening international institutions among Democratic Party identifiers based on the full logit model results in the Appendix (available upon request). Looking at each race group within the Party, we see that almost across the board African American Democrats are more likely to support strengthening international institutions. At each level of political trust, Black Democrats have a greater possibility of supporting the listed international institutions than other race groups within the Party. Support for strengthening international institutions among Blacks with high political trust range from 67 to 88 per cent, for Whites the range is from 46 to 76 per cent, for Hispanics the range is from 55 to 84 per cent, and for other races the range is from 51 to 82 per cent. Looking now at race groups with medium political trust, support for strengthening international institutions among Blacks range from 66 to 88 per cent, among Whites the range is from 44 to 77 per cent, among Hispanics the range is from 54 to 84 per cent and among other race groups the range is from 50 to 88 per cent. The results show a similar trend in regards to race groups with low political trust in that their level of support each falls well-below that of Black Democrats.

Among those with low political trust, support for strengthening international institutions among Blacks range from 54 to 88 per cent, among Whites the range is from 39 to 72 per cent, among Hispanics the range is from 45 to 85 per cent, and for other races the range is from 46 to 85 per cent. Blacks with high political trust have a statistically significant higher probability than other race groups within the Democratic Party to exhibit support for strengthening 5 of 7 international institutions listed (the ICC, WHO, IMF, WB, and UN respectively). Black Democrats with medium political trust have a statistically significant higher probability than other party members to exhibit support for strengthening 5 of 7 international institutions listed (the ICC, WHO, IMF, WB, and UN respectively). Turning now to those with low political trust, the probability to exhibit support for strengthening international institutions among Black Democrats is significantly higher than other race groups in 3 of 7 institutions listed (the ICC, IMF, and UN), and is tied for highest in two 2 of 7 (the WTO and WHO).

Table 3 also demonstrates that support within the Democratic Party to strengthen the capacity of international institutions varies by the particular institution in question as well as by levels of political trust. For instance, in the category of high political trust, each race group has a statistically and significantly higher probability of exhibiting support for strengthening the ICC, IMF, and the WB than those at other levels of political trust. Whites and Hispanics with medium levels of political trust have a higher probability of exhibiting support for strengthening the WTO, WHO, and the UN than members of their race at other levels of political trust. Blacks and other races with medium levels of political trust have a higher probability of exhibiting support for strengthening the WTO and WHO than other members of their race at different political trust levels. Looking at those with low levels of political trust, each race group has a higher probability of exhibiting support to strengthen the capacity of the IAEA than other members of their race groups at different levels of political trust.

Summary and Conclusion

Because adequate samples of Black Americans were often excluded from many previous national surveys on public opinion and foreign policy, little empirical research existed to fully comprehend the significant contributions to the discourse and formulation of US international policy. Many have taken this sparsely explored research area to mean that Blacks are largely unconcerned with issues outside of the domestic sphere. In other words, because there is little research on Black public opinion and foreign policy, the conclusion is that Blacks are not interested in US foreign policy or world affairs. Due to the racist implementation of previous "national" surveys on public opinion, even some Black scholars have been led to concur in the veracity of this unfortunate premise. As this paper shows however, such thinking is not only foolhardy, but it is also very far from the truth. The past several decades has witnessed an abundance of scholarship, research, and informed discourse on African American experiences and attitudes related to US foreign policy, international institutions, and global affairs generally. With the availability of newer research tools and technologies, the release of many archival records, and a renewed interest in Black involvement with world affairs, scholars have made significant headway in increasing our knowledge about African Americans in this domain.

The aim of this article is to address a major limitation in the scholarship on political trust and public opinion towards international affairs. Namely, the lack of research seeking to understand the connections between political trust and citizen attitudes toward international institutions and structures of authority. Seeking to fill this gap, I sought in this article to develop and test hypotheses equipped to broaden our understanding of political trust, public opinion, and political attitudes toward some of the world's most politically important international institutions.

A major criticism of the political trust literature dealing with African Americans is that it often fails to account for its implications for any other area besides domestic politics. Thus, some lament the research agenda in this area has been too narrow (Magnum, 2012). I broaden the scope of analysis by focusing on the international implications of domestic political trust. I do so from a unique standpoint in that I focus my examination within a political institution long revered as a major voice for minorities and working-class citizens – the Democratic Party.

There are several take-aways to be noted from this analysis. Perhaps the most obvious is the widespread support among Black Democrats to exhibit support for international institutions. This sense of internationalism may seem strange for a group that is not always viewed as holding coherent or distinct international political attitudes, but once one considers the long legacy of African American involvement in world affairs coupled with the group's history of domestic oppression, it becomes easier to understand the context in which African Americans are more willing than their compatriots to support increasing the capacity of international institutions.

Another takeaway is my finding that support for international institutions varies by the particular institution in question and levels of political trust. In thinking of Jentlesen's (1992) "pretty prudent public," his thesis that Americans are strategic in what they choose to support in terms of foreign policy and international affairs seems to hold here. For instance, those with the lowest levels of political trust within each race group exhibited the highest probability to support strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency. If you have low trust in the national government, then it makes sense to support a robust international institution dedicated to the integrity of nuclear weapons. This illustrates that people rationally assess the type of support they choose to exhibit towards international institutions.

The approach adopted in this article is important because although views toward international affairs is a personal process, political and sociological factors such as political trust greatly influences and shapes this process. Because public attitudes and their emotional status conditions how public officials respond in the international arena, it is important for public leaders to also understand the forces which shape mass opinions. This article takes us one step closer in this direction.

A weakness of this research concerns the limitation and availability of important data from which to conduct a more meaningful investigation. Many of the major national surveys do not contain nationally representative samples of minorities, making it very difficult to confidently generalize important findings. The Global Views 2010 data seeks to compensate for this handicap by including more minority respondents. Even in this however, I would have been more comfortable if I had access to an oversample of African Americans and other minorities in the dataset.

Future research seeking to delve deeper into the issues raised in this article could expand the range of international issues addressed. For instance, though I examine attitudes toward international institutions, I do not believe that the effects of political trust for Blacks in general are limited here. Future scholarship could apply my approach to attitudes related to American foreign policy decisions, actions undertaken on behalf of world bodies, etc. The idea being to fully investigate the effects that political trust may have on our thoughts and behaviors as American citizens and members of the world community.

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