The Effect of Interracial Peers on Political Preferences: Evidence from Schools in the United States*

Sebastian Garcia-Torres†

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Abstract

This study examines the long-lasting influence of Black peers in school on their classmates' future political preferences. Using comprehensive panel data from a representative sample of US school students tracked over time, I exploit quasi-random variation in the proportion of Black peers across different cohorts within the same school. The results indicate that a higher proportion of same-gender Black peers is associated with a lower likelihood of developing conservative political preferences later in life. I focus on political preferences during a period in the US when race was a particularly salient issue—namely, the presidential election of Barack Obama—emphasizing the significance of issue salience in shaping peer effects. The findings are consistent with mechanisms emphasized by the common ingroup identity model, whereby sustained interaction in a shared school environment may foster a re-categorization of racial groups into a common social identity, facilitating the transmission of political attitudes.

Keywords: Political Economy, Political Preferences, Peer Effects, Racial Identity, Education

JEL Codes: P16, D72, I21, J15

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†Harvard University. Email: sgarciatorres@hks.harvard.edu.

1 Introduction

Political preferences are fundamental determinants of individual behavior, interpersonal relations, and professional decisions. Particularly, in light of recent global trends showing an increase in support for extreme political tendencies in the US (Callander & Carbajal, 2022) and other countries around the world (Boxell et al., 2020), it is of great interest to understand how these political preferences are shaped.

People's political preferences are influenced by a wide array of factors, which can be divided into: *(i)* individual characteristics, such as race, gender, and familiar background; *(ii)* institutional and historical components, e.g., slavery (Acharya et al., 2016), trade (Autor et al., 2020), market liberalization (Grosjean & Senik, 2011), or acts of terrorism (Gould & Klor, 2010); and *(iii)* environmental drivers, which are defined as a person's geographical and interpersonal surroundings (Nathan & Sands, 2023). The impact of exposure to racial diversity (Brown et al., 2021; Schindler & Westcott, 2021) and interracial peers on political preferences (Billings et al., 2021; Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021; Polipciuk et al., 2021) is a particularly intriguing aspect in the study of environmental determinants, as the dual layer of potential polarization, involving both race and politics, adds additional complexity to the possible channels of political transmission.

The focus of this work is closely related to this latter determinant, as I explore the causal effect of exposure to racial diversity during adolescence—i.e., the effect of the share of Black peers during school—on future political preferences. More precisely, I am interested in understanding the direction in which contact with these school peers might change their classmates' future political views, meaning if people are later on more likely to politically lean toward conservative, center, or liberal ideologies. This question has received limited attention so far, with the exception of Billings et al. (2021), who find that the share of Black peers reduces the likelihood of individuals' affiliation to the Republican Party. In my study—in contrast to Billings et al. (2021)—I concentrate on a period in American politics in which race was an especially salient topic (Parker, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010), namely during the election and first year of Barack Obama's presidency. Herewith, the research setting in my work addresses how the political salience of a topic can influence the political behavior of the people in this time frame (Page & Shapiro, 1983). Also closely related to my research is recent work by Polipciuk et al. (2021), who study the effect of interracial cohorts—not specifically Black peers—on future political participation and party identification, and find that exposure to a more racially diverse cohort in high school increases the likelihood of voting participation in the future, but has no significant effect on the party identity of individuals.

Methodically, to overcome the problem of endogenous selection into schools, which could potentially bias the results of my examination, the empirical approach employed here exploits idiosyncratic variation in the share of Black students across different cohorts of students within a

school, an approach first proposed by Hoxby (2000) and subsequently used extensively to study causal peer effects (see, for example, Lavy & Schlosser, 2011; Lépine & Estevan, 2021; Merlino et al., 2019; Mouganie & Wang, 2020). I rely on data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a longitudinal and nationally representative survey of US adolescents in grades 7th-12th, which started in 1994–1995.[1] In those years, Add Health collected data on various demographic characteristics, including race, for all students in these grades in 134 schools across the country, and has since then followed a core sample of these students (around 20,000) longitudinally for more than 20 years, in five subsequent survey waves. I concentrate on the political preferences from non-Black students expressed in Wave IV, which was conducted between 2008 and 2009, when they were between 25 and 34 years old, meaning most of them were likely to already have had defined political views (Chan & Clayton, 2006; Trevor, 1999).

My main contribution in this paper is to provide evidence that the racial composition of a person's school cohort, and particularly the share of same-gender Black peers, has a long-lasting effect on their future political preferences. In particular, I find that an increase by one within-school standard deviation in this share shifts the political preferences of their non-Black classmates, from conservative to liberal, by 1.8 percentage points. This work also finds that the likelihood of their identifying as overall conservative decreases by 0.8 percentage points (or 3.1% of the mean), and of identifying as very conservative by 0.49 percentage points, which represents 11% of the mean. These results are robust to a series of alternative specifications and controls. I also find suggestive evidence that the share of same-gender Black peers is positively correlated with a higher probability to self-identify as overall liberal, and very liberal. I interpret these effects of Black peers as a significant weakening of right-wing conservative ideologies rather than a strengthening of extreme liberal views, which aligns with previous work by Billings et al. (2021).

Regarding possible mechanisms underlying these results, I first show that the effect of Black peers on future political attitudes cannot be explained by an effect of these peers on an array of future outcomes of individuals, including education, income level, criminal history, or political participation. Second, I present suggestive evidence that my results can be explained under the main predictions of the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993), which posits that sustained interaction within a shared social environment can lead individuals to re-categorize members of different racial groups as part of a common ingroup, thereby reducing intergroup bias and facilitating the transmission of attitudes and beliefs.

My work contributes to three fields in current literature. First, it relates to the research area of political socialization and the formation of political preferences, in particular to the literature on social environmental factors (Nathan & Sands, 2023), and the implications of race and inter-racial contact on political views (Acharya et al., 2016; Billings et al., 2021; Cáceres-Delpiano et

[1] See Harris (2013) for an overview of the study design and accomplishments of Add Health.

al., 2021; Polipciuk et al., 2021; Schindler & Westcott, 2021). The social environment has been widely studied, i.a., in research focused on the effect population ageing has on conservative political preferences (Ahlfeldt et al., 2022; Cattaneo & Wolter, 2009), on how social media and the digital environment play a major role in driving individuals to strongly polarized political ideologies (Levy, 2021) and engaging in political protest (Enikolopov et al., 2020), or how the political preferences of natives are shaped by exposure to refugees and migrants. In a study of city districts in Hamburg, Otto and Steinhardt (2014) find that higher exposure to migrants leads people, on average, to higher support for conservative and xenophobic parties, a result that closely resembles findings in other settings (see, for example, Alesina & Tabellini, 2022; Dustmann et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017). An environmental determinant of political preferences that has remained less studied is the effect of exposure to Black people—or to other racial and ethnic minorities— within one country. Noteworthy exceptions are recent studies by Billings et al. (2021), Brown et al. (2021), Cáceres-Delpiano et al. (2021), and Schindler and Westcott (2021). While Cáceres-Delpiano et al. (2021) focus on the impact of intergroup contact on political preferences—using evidence from military service in Spain—and find that exposure to diverse groups in military service leads to more favorable attitudes towards political parties promoting national unity, Billings et al. (2021) and Brown et al. (2021) concentrate on the long-term effects of exposure to Black people in the US, and report that early-life exposure leads White people to embrace less conservative and more pro-Democratic political views, results that closely resemble new evidence from the presence of African American soldiers in the UK by Schindler and Westcott (2021).

A second field to which this work adds to is the determinants of the 2008 presidential election and the racial political factors which led to those outcomes (Mas & Moretti, 2009; Tesler & Sears, 2010). As an extensive body of literature has demonstrated, there was a marked shift in the political climate in the US leading up to the election of Barack Obama in 2008, where race once again became one of the election's most salient topics (see, for example, Haney-López, 2014; Piston, 2010; Tesler, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010). This after several years in which other topics—e.g., gun ownership and the economy—had been more salient than race (Kinder & Dale-Riddle, 2012; Tesler, 2016). For example, in the primary election between Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama, where both candidates had very similar programs and opinions on most topics, Kinder and Dale-Riddle (2012) show how several different racial attitudes had larger impacts than all other non-racial national questions on how voters behaved. Also, studies show how racial resentment, anti-Black stereotypes, and even opposition to interracial marriage were determinants that over-proportionally "penalized" the Obama candidacy (Mas & Moretti, 2009; Piston, 2010), even while these topics did not have a significant role in defining the pre-Obama election outcomes. Evidence suggests that Barack Obama's race, along with other perceptions held by White voters, including his alleged Muslim background, activated a strong out-group sentiment that contributed to his poor

performance among White conservatives during the 2008 election (Kinder & Dale-Riddle, 2012). However, this same factor, combined with other aspects of his campaign, was instrumental in attracting large numbers of Black voters to the polls (Tesler, 2016) and receiving substantial support from White liberals (Tesler & Sears, 2010).

Finally, my work provides further input into the growing literature on long-lasting peer effects, especially of the peers individuals have during their childhood and adolescence in school (Bifulco et al., 2011; Giulietti et al., 2022; Lavy & Schlosser, 2011; Merlino et al., 2019; Sacerdote, 2011). The dataset from Add Health has been employed in numerous studies aimed at examining the impact of peers on diverse outcomes, including academic performance (Bifulco et al., 2011; Patacchini et al., 2017), labor force participation (Olivetti et al., 2020), mental health (Fruehwirth et al., 2019; Giulietti et al., 2022; Kiessling & Norris, 2023), obesity (Brunello et al., 2020; Trogdon et al., 2008), and interracial relationships (Merlino et al., 2019). The impact of the cohort's racial composition in the focus of my work, i.e., the share of Black peers, has been studied by Merlino et al. (2022), who report that individuals with a higher share of Black peers during school are more likely to live, 20 years later, in neighborhoods with more Black residents, and Merlino et al. (2019), who find that the effect of these peers is to increase the likelihood to have interracial romantic relationships. Additionally, Bifulco et al. (2011) focus on the peer effects of the combined share of Black and Hispanic students on their classmates and find no evidence that this characteristic of the cohort has an impact on the post-secondary student outcomes they examine. Also, Polipciuk et al. (2021) investigate the influence of interracial peers on future political party identity and report no statistically significant impact of the cohort composition in this respect.

2 Data and Empirical Strategy

2.1 Data

For my analysis I rely on data from Add Health, a nationally representative longitudinal survey that was designed to study the social and health environments of a sample of adolescents in grades 7th to 12th in the US (Harris et al., 2009). The schools selected to participate in this survey came from a stratified sample frame, aiming to be representative of US schools regarding region, urbanicity, school type, school size, and ethnic composition (Harris, 2013). Currently, the project consists of five rounds, starting in 1994-1995 with Wave I. In this Wave, more than 90,000 students from 134 schools (80 high schools and 54 matched feeder schools) were administered an in-school questionnaire that collected general information on the participants, including gender, race, ethnicity, and some basic data on household background. Along with the in-school survey, school administrators were asked to fill a questionnaire covering general information on the schools. Then, a core sample

of students from this group was randomly selected, stratified by gender and grade, to be followed longitudinally (Harris et al., 2009). This subset of adolescents was then interviewed in a Wave I in-home survey on topics related to their social environment, including questions about family, friendships, school, and expectations about the future. Around 20,700 students participated in this in-home survey. They were then interviewed again in in-home surveys one year later in 1996 (Wave II), and then in 2001-2002 (Wave III), 2008-2009 (Wave IV), and 2016-2018 (Wave V).

The combination of numerous school-wide respondents for the in-school questionnaire and the longitudinal structure of the subsequent parts of Add Health proves to be optimal for the study of long-term peer effects, as it allows researchers to, first, construct accurate school and grade shares of peers,[2] and then, to follow a representative subgroup of the students for over 20 years. For the first step I construct three different shares of Black students: the share of all Black peers in the same grade at the same school, and then, both the divided shares of same-sex and opposite-sex Black peers.[3] These three alternative definitions are especially relevant when studying school peer effects because, as suggested by Kalmijn (2002), the transmission of attitudes varies according to the peers' gender. The shares are constructed based on the self-reported race given by the in-school respondents. Because respondents had the option of self-identifying themselves as being of more than one race, I define the Black share as the share of students that uniquely identified as Black/ African American.

Further, the political preferences outcome for the main analysis of this work is measured using data from the in-home survey in Wave IV (i.e., 12 years later, in 2008-2009), in which the respondents were between 25 and 34 years old, meaning they were all adults and therefore able to vote and exercise their political preferences. In particular, I use the responses to the question "[i]n terms of politics, do you consider yourself very conservative, conservative, middle-of-the-road, liberal, or very liberal?". For most of the analysis I exploit the categorical characteristic of this question, but in addition I define four further indicator variables out of this question: I define as overall conservative those individuals who answered "conservative" or "very conservative", and as overall liberal those who replied "liberal" or "very liberal". For the more extreme cases I define two indicators that are equal to 1 if the responses are either "very conservative" or "very liberal", respectively, and are otherwise equal to 0.

Starting from a sample of over 20,700 respondents who answered all parts of the survey in Wave I, I exclude approximately 5,000 individuals for whom there is no information in Wave IV. Then I drop around 1,000 respondents who did not reply about their political preferences. For 241 cases I am unable to find the corresponding school, so I leave these out of the sample. Further,

[2]Constructing reliable shares of students from the in-school survey minimizes measurement error in cohort composition differences and thus lowers biases that arise from this error (Bifulco et al., 2011).
[3]See Appendix Table A.1 for a detailed description of all variables used in this work.

I exclude 308 students that cannot be assigned to a school cohort, and 663 students for whom I am not able to construct the Black peer shares. Lastly, I drop 429 students for whom there are no sample weights for Wave IV. This leaves me with a sample of 13,073 individuals.

The focus of this work lies in all students who are not Black, because the variation in the share of Black peers has opposite implications regarding interraciality to them as to the rest of the sample, meaning that a higher share of Black peers in the cohort represents for the Black students a bigger concentration of persons with the same race, and for the rest, a more interracial peer composition. To exclude Black participants from the sample, I use information on self-defined race from the in-home questionnaire in Wave I, restricting the definition of Black students to those students who exclusively identify as Black/ African American. I also show in Table A.3 that my results are robust to changing the definition of Black students, as I replicate my main analysis with individuals who were assigned to be Black by the interviewer from Add Health, a definition used by Merlino et al. (2019). In this process, I drop 2,716 individuals, leaving a total of 10,357 non-Black individuals from 130 schools and 434 school cohorts as the final sample used in this investigation.

The fact that many individuals initially surveyed in Wave I of Add Health do not appear in the sample used in this study could raise concerns about possible biasing of the results because of attrition. Especially, as Bifulco et al. (2011) postulate, there is a possible risk that cohort composition might have a causal effect on attrition levels. Following standard procedures in these cases, all parts of the analysis in this work use individually assigned probability weights that were constructed by Add Health for respondents in Wave IV. I further test if the likelihood of participating in Wave IV is correlated with the share of all Black peers in Appendix Table A.4 (column 1), and the gender-divided shares of Black peers (column 2), and find no evidence for this.[4] These results are also in line with the findings of Bifulco et al. (2011). Also, because the decision not to respond the questions regarding political preferences could be not randomly distributed and reflect some unobserved underlying factors, I test—for all non-Black respondents in Wave IV—if the probability of not answering this question is correlated with the racial composition of the school cohort (columns 3 and 4) and, reassuringly, report no statistically significant correlations.

Summary statistics are presented in Table 1 for the 10,357 non-Black participants of Add Health in my sample. In Appendix Table A.2 I complete the information presented in this table by showing the in-school and between-school average standard deviation of the variables of interest. Regarding the political outcomes in Wave IV, this table reports that around 4% of the sample had very conservative political views, and together with the moderate conservatives they make up 25.6% of the responses. This is very similar on the other side of the coin, where respon-

[4]I further rely on the work by Merlino et al. (2019), who run a series of additional tests and find no evidence that attrition in Wave IV correlated with the shares of minorities (i.a., of Black students) within school cohorts.

dents with liberal and very liberal political views make up 25.9% of the sample. The remaining half of the individuals report to consider themselves as being politically in the "middle of-the-road". On average, the share of Black peers in the same cohort is around 9% and the standard deviation in this share is 14.1 percentage points. This average remains very constant when looking at the shares of Black peers divided by gender, with the opposite-sex share being on average slightly higher (9,5%). In Wave I, the sample is constituted mainly of students who self-identify as White (86,7%), and around 14% are Hispanic. The age group in this year spans from 12 to 21 years, with an average of almost 16. The religious distribution of the sample shows that 70,5% defined themselves as Christian (either Protestant or Catholic) and around 13% reported being atheist, which is very in line with other nationally representative polling from those years (see, for example, Newport, 2009). The individuals are almost equally distributed across school grades 7 to 12, with the highest group (18,3%) being in the 7th grade. The average grade size is 214 students, with a standard deviation of 144, meaning there is ample variation in grade sizes. As expected, this variation drops significantly when looking at within-school standard deviations in Appendix Table A.2. For Wave IV, the age range goes from 25 to 34 years, and the average age is almost 29 years. Over 65% of the people in the sample attended college and almost the same percentage works at least in a 10-hour job. Further characteristics of the respondents in Wave IV, for example if they had health insurance, or have ever been in the military, are also presented in the table in order to display a more complete picture of their lives in 2008–2009.

2.2 Estimation Strategy

The effect of cohort composition on an individual's future preferences is very likely confounded by the effect of various other correlated factors (Lavy & Schlosser, 2011). In this regard, one of the biggest challenges is the possibility of individual self-selection into schools, thus correlating individual attributes and school composition (Moffitt et al., 2001). Further, selection into classes can also arise, as some parents may try to influence the class within a cohort of a school to which their children go—if for example they think one teacher is better—or school administrators may group different types of students in different classes of a cohort (Hoxby, 2000).

To mitigate these concerns, I employ an empirical approach proposed by Hoxby (2000), attempting to exploit idiosyncratic variation in the share of Black peers across cohorts of students within the same school. More intuitively, this means that I assume that, while families to some degree choose the school their children go to, they do not base this decision on the difference between average school composition and cohort-specific composition, and that these differences are not correlated with omitted variables. This approach has been widely used in research on peer effects (see, for example Bifulco et al., 2014; Merlino et al., 2019; Olivetti et al., 2020).

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	Observations	Mean	Std. dev.
Political preferences (Wave IV):			
Political preferences	10,357	3.020	0.911
Political preference = very conservative	10,357	0.044	0.205
Political preference = conservative	10,357	0.212	0.409
Political preference = middle of-the-road	10,357	0.485	0.500
Political preference = liberal	10,357	0.198	0.399
Political preference = very liberal	10,357	0.061	0.239
Main explanatory variables (Wave I):			
% Black peers, all	10,357	0.092	0.141
% Black peers, same gender	10,357	0.092	0.141
% Black peers, opp. gender	10,357	0.094	0.145
Other variables (Wave I):			
Female	10,357	0.492	0.500
Age	10,354	15.863	1.799
Race = White	10,357	0.866	0.340
Race = Asian	10,357	0.047	0.212
Race = American Indian	10,357	0.037	0.189
Race = other	10,357	0.085	0.278
Hispanic	10,357	0.135	0.341
Family income	8,002	48.515	49.439
Religion = Catholic	10,218	0.281	0.449
Religion = Protestant	10,218	0.423	0.494
Religion = atheist (no religion)	10,218	0.131	0.337
Lives in urban area	10,357	0.253	0.435
Grade size in school	10,357	214.346	144.004
Grade in school = 7	10,357	0.183	0.387
Grade in school = 8	10,357	0.170	0.376
Grade in school = 9	10,357	0.168	0.374
Grade in school = 10	10,357	0.161	0.368
Grade in school = 11	10,357	0.152	0.359
Grade in school = 12	10,357	0.165	0.371
Avg. school grades	10,357	4.783	1.278
Other variables (Wave IV):			
Age	10,354	28.858	1.804
Attends college	10,356	0.667	0.471
Employed	10,354	0.652	0.476
No health insurance	10,345	0.210	0.407
Military participation	10,357	0.069	0.253
Ever Arrested	10,317	0.279	0.448
Voting regularity	10,332	2.309	1.334

Notes: The table reports descriptive statistics for the main variables used in the analysis. The sample includes non-Black students in grades 7 through 12. Wave IV cross-sectional weights are used. Detailed information on how these variables are constructed can be found in Appendix Table A.1. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

The empirical model I follow can be written as:

$$Y_{i,2008} = \alpha BlackShare_{sc,1995} + I_{gf} + I_{sf} + \epsilon_i, \tag{1}$$

where i denotes individuals, c cohorts, s schools, g grades, and f stands for gender. The main dependent variable, $Y_{i,2008}$, represents the political preferences individual i holds in 2008 (i.e., Wave IV). $BlackShare_{sc,1995}$ is the share of Black students from all students in a specific cohort c at school s in Wave I (i.e., 1995). I_{sf} denotes school-gender fixed effects, and I_{gf} are grade-gender fixed effects. Finally, ϵ_i is a random error term. The coefficient of main interest is α, which arguably measures the causal effect of Black peers on the outcome of interest.

Because part of this analysis is based on the idea that the transmission of social attitudes during childhood and adolescence has gendered differences (Kalmijn, 2002), I extend the model by separating the share of Black peers into the shares of same-gender Black students and the opposite-gender Black students in the cohort, so that I estimate the following regression:

$$Y_{i,2008} = \beta BlackShare^{same}_{sc,1995} + \gamma BlackShare^{opp.}_{sc,1995} + I_{gf} + I_{sf} + \epsilon_i, \tag{2}$$

where $BlackShare^{same}_{sc,1995}$ is the share of Black peers in school s and cohort c of the same gender, and $BlackShare^{opp.}_{sc,1995}$ of opposite gender in Wave I. The causal effects of the peers in focus are measured in this specification by β for the same-gender, and by γ for the opposite-gender Black peers.

For all specifications of my analysis, standard errors are clustered at the school level—as is commonly done in the school peer-effects literature (see Bifulco et al., 2011; Imberman et al., 2012)—and Add Health Wave IV cross-sectional weights are used.

2.3 Evidence on the Identification Strategy

Before moving on to the results, it is first important to investigate more closely the validity of my empirical strategy by performing two examinations suggested by Lavy and Schlosser (2011). First, I check if the model has enough variation in the cohort share of Blacks, an important verification since my estimates' precision depends on this. To do so, I examine how much of the raw variation in the share of Black students remains after removing school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and then also school-specific trends. Appendix Table A.5 shows the results of this review. Each panel shows the same test for a different share: in panel A I examine the variation in the all-sex share of Black peers, in panel B the share of same-sex, and in panel C the share of opposite-sex Black peers. For all panels, I report the corresponding standard deviations accompanied by further descriptive statistics. Panel A shows that removing school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects

reduces around 85% of the standard deviation of the share of Black peers, and further removing school-specific trends eliminates nearly 90%. For the cohort's same-gender share, reported in Panel B, the remaining variation after controlling for school and grade fixed effects is 19,15% and 16,31% of the variation of the raw shares after removing school trends. In panel C, the reported residual variation for the share of opposite-sex Black peers is similar, with 19,31% and 15,86% residual variation, respectively. Although the residual variation is relatively small after controlling for these fixed effects and trends, there is sufficient variation left to estimate—with reasonable precision—the effects of small changes in racial composition of cohorts within a school. Other work by Bifulco et al. (2011) or Olivetti et al. (2020) also rely on these relatively small, but sufficient, residual variations for their analyses.

The second check I conduct is to test the assumption that the variation in the composition of cohorts within a school is as good as random, once I control for grade-gender fixed effects. For this, Table 2 shows a series of "balancing tests" that aim to examine whether the variation in the share of Black peers across cohorts within a school is correlated with the variation of various individual's predetermined characteristics, that are commonly used in the peer-effects literature (see, for example Bifulco et al., 2011; Olivetti et al., 2020).[5] Also, following Merlino et al. (2019), I include a test for the size of the grade within the school. Each of these variables is first regressed on the share of Black peers in the same cohort and then, simultaneously on both the same-sex and opposite-sex shares of Black peers. The results of the first set of regressions are presented in column 2 and of the latter regressions in columns 3 and 4. All regressions include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects. Column 1 reports the number of observations available for each dependent variable. The results of this table show that none of the correlations calculated between the individual's characteristics and the share of Black students in the same cohort seem to be significant. This, in turn, has important implications for the main assumption of my empirical strategy because, as Altonji et al. (2005) argue, the amount of selection on observable variables provides good guidance to the selection on unobserved characteristics. No significant correlations support, in this case, the idea that the model specification presented exploits an exogenous source of variation, i.e., the variation in the share of Black peers. In line with these results, Merlino et al. (2019) run regressions for all pre-treatment variables available in Add Health on the share of Black peers and find—for both the overall and gender divided specifications—that less than 10% of the variables are significantly correlated with these shares. The only variable included in this "balancing test" for which I find a correlation significant at the 5%-level is the size of the grade of the individuals. I suspect this to be a spurious correlation, especially because I control for school

[5]The variables are: If the respondent has Hispanic heritage, age, if the respondent was born in the US, parental age, parental education, parental religion, number of older siblings, family income, language spoken at home, if the respondent lives in a single-parent home, and if he/she lives with both biological parents. A description of these variables is presented in Appendix Table A.1.

fixed effects, but I add this information as a control variable to all parts of my analysis.

Table 2: Balancing Tests for Cohort Composition Measures

		Independent variable(s):		
	Observations	% Black peers, all	% Black peers, opp. gender	% Black peers, same gender
Dep. variable:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Hispanic	10,357	–0.024	0.014	0.022
		(0.162)	(0.137)	(0.139)
Age	10,354	–0.199	0.022	–0.298
		(0.646)	(0.423)	(0.416)
Born in the United States	10,357	–0.069	0.051	–0.138
		(0.165)	(0.137)	(0.160)
Parent's age	10,357	0.326	–1.924	1.759
		(2.705)	(2.968)	(2.383)
Parent's education	9,890	0.657	0.451	0.021
		(0.970)	(0.742)	(1.032)
Parent's religion = Catholic	8,371	0.094	0.166	–0.112
		(0.249)	(0.207)	(0.197)
Number of older siblings	10,346	–0.473	–0.201	–0.272
		(0.725)	(0.505)	(0.507)
Log of family income	10,270	0.675	0.409	0.230
		(0.605)	(0.374)	(0.386)
English spoken at home	10,357	0.214	0.127	0.048
		(0.137)	(0.112)	(0.150)
Single parent family	10,357	–0.228	–0.082	–0.180
		(0.345)	(0.217)	(0.216)
Live w/both biological parents	8,953	0.243	0.134	0.156
		(0.329)	(0.201)	(0.265)
Grade size	10,357	262.598**	127.697**	131.395**
		(118.235)	(60.087)	(61.007)

Notes: The table reports the results from the different regressions of the balancing test. Each row in the table reports coefficients from a regression of the dependent variable on the share of all Black peers in the cohort (in column 2), or regressed on both the share of same and opposite gender (in columns 3 and 4). Standard errors (in parenthesis) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade gender fixed effects. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Wave IV cross-sectional weights are used. Detailed information on how these variables are constructed can be found in Appendix Table B.1. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Further checks of the identification assumption proposed by Lavy and Schlosser (2011) include testing for non-random clustering of Black students across grades within schools and examining whether within-school variation in the Black share across cohorts is symmetric. First, if variation

in the share of Black peers across grades within a school is plausibly exogenous, a student's race should be uncorrelated with the racial composition of their cohort once school fixed effects are included. The results in Appendix Figure A.1 are consistent with this implication and provide support for the identifying assumption. Second, Appendix Figure A.2 examines whether differences in Black shares across grades are symmetric. If changes in grade-level Black shares were driven by selective attrition—such as Black students disproportionately dropping out in higher grades—one would expect systematically lower Black shares in later grades. Reassuringly, the distributions of changes in overall and gender-specific Black shares are centered around zero, suggesting no systematic trend.

3 Results

3.1 Main Results

Table 3 reports the benchmark results of models (1) and (2), that study the effect of the share of Black peers on future political outcomes from their non-Black peers.[6] All specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size (as a consequence of the findings from the balancing test). This table shows a set of results for three different groups of outcomes. First, columns 1 and 2 display the effect of the share of Black peers on political preferences, which is a 1-to-5 categorical variable going from very conservative to very liberal. The share used in column 1 includes all Black peers, while in column 2 this is separated into peers of same and opposite gender. In order to understand more precisely which peers are driving the effect, the rest of the results presented in the table follow this second specification. In columns 3 and 4, I concentrate on the effect of this group of peers on self-identifying as overall conservative or very conservative, respectively. The last set of results, in columns 5 and 6, report the effect of exposure to Black students in the same cohort on being either overall liberal, or very liberal. For columns 2 to 6, I additionally present the p-value of the statistical examination assessing the equality of coefficients for the same-gender and opposite-gender shares.

For model (1), the coefficient for the effect of the share of all Black peers shows a positive correlation with the political outcomes, however, not significantly different from zero at conventional levels. On the other hand, in column 2, when regressing the political preferences on both shares of Blacks, I find a significant and, once again, positive effect of the same-gender share. In terms of magnitude, the coefficient expresses that an increase of 2.1 percentage points in this variable (a

[6] Appendix Table A.3 shows that these results are robust to different definitions of the sample. Column 1 looks at the main results for only the White students, and column 2 defines as Black those participants who were perceived as Black by the Add Health interviewers, and excludes them from the sample (to focus on non-Black students). The coefficients remain very similar in size and direction.

Table 3: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Main Results

	Political preferences		Conservative		Liberal	
			Overall	Very	Overall	Very
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Black peers, all	0.763					
	(0.468)					
% Black peers, same gender		0.868**	-0.378**	-0.231**	0.118	0.141
		(0.333)	(0.182)	(0.095)	(0.150)	(0.098)
% Black peers, opp. gender		-0.076	0.145	0.016	0.181	-0.096
		(0.353)	(0.182)	(0.073)	(0.152)	(0.107)
P-value	–	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.56	0.13
Mean dep. var.	3.020	3.020	0.256	0.044	0.259	0.061
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.911	0.911	0.437	0.205	0.438	0.239
Observations	10,357	10,357	10,357	10,357	10,357	10,357

Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health, that had full information for Waves I and IV. In columns (1) and (2), the dep. variable is a 1-to-5 categorical variable ranging from "very conservative" to "very liberal". For columns (3) to (6) the dep. variable is an indicator variable coded as 1 if the political preference corresponds to the title (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table A.1). The reported p-value in the table corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients for same-gender and opposite-gender Black peers are equal. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

within-school standard deviation in the same-sex share) would shift the political preferences of the respondents from conservative to liberal by almost 1.8 percentage points. For the share of opposite-sex peers, the reported effect is negative but very small in size, and statistically insignificant. The fact that the transmission of socio-political preferences seems to occur from the same-gender peers goes in line with findings from related literature (see, for example Giulietti et al., 2022; Kalmijn, 2002; Merlino et al., 2022).

I now turn to the benchmark results on the effect of Black peers on their non-Black cohort classmates on the likelihood of politically self-identifying as a conservative. For both definitions of conservative, I find negative effects of the same-gender share, that in both cases are significant at the 5% level. In the first specification, the coefficient is -0.378, which in terms of magnitude, means that an increase in the Black share of peers of one standard deviation (approx. 14.1 percentage points) would decrease the probability of having conservative preferences by approximately 5.3 percentage points. This finding resembles closely in scale the work of Billings et al. (2021) on the decrease in the probability of being affiliated with the Conservative Party caused by a change in

the racial composition of the cohort. This interpretation is to be taken with caution, as such a big change in the share of Black students in a cohort within a school is very unlikely, and the variation source in the presented model does not account accurately for such big cohort changes.[7] The preferred interpretation for this coefficient is to look at an increase of one within-school standard deviation in the share of same-sex Black peers, which would lead to a reduction in the likelihood of self-identifying as overall conservative of around 0.8 percentage points (or 3.1% of the mean of the outcome). For the more extreme definition of this view, the coefficient can be interpreted as a 0.49 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of being very conservative, associated with an increase of a within-school standard deviation of the share of Black peers. Here the effect is relatively sizable and represents 11% of the mean. For the share of opposite-gender Black students in the same cohort, the coefficient is positive in both cases, suggesting this group of peers would have the opposite effect of the same-gender Black students on the likelihood of being conservative, but these coefficients are, once again, insignificantly different from zero and small, especially for the very conservative outcome (0.016). These results, together with the alternative specifications in Appendix Table A.3 (columns 4 and 5), are all in line with the hypothesis that exposure to Black peers leads to a weakening of the conservative ideology expressed.[8]

The last group of results reported in Table 3 is for the likelihood of having overall liberal, or very liberal political preferences. Columns 5 and 6 show that the effect of the same-gender Black peers in both specifications is positive, but statistically insignificant. These results go in line with previous research on political preferences, for example by Billings et al. (2021), who find no effects of the racial changes in cohort's composition on Democratic Party affiliation in the US.

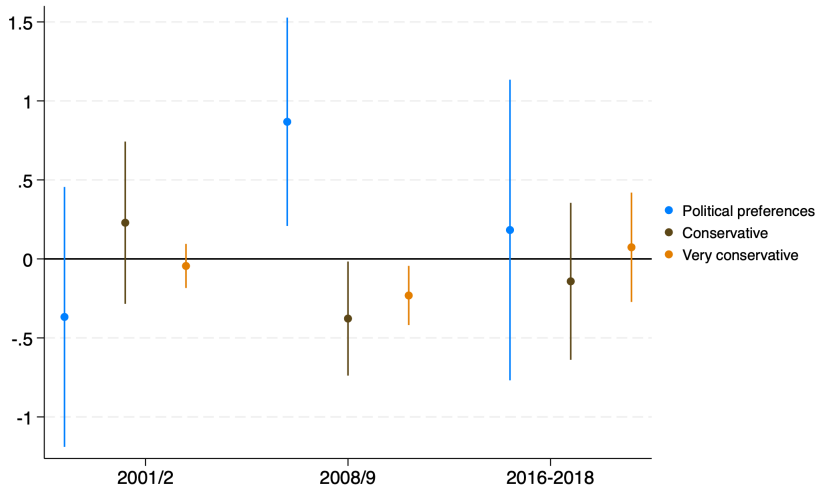
Additionally, Figure 1 replicates the analysis from columns 2–4, taking advantage of the fact that political preference questions were also asked in Add Health's Waves III (2001) and V (2016). Notably, the three periods shown in this figure correspond to years in which US presidential elections were held. The figure illustrates that the effect of Black peers on political preferences varies over time; the coefficient is statistically significant only for the 2008–2009 survey period. This pattern also holds for binary outcomes related to conservative and very conservative preferences. These results suggest that the influence of Black peers on political preferences may be context-dependent, with the 2008 presidential election being particularly influenced by racial dynamics

[7] For example, the work by Billings et al. (2021) reports changes similar in magnitude to the likelihood of enlisting in a political party as an effect of an increase in 10 percentage points in the share of Black students in the grade. For this, they exploit a different source in variation, i.e., the abolition of school segregation policies, which led to big changes in the racial composition of school cohorts.

[8] Essentially, the alternative definitions try to capture possible *anti-sentiments* to the political views, meaning that the *anti*-liberals are defined as those conservative, or middle of the road, and the *anti*-conservative the other way around. I find a positive and statistically significant effect for the share of same-sex Black peers on the expressed *anti*-conservative feeling. The table also reports a negative correlation of the cohort composition with the *anti*-liberal sentiment, but this is not significant at conventional levels.

(Tesler, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010).

Figure 1: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Salience of Race in 2008



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. Add Health cross-sectional weights are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

3.2 Robustness

Next, I present two important robustness checks to the benchmark results. First, Appendix Table A.7 shows that the previous findings are robust to several alternative specifications of the model. All additional specifications are reported for the three sets of outcomes, where I find significant effects in the previous table, meaning that panel A looks at the 1-to-5 political preferences outcome, panel B at the probability of having overall conservative views, and panel C at the very conservative outcome. All columns include baseline controls (i.e., school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, as well as the size of the grade).

Column 1 shows, across all panels, the effect of the same-gender Black share of peers on the three outcomes when regressing these outcomes only on the same-gender, and not including the opposite-gender share, as in the baseline. By focusing only on the same-sex share of Black peers, I am testing the sensitivity of the findings to a different specification and showing that my results hold up even when excluding opposite-sex peers. The coefficients are in all cases significant, and very close in terms of magnitude and direction to the main results. This further highlights the importance of same-sex peers in shaping political outcomes and helps to provide a more nuanced understanding of the underlying mechanisms at work.

For columns 2 to 4, I include, accumulatively, a series of control variables that aim to improve the precision of the estimates by combating the effects of possible omitted variable bias. First, for column 2, the model includes pre-determined individual and family characteristics of the students, such as race, age, and parental educational background. Herewith, I try to capture the variation in political outcomes that these characteristics can account for.[9] Then, column 3 further includes schooling information about the respondents—e.g., average test scores, or if the person ever failed a class—and other shares of cohort's composition, like the share of peers born in the US, or the share of peers with college-graduated parents, to combat a possible biasing of the results driven by other contextual effects (Manski, 1993). Lastly, column 4 also controls for post-treatment variables, trying to somewhat capture the socio-economic condition of the people in Wave IV and isolate the effect of the Black peers. An important note of caution is in order here, as controlling for post-treatment variables raises the possibility that these controls are endogenous and could be somewhat determined by the racial composition of the individual's cohort. In this case, these variables could act as mediators from the effect of Black peers on political preferences, and therefore be considered "bad controls" (Angrist & Pischke, 2009). I choose to add these controls, nevertheless, to try to capture away some of the variation in the political preferences in 2008 based on other socio-economic outcomes from that year, and not on the effect of an interracial cohort during school. It is therefore reassuring that the coefficients remain in all cases significant and near in size to the main results. As postulated by Altonji et al. (2005), the fact that the peer effects do not change substantially after adding observable controls suggests that the potential bias of unobservables is likely small as well. The coefficient for the political preferences ranges from 0.808 to 0.810, for the overall conservative definition from -0.372 to -0.387, and for the very conservative regressions from -0.187 to -0.196. The estimates in column 2 correspond to the preferred model specification. An interpretation for the magnitude of these coefficients is that an increase of one within-school standard deviation in the share of same-gender Black students leads, *ceteris paribus*, to a shift of 1.1 percentage points from conservative to liberal, to a decrease of 0.8 percentage points (or 3,1% of the mean) to the probability of being overall conservative, and drives the likelihood of being very conservative down by 0.5 percentage points (or 10.4% of the mean).

Lastly, following Olivetti et al. (2020), I include in column 5 the within-grade standard deviation of the share of Black peers, to study if the impact of these peers depends on cohort heterogeneity in Black peers. This added variable is not significantly different from zero in determining any of the three outcomes, and the main coefficients remain constant in size, so I conclude from this

[9] Although Table 2 already presents evidence that many of these characteristics are not correlated with the racial composition of the schools, and thus controlling for them could over-specify my model, there is a body of literature showing the effects of many of these pre-determined variables on future political behavior (see, for example, Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Jennings et al., 2009; Van Ditmars, 2022). Therefore, I control for these variables to isolate the channel of transmission of the Black peers.

last specification that this channel is not a relevant driver of the differences in political preferences.

The second robustness analysis I perform is to address the issue that could arise from the 1-to-5 scaling of the dependent variable measuring political preferences. In the main results I treat these preferences as if they were cardinally scaled, assuming therefore that the distance between the possible answers is perceived as identical by the individuals who responded to the question. However, it is possible that in practice this does not hold, as the perceived differences between being "very conservative" and "conservative" may be smaller than, e.g., between the "conservative" and "middle of-the-road" options. To account for this, as first proposed by McCullagh (1980), I estimate ordered logit regressions models for both the share of all Black peers, and the share of Black students in the cohort separated by gender. The results can be seen in Appendix Table A.8. For all columns I use the same set of controls employed in the benchmark regressions to make the results more comparable.[10]

In general, the overall picture of Appendix Table A.8 is similar to the one presented in the two first columns of Table 3. In column 1, when looking at the effect of the share of all Black peers, the coefficients for the two conservative options are negative and for the two liberal options positive, and significant at the 10% level.[11] Also, as in the main results, the effect of the opposite-sex Black peers (reported in column 2) is not significant and, in all specifications, the coefficients remain very close to zero in size. For the last column, I find that an increase in one within-school standard deviation in the share of same-sex Black peers leads to a decrease of 0.2 percentage points in the likelihood of responding "very conservative" (or 3.3% of total responses in this category), and makes respondents 0.5 percentage points less likely to self-identify as conservatives (i.e., 2.3% of the outcome). On the other hand, the likelihood of being liberal would increase by around 0.4 percentage points, and of responding "very liberal" by 0.2 percentage points, changes that correspond to a 2,2% and 3,2% of the total responses for these categories, respectively. An additional insight gained from these results is that, across all specifications, the likelihood of identifying as politically middle-of-the-road is not affected by the share of Black peers. These findings somewhat resemble those found by Billings et al. (2021), who do not find a statistically significant effect of the cohort's racial composition on the probability of White students to register as politically unaffiliated.

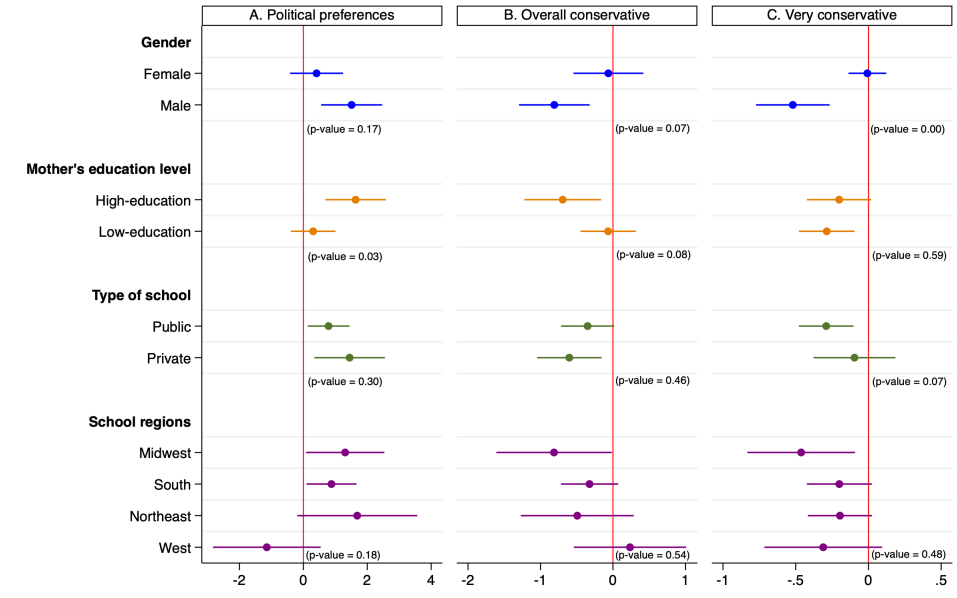
[10] In Appendix Table A.6 I complete this analysis by reporting the marginal effects of Black peers on the likelihood of self-identifying as overall conservative and very conservative from nonlinear regression models. The table reports coefficients very similar in magnitude to the benchmark results.

[11] Directionally, these results go in line with the coefficient of column 1 in Table 3. The fact that I find significance here for all but the "middle of the road" options can be seen as suggestive evidence that it is not quite appropriate to assume political preferences are cardinally scaled.

3.3 Heterogeneity Analysis

To gain further insights on the extent to which the cohort's racial composition affects future political preferences, I explore different possible sources of heterogeneity in the effect, by dividing the full sample into sub-groups. The results of this analysis are presented in Figure 2. Each marker represents the coefficient point for the share of same-sex Black peers in each separate regression, for the indicated outcome (i.e., either political preferences, overall conservative, or very conservative) and the indicated subgroup, and is accompanied by its respective 90%-confidence interval. All regressions control for school-gender fixed effects, grade-gender fixed effects, and grade size. The figure also reports, in parentheses below each comparison group, the p-value for the hypothesis test of equality of coefficients within each comparison group.

Figure 2: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Heterogeneity



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The dep. variable in panel A corresponds to the categorical variable political preferences, in panel B to the overall conservative indicator variable, and in panel C to the very conservative indicator variable (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table A.1). The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. For each category, the sample is divided into the different sub-categories specified in the y-axis. Each coefficient is accompanied by its respective 90% confidence interval. The reported p-value below each category corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients in that group are equal. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

First, in blue, the results are split by the gender of the respondents. For the three sets of outcomes, the results are consistent in direction with the estimates from the full-sample analysis. Interestingly, the cohort's effect remains only statistically significant for the group of men in the sample, and is—for both the overall and very conservative outcomes—significantly different than the effect in the group of women. I interpret these results not as a general statement that the effect of Black peers is stronger for men, because related work, e.g., by Merlino et al. (2022) finds that the effect of exposure to Black peers on other outcomes are also significant for women, but

rather as a specific pattern that arises when looking at the development of political preferences. The literature presents many possible explanations for this. It could be driven, for example, by gendered differences in the socialization and construction of political views (Trevor, 1999; Van Ditmars, 2022), or by the degree to which male and female adolescents participate in political discussion and activities (Hooghe & Stolle, 2004; Pfanzelt & Spies, 2019).

Then, in orange, I show the heterogeneity of the effect by comparing those non-Black students whose mothers have at least a college degree, with those with mothers with lower educational achievements.[12] This analysis can provide insights into how the parents' education level (which has important implications on the political preferences of their children, see Jennings et al., 2009) impacts the process of transmission of political beliefs by exposure to Black peers. Comparing these sub-samples shows that both for the political preferences and the likelihood of being overall conservative, the effects are significantly different at conventional levels, and in both cases they are higher in magnitude for those with high-education mothers. In part, these findings go in line with studies showing how (maternal) education is an important determinant of political preferences (Czarnek et al., 2021; Dunn, 2011; Zingher, 2022). It is plausible that higher levels of maternal education may foster an environment that is more conducive to the operation of the effect of Black peer effects on their children's political attitudes. For the last outcome of interest, the effect of the exposure to Black peers in school points directionally to the same side for both subgroups, but the hypothesis that the two coefficients are the same cannot be rejected.

Third, the comparison of the effects by the type of school the students attended in Wave I—either private or public—is presented in green. The reported p-values for both political preferences and overall conservative outcomes do not reject the hypothesis that the coefficients for the two sub-groups are the same. In both cases, the direction of the Black peers' effect is consistent with the benchmark results, albeit with slightly greater magnitude for students from private schools. However, the effects differ significantly for the outcome of very conservative preferences, and the reduction in the likelihood of identifying as one is stronger among students attending public schools. This difference in the effects may be attributable to contextual differences between Black students in private and public schools (see also Appendix Figure A.4). Additionally, since a vast majority of the students in the sample attended public schools, it is possible that the analysis of the effect of Black peers in private schools lacks sufficient variation.

Lastly, the figure presents in purple the estimates for the impact of Black peers, divided into the four broad Census Bureau Regions where the schools were located in Wave I (i.e., Midwest, South, Northeast, and West). This analysis is relevant, as it may have valuable implications for the interpretation of my work. For example, there are many studies that show important regional differences in the impact of race (see, for example, Kousser, 2010) and the long-lasting legacy of

[12]The results remain almost unchanged when separating the groups by the level of paternal education.

slavery (Acharya et al., 2016) in determining political behavior. Similar to the work by Merlino et al. (2019), the results show no statistically significant differences of the effect among the different regions for any of the studied outcomes. The effect seems to be the strongest in all cases for the Midwest region, where the coefficient remains at the 10%-level significant in all specifications, followed by the schools located in the South and the Northeast. For the political preferences, and the probability of being overall conservative in the West subgroup, the direction of the coefficient is opposed to the main results, which raises the question of whether there are structural differences in this sector leading to different effects of the level of interraciality in schools.[13]

4 Mechanisms

Next, I analyze potential underlying mechanisms for the findings that the school cohort's racial composition has long-lasting effects on the individuals' future political preferences. There are three main possible channels that seem relevant for this; first, I discuss if the framework from the social psychology's common ingroup identity model (CIIM) (Gaertner et al., 1993) helps in understanding the transmission reported in this work. Another possibility is that exposure to Black peers affects some other relevant variables, and these, in turn, have an impact on political behavior. In this work, I discuss the option that engagement in politics could act as mediator of future political views. Lastly, I address how Black peer presence in school can impact their classmates' future political views through the channel of information updating about racial issues.

Many authors studying peer effects between heterogeneous groups of people have relied on the foundations of intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), which states that positive contact experiences can lead, under appropriate conditions, to an increase in cross-group understanding and a reduction of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. In fact, in a meta-study of empirical evidence on this theory conducted by Pettigrew et al. (2011), the authors find that intergroup contact reduces prejudices against minorities, and that these changed perceptions hold up not only for the persons they had direct interaction with, but normally for the whole outgroup. In the peer literature this has been applied, for example, to the study of regional integration in the military service in Spain (Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021), to understand intergroup interaction between different socio-economic groups in Indian schools (Rao, 2019), and more closely related to my work, to study the channel of transmission of Black peers on future social outcomes in the US (Billings et al., 2014; Merlino et al., 2019).

Related to this, the CIIM, first formally postulated by Gaertner et al. (1993), proposes that

[13] Because of data limitations, each subgroup has a relatively low number of observations (ranging from 1,581 in Northeast to 3,345 in the South) so that I cannot broaden my analysis into this question, as there may be too little variation for the model to calculate accurate estimates. Further research should focus more on these regional differences in the transmission of political preferences.

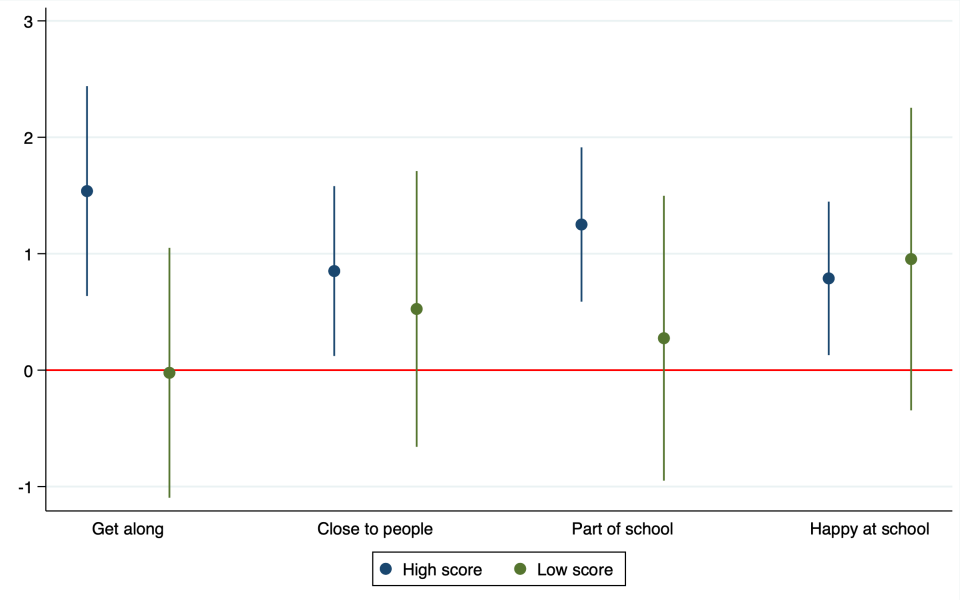
intergroup bias can be reduced via the re-categorization of pre-established separate bodies—"us" and "them"—into an inclusive ingroup, therefore constructing "two subgroups within one group", if the members of these groups are cognitively redirected to share a common superordinate identity, in this case, belonging to the same school. This shared identity can then become a more salient and influential aspect of their perception of the groups, reducing the impact of implicit biases and, potentially, lead to long-term changes in political preferences (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). The CIIM poses an attractive framework to understand changes in racial (and in a second stage, political) attitudes, as it presents the possibility to understand the role of shared identities in the face of aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Kovel, 1984), which studies have found to develop during childhood and adolescence in the cognitive creation of racial in- and out-groups (De Franca & Monteiro, 2013; Hagerman, 2020). In fact, Gaertner and Dovidio (2005) postulate that CIIM can be especially relevant for aversive racists, as some of their racial prejudices can be understood as being rather pro ingroup, and not against "the others", i.e., Black people. Under this premise, the re-categorization of this separation, that occurs when students share a common school, can generate positive attitudes and empathy towards former out-group members as part of the ingroup (Gaertner et al., 1993).[14]

To test for this mechanism, I employ data from Add Health's in-home survey from Wave I, where participants were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences and feelings in their school. I concentrate on four questions that proxy a feeling of belonging to the institution, i.e., to what extent the students feel like they get along with their peers, how close they are to them, to what degree they consider themselves as part of school, and how happy they are. Under this setting, CIIM would suggest that the effect of exposure to Black peers on political views should have a bigger impact on those students who have high scores on these variables, as they are more likely to have undergone the re-categorization and formed a school-wide—or cohort-wide—"we" perception.[15] Figure 3 presents a comparison of the effect of Black peers on political preferences divided by sub-samples with those who assigned high and low scores to their respective school-belonging categories. It is important to note that the results of this analysis are limited due to the endogeneity problem of these variables. Also, the answers to the questionnaire regarding school-belonging may not be as informative as expected if the re-categorization of groups fails to happen. In this case, non-Black students may feel they belong to the school or get along with their classmates, but not include their Black peers in these considerations.

[14] I concentrate on the CIIM due to its potential to offer additional perspectives beyond the well-established evidence for intergroup contact theory. My research setting involves adolescent students in a shared school, for which I believe the CIIM focus on group identity can enhance our understanding of the mechanisms driving political preference transmission in this particular context.

[15] See Appendix Table A.1 for a description of these four variables. For the purpose of this analysis, individuals who responded with either (1) "strongly agree" or (2) "agree" are classified under the high-score group for each question, while all other respondents are classified under the low-score group.

Figure 3: Heterogeneity in the Effect by School-Belonging Categories



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. For each category of school-belonging, the sample is divided into those with high-scoring and low-scoring answers to the respective question (see more in detail the construction of these categories in Appendix Table A.1). Individuals who responded with either (1) "strongly agree" or (2) "agree" are classified under the high-score group for each question, while all other respondents are classified under the low-score group. Each coefficient is accompanied by its respective 90% confidence interval. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

The results go in line with the theoretical expectations, as the effect remains statistically significant in each category for only the high-scoring group, indicating that there seems to be a link between a positive school identity and the effect of exposure to Black students on future political views. The differences in magnitude between groups, particularly in the categories of "get along" and "part of school", which reflect in the most direct way the level of the individual's school-belonging, are sizable, and to some degree serve as evidence that the CIIM framework helps to explain some of the political preferences' transmission process. Similar conclusions are reached when comparing these sub-samples in terms of the likelihood of politically identifying as conservative or very conservative (see Appendix Table A.9).

Now I turn my attention to discuss the possibility that the changes in political preferences may be caused by other outcomes that mediate political behavior. Researchers have focused on different possible mediators of social and political practices, for example on educational achievement (Billings et al., 2014; Hanushek et al., 2009; Merlino et al., 2019), criminal records (Billings et al., 2014), and income or employment status (Merlino et al., 2022). Another, less explored, possi-

ble outcome that could be affected by the share of Black peers, and be responsible in mediating future political views is the extent to which people choose to engage in political activity.[16] One could argue that having an active participation in political matters, or being regularly registered to vote, could lead individuals to develop clearer opinions and have more defined political views. The direction in which Black peers affect political participation is *a priori* not clear: while White students are often more politically active within the school environment (Levinson, 2012), such as in debate teams (Hart & Atkins, 2002), Black peers may bring a new level of political engagement and activism, as they are confronted with systemic racism and the struggle for equality starting at a very young age (Orum & Cohen, 1973), leading to engagement in movements, for example in the Black Lives Matter cause (Tatum, 2017).

To test for this mechanism, Table 4 reports the correlation of the share of Black peers with the different outcomes on political participation. More precisely, columns 1 to 3 focus on the following three outcomes from Wave III (measured between 2000 and 2001, i.e., eight years prior to the question on political preferences): party identification, whether the participants voted in the 2000 presidential election, and if they were registered to vote.[17] The time difference between these outcomes and the measurement of the political preferences offers the possibility to test whether the presence of Black peers exerts predominantly transitory influence on political engagement, which then mediates longer-term political preferences. The results of regressing these outcomes on the shares of Black peers show positive, but statistically insignificant, correlations for both party identity and 2000 presidential election participation. For the probability of being registered to vote, I find a small and again statistically insignificant coefficient of the cohort's composition, a result which resembles the findings by Billings et al. (2021). Then, to account for the possibility that the results in the first columns could arise because they are not portraying a long-term effect (Patacchini et al., 2017), or because of missing political maturity of the participants in Wave III (Chan & Clayton, 2006), I test for the correlation between the share of Black peers and how frequently they participate in elections, information that was asked in Wave IV (column 4), and then again—to show the robustness of the results—in Wave V (column 5). Both columns report positive, but statistically insignificant, correlations between these outcomes and the share of same-sex Black peers.

These results, together with the findings in previous literature (Billings et al., 2021; Levinson, 2012), do not support the hypothesis that political participation could mediate political preferences

[16] It could be argued that political participation is not a different channel of transmission than education, if education would have a causal impact on participation. Although I cannot rule this argument out, work by Berinsky and Lenz (2011) and Persson (2015) has failed to find a significant causal link.

[17] Although these outcomes are not measured at the same time as the political preferences, they are from a point in time when the great majority of participants had already left school, meaning shortly after the "full-time" exposure to interraciality in school.

Table 4: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Participation

	Participation in Wave III			Vote frequency	
Dep. variable:	Party	Election 2000	Registered	Wave IV	Wave V
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
% Black peers, same gender	0.273	0.195	-0.035	0.212	0.187
	(0.243)	(0.249)	(0.248)	(0.646)	(0.715)
% Black peers, opposite gender	0.229	0.379	0.184	0.884*	0.631
	(0.224)	(0.289)	(0.221)	(0.514)	(0.634)
Mean dep. var.	0.328	0.425	0.719	2.308	2.498
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.469	0.494	0.450	1.155	1.136
Observations	8,595	8,621	8,644	10,332	7,328

Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. See more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table B.1. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave III are used in columns (1)–(3). Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used in column (4). Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave V are used in column (5). Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

and help explain the effect Black peers have on these views. Again, the results of the analysis I employ here should be interpreted as suggestive, but not definite, evidence. A limitation to the analysis lies in data constraints, as I would ideally like to incorporate a more comprehensive definition of political participation—for example, including engagement in social protest, grass root movements, and local government. This data would be informative, as it would allow the analysis to focus on those political activities that are generally more related to topics that concern Black people and Black political action. Also, the chain of causation is not absolutely clear in this setting. While the timeline indicates a clear chain of events for the Wave III results, this is not clear for the later specifications. I have discussed the possibility that political activity could have an effect on political preferences, but the argument could also be made that it occurs the other way around, meaning that having strong political preferences leads people to be more politically active.[18]

[18]In fact, when regressing the voting frequency in Waves IV and V on the variables indicating people with strong conservative or strong liberal views, I find that being very conservative has a positive and statistically significant effect on the voting frequency on Wave V. The results can be found in Appendix Table A.10.

5 Conclusion

This work studies the long-lasting effect of Black peers on their classmates' future political preferences. To do so, I draw upon data from Add Health, a longitudinal study that has followed a representative group of high-school students in the US for over two decades, and exploit variation in the proportion of Black students within schools across different cohorts aiming to identify causal effects. I concentrate on the expressed political preferences in 2008–2009, a time frame in American politics in which race was especially salient in determining political opinions, with the Presidential election of Barack Obama, the first Black president in US history.

I find that a higher share of Black peers—and in particular those of the same gender—has a significant impact in shifting these political views away from conservative, to more liberal tendencies. The findings suggest that the racial composition of a cohort is a significant factor in reducing the probability of individuals' identifying as highly conservative or conservative, without resulting in a substantial increase in extremely liberal beliefs.

This study examines three channels that potentially underlie the effect of Black peers on their classmates' future political preferences: First, I find suggestive evidence that the re-categorization of racially divided groups into a shared school-belonging identity may be one of the forces behind the results. Then, looking at the mediating role of increased political participation in shaping future political preferences, I conclude that this is unlikely to be a major force behind the results. However, due to data limitations, I focus on the third mechanism—i.e., the role of information updating and increased awareness of racial discrimination—from a theoretical perspective, and argue that this may play an important role in explaining the observed patterns of political preferences.

Regarding policy implications, my analysis suggests that promoting interracial schools and increasing the share of Black students could be an effective policy to prevent the development of the polarizing and far-right political tendencies that have emerged in recent years. Furthermore, this work highlights how interracial peer groups in schools facilitate the development of shared identities, which may play a crucial role in raising the awareness of issues related to racial justice and promoting political consensus that addresses racial inequality in society.

There are numerous avenues to expand the findings presented in this work. For instance, future work could delve deeper into the composition of cohorts, as the racial identification of Black captures a highly heterogeneous group. Examining the interplay between race and socio-economic status, school location, and teachers may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the observed patterns. Such an investigation could shed more light on the nuanced mechanisms that drive the transmission of political preferences among high school students. Also, the setting of the study in 2008—a year marked by the salience of race in American politics—gives rise to two important questions. Firstly, it is unclear whether the effect of Black peers on political preferences is a

one-time occurrence or whether it has long-lasting implications across multiple election periods. Secondly, if the effect is indeed stronger due to the particular political climate of President Barack Obama's election year, it would be worthwhile to investigate whether other characteristics of a school cohort's composition become relevant in different election cycles.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Variables Definition

Variable	Wave	Description	Range
		Main outcomes & cohort variables:	
Political preferences	IV	In terms of politics, do you consider yourself (1) very conservative; (2) conservative; (3) middle of-the-road; (4) liberal; or (5) very liberal?	1, ..., 5
Overall conservative	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is conservative or very conservative; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Very conservative	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is very conservative; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Overall liberal	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is liberal or very liberal; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Very liberal	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is very liberal; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Anti conservative	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is middle-of-the-road, liberal or very liberal; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Anti liberal	IV	Indicator variable: (1) if the political preference is middle-of-the-road, conservative or very conservative; (0) otherwise	0, 1
% Black peers, all	I	Share of students in an individual's cohort who self-identify as Black/African American	[0, 1]
% Black peers, same sex	I	Share of same-gender students in an individual's cohort who self-identify as Black/African American	[0, 1]
% Black peers, opp. sex	I	Share of opposite-gender students in an individual's cohort who self-identify as Black/African American	[0, 1]
		Balancing outcomes:	
Hispanic	I	Are you of Hispanic origin?	0, 1
Age	I	Age of individual	12, ..., 21
Parent's age	I	Age of the parent who responded the parental survey	20, ..., 81
Parent Catholic	I	Indicator variable: (1) if the parent who responded the survey is Catholic; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Number of older siblings	I	Respondent's number of older siblings	0, ..., 11
Family income	I	Annual family income of respondent (in thousand USD)	0, ..., 999
English spoken at home	I	Indicator variable: (1) if language spoken at home is primarily English; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Single patent family	I	Indicator variable: (1) if only one parent in household; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Live w/both biological parents	I	Indicator variable: (1) if respondent lives with both biological parents; (0) otherwise	0, 1
Grade size	I	Number of students in the school cohort of the respondent	2, ..., 695

(Continues on next page)

Table A.1: Variables Definition (Continued)

Variable	Wave	Description	Range
		School-belonging variables:	
Get along	I	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: You get along with other students: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) strongly disagree	1, ..., 5
Close to people	I	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: You feel close to people at your school: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) strongly disagree	1, ..., 5
Part of school	I	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: You feel like you are part of your school: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) strongly disagree	1, ..., 5
Happy at school	I	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: You are happy to be at your school: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) strongly disagree	1, ..., 5
		Political participation outcomes:	
Party identification	III	Do you identify with a specific political party? (1) yes; (0) no	0, 1
Voted in election of 2000	III	Did you vote in the most recent Presidential election: (1) yes; (0) no	0, 1
Registered to vote	III	Are you registered to vote: (1) yes; (0) no	0, 1
Vote frequency	IV & V	How often do you usually vote in local or statewide elections: (1) never; (2) sometimes; (3) often; (4) always	1, ..., 4

Notes: The table defines the variables used in the main analysis, and the outcomes variables for the different parts of the thesis. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Table A.2: Summary Statistics – Within and Between School Variation

	Observations	Within-school std. dev.	Between-school std. dev
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Main outcomes (Wave IV):			
Political preferences	10,357	0.872	0.241
Political preference = very conservative	10,357	0.176	0.040
Political preference = conservative	10,357	0.396	0.084
Political preference = middle of-the-road	10,357	0.490	0.094
Political preference = liberal	10,357	0.382	0.087
Political preference = very liberal	10,357	0.220	0.047
Cohort's shares (Wave I):			
% Black peers, all	10,357	0.013	0.139
% Black peers, same gender	10,357	0.021	0.137
% Black peers, opp. gender	10,357	0.021	0.141
Other variables (Wave I):			
Female	10,357	0.493	0.074
Age	10,354	1.157	1.333
Race = White	10,357	0.227	0.194
Race = Asian	10,357	0.105	0.099
Race = American Indian	10,357	0.071	0.043
Race = Other	10,357	0.172	0.130
Hispanic	10,357	0.211	0.218
Family income	8,002	36.036	21.795
Religion = Catholic	10,218	0.374	0.208
Religion = Protestant	10,218	0.430	0.230
Religion = Atheist (no religion)	10,218	0.302	0.096
School: urban	10,357	0.000	0.435
School: grade size	10,357	28.066	139.218
School: Grades	10,357	0.000	1.278
Grade = 7th	10,357	0.201	0.236
Grade = 8th	10,357	0.202	0.217
Grade = 9th	10,357	0.291	0.128
Grade = 10th	10,357	0.286	0.126
Grade = 11th	10,357	0.282	0.112
Grade = 12th	10,357	0.289	0.123
Other variables (Wave IV):			
Age	10,354	1.168	1.333
Attends college	10,356	0.438	0.154
Employed	10,354	0.469	0.076
No health insurance	10,345	0.390	0.092
Military participation	10,357	0.230	0.046
Ever arrested	10,317	0.438	0.087
Voting regularity	10,332	1.118	0.276

Notes: The table reports descriptive statistics for the main variables used in the analysis, including number of observations and two measurements of the std. dev. of the variables, i.e., std dev. within schools and between schools. The sample includes non-Black students in grades 7 through 12. Wave IV cross-sectional weights are used. Detailed information on how these variables are constructed can be found in Appendix Table B.1. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Table A.3: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Definitions

	Alternative samples:			Anti-sentiment:	
	Alternative Definition (1)	Only Whites (2)	Small sample (3)	Anti conservative (4)	Anti liberal (5)
% Black peers, same gender	0.870***	0.825**	0.815**	0.378**	-0.118
	(0.330)	(0.377)	(0.339)	(0.182)	(0.150)
% Black peers, opp. gender	-0.039	-0.094	-0.051	-0.145	-0.181
	(0.350)	(0.398)	(0.373)	(0.182)	(0.152)
P-value	0.07	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.78
Mean dep. var.	3.018	3.009	3.022	0.744	0.741
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.912	0.909	0.909	0.437	0.438
Observations	10,108	8,275	10,297	10,357	10,357

Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample in column (1) is conformed by all participants, who were not categorized as "Black/ African American" by Add Health's interviewers, in column (2), by those who self-identified exclusively as White, and in column (3) by non-Black students, in cohorts with at least five other students in Add Health. The sample in columns (4) and (5) corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. In columns (1) to (3), the dep. variable is a 1-to-5 categorical variable ranging from "very conservative" to "very liberal". For columns (4) and (5) the dep. variable is an indicator variable coded as 1 if the political preference corresponds to the title (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table B.1). Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. The reported p-value in the table corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients for same-gender and opposite-gender Black peers are equal. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table A.4: Attrition and the Likelihood of Responding about Political Preferences

Dep var.:	Interviewed in Wave IV		Missing political preferences	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
% Black peers, all	-0.003		-0.077	
	(0.206)		(0.106)	
% Black peers, same gender		-0.042		0.048
		(0.113)		(0.081)
% Black peers, opp. gender		-0.140		-0.103
		(0.116)		(0.081)
Mean dep. var.	0.760	0.761	0.061	0.061
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.427	0.426	0.239	0.239
Observations	15,013	14,897	11,416	11,341

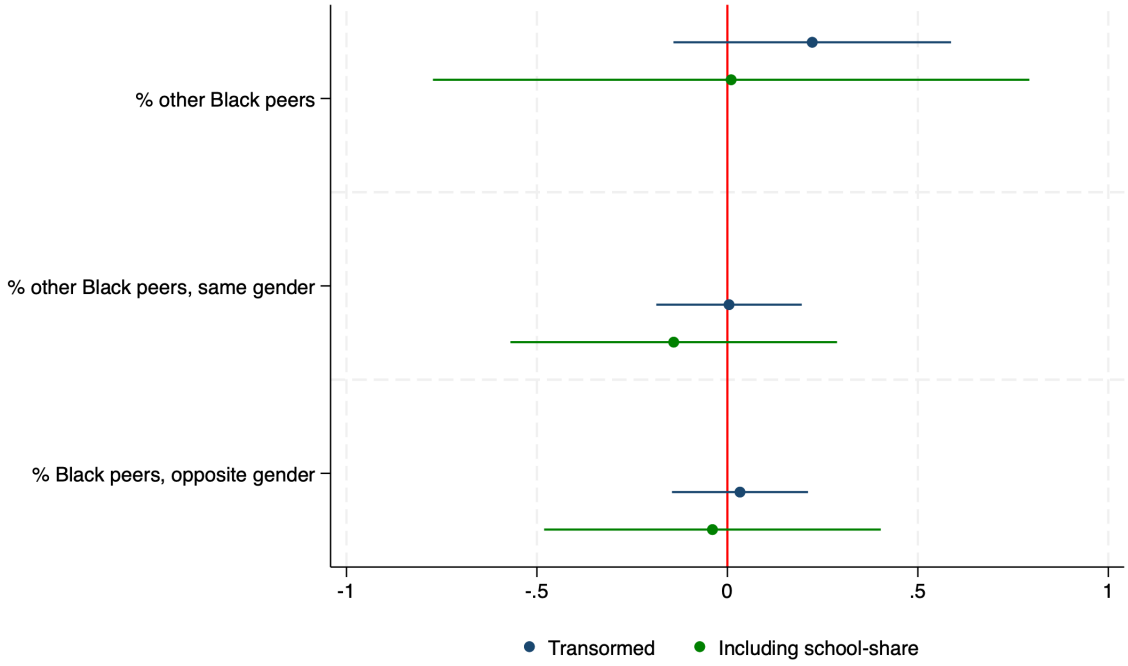
Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects. The dependent variable in columns (1) and (2) is an indicator variable, which equals to 1 if the person was interviewed in Wave IV, and to 0 otherwise. The sample in these columns is conformed by all non-Black students in the in-home survey of Wave I from Add Health. The dependent variable in columns (3) and (4) is an indicator variable, which equals to 1 if the respondent did not reply to the question about his/her political preferences, and to 0 otherwise. The sample in these columns is conformed by all non-Black students who were interviewed in Wave IV from Add Health. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table A.5: Raw and Residual Variation in the Share of Black Peers

	Observations (1)	Mean (2)	Std. dev. (3)	Min (4)	Max (5)
% Black peers, all:					
Raw cohort variable	10,357	0.092	0.141	0.000	0.942
Residuals: net of school-gender and grade-gender FE	10,357	0.000	0.021	-0.345	0.130
Residuals: net of school-gender, grade-gender FE and school trends	10,357	0.000	0.015	-0.215	0.111
% Black peers, same gender					
Raw cohort variable	10,357	0.092	0.141	0.000	1.000
Residuals: net of school-gender and grade-gender FE	10,357	0.000	0.027	-0.334	0.383
Residuals: net of school-gender, grade-gender FE and school trends	10,357	0.000	0.023	-0.221	0.427
% Black peers, opp. gender					
Raw cohort variable	10,357	0.094	0.145	0.000	0.962
Residuals: net of school-gender and grade-gender FE	10,357	0.000	0.028	-0.356	0.335
Residuals: net of school-gender, grade-gender FE and school trends	10,357	0.000	0.023	-0.299	0.335

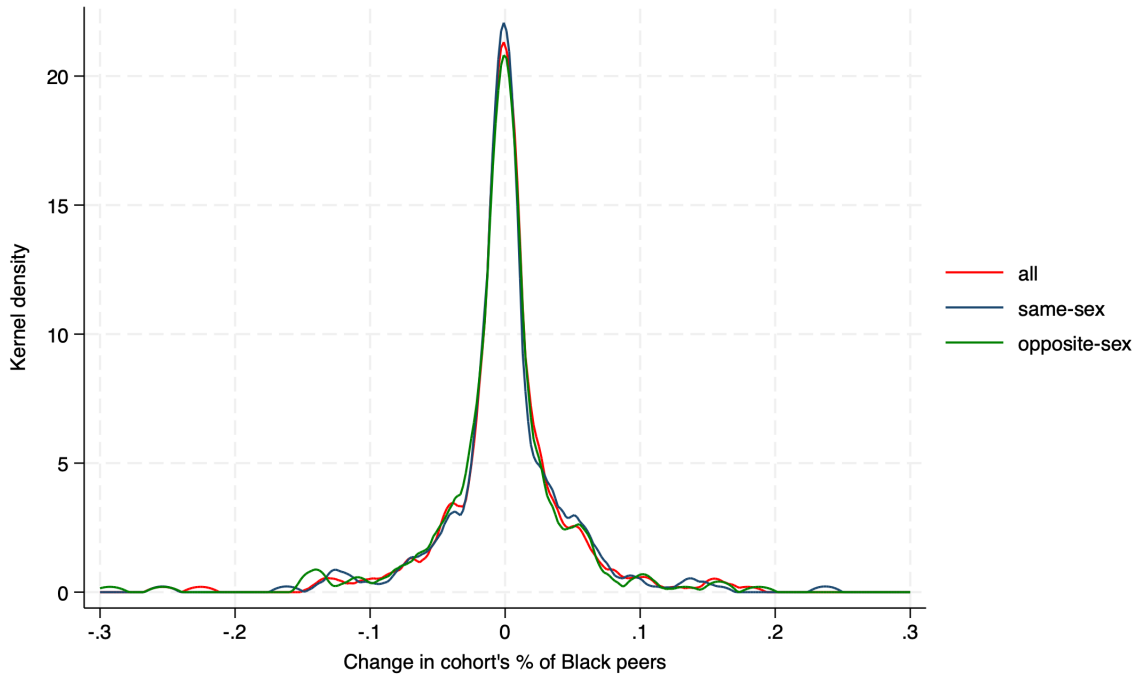
Notes: The table reports descriptive statistics for the share of all Black peers, same-gender Black peers, and opposite-gender Black peers at the cohort level before and after removing school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and then also after removing school specific trends. The sample includes non-Black students in grades 7 through 12. Wave IV cross-sectional weights are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Figure A.1: Test for Nonrandom Clustering



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The dep. variable in panel A is the overall liberal indicator variable, and in panel B the very liberal indicator variable (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table A.1). The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Each coefficient is accompanied by its respective 90% confidence interval. The reported p-value below each category corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients in that group are equal. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Figure A.2: Variation of the Share of Black Students in a School



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The dep. variable in panel A is the overall liberal indicator variable, and in panel B the very liberal indicator variable (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table A.1). The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Each coefficient is accompanied by its respective 90% confidence interval. The reported p-value below each category corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients in that group are equal. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Table A.6: Effect of Black peers on Future Political Preferences – Nonlinear Binary Specifications

Dep. var:	Overall conservative			Very conservative		
	Probit (1)	Logit (2)	Poisson (3)	Probit (4)	Logit (5)	Poisson (6)
Panel A — Effect of all Black peers						
% Black peers, all	-0.224	-0.229	-0.211	-0.322	-0.323	-0.240
	(0.193)	(0.195)	(0.181)	(0.205)	(0.203)	(0.149)
Panel B — Effect of Black peers, divided by gender						
% Black peers, same gender	-0.345**	-0.354**	-0.308**	-0.316***	-0.319***	-0.241***
	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.157)	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.091)
% Black peers, opp. gender	0.130	0.126	0.116	-0.058	-0.068	-0.052
	(0.171)	(0.172)	(0.161)	(0.121)	(0.117)	(0.086)
Mean dep. var.	0.257	0.257	0.256	0.058	0.058	0.044
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.439	0.439	0.437	0.234	0.234	0.205
Observations	10,287	10,287	10,357	8,260	8,260	10,357

Notes: The table reports average marginal effects of Probit, Logit, and Poisson regressions for the dependent variables overall conservative and very conservative (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table B.1). Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Missing observations in columns (1), (2), (4), and (5) are observations omitted by Stata (version 17) because of collinearity. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table A.7: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Robustness Checks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A – Dep. variable: Political preferences					
% Black peers, same gender	0.858**	0.810**	0.825**	0.808**	0.801**
	(0.331)	(0.340)	(0.342)	(0.356)	(0.351)
Mean dep. var.	3.020	3.020	3.020	3.020	3.020
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.911	0.911	0.911	0.911	0.911
Panel B –Dep. variable: Overall conservative					
% Black peers, same gender	-0.359**	-0.372**	-0.372*	-0.387*	-0.383*
	(0.174)	(0.184)	(0.200)	(0.198)	(0.202)
Mean dep. var.	0.256	0.256	0.256	0.256	0.256
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.437	0.437	0.437	0.437	0.437
Panel C – Dep. variable: Very conservative					
% Black peers, same gender	-0.229**	-0.218**	-0.187**	-0.196**	-0.203**
	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Mean dep. var.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205
Baseline controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Individual controls		Y	Y	Y	Y
School, peer controls			Y	Y	Y
Wave IV controls				Y	Y
Std. dev. control					Y
Observations	10,357	10,357	10,357	10,357	10,357

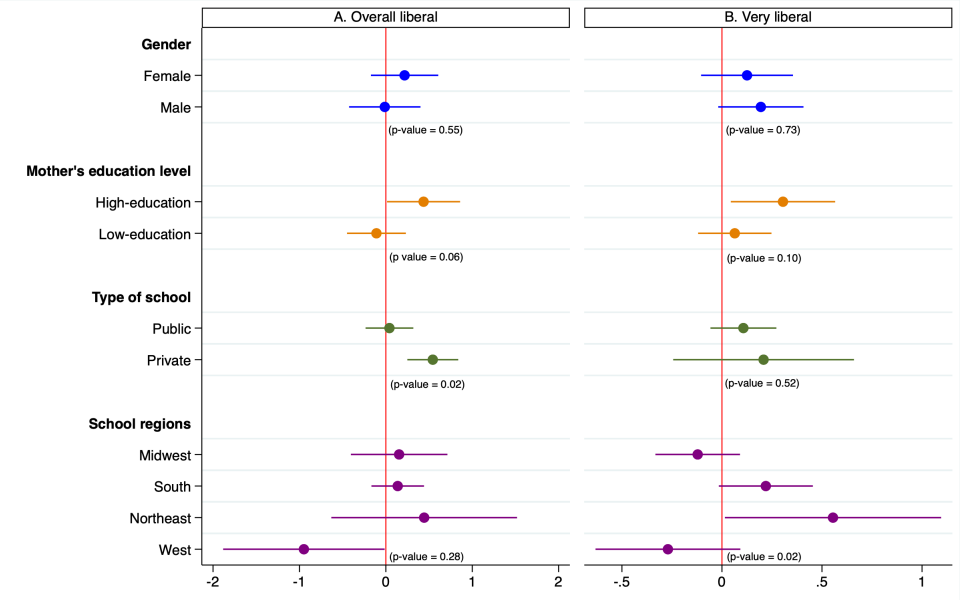
Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. Individual controls are: race, Hispanic, born in the US, age, language spoken at home, parental age, household size, parental education, log-family income, and a dummy variable that equals 1 if the student lives in a single-parent household. School peer controls refers to: cohorts gender ratio, and number of same-gender peers, average school grade, dummy if ever repeated a grade, and the share of same-gender peers born in the US, Asian, Hispanic, with parents born in the US, with parents with a college degree, and with parents in the labor force. Wave IV controls are: log-earnings, home-ownership, and health insurance status in 2008-2009. Missing dummies were used for missing information in the following variables: number of older siblings, parental education, log-family income, average school grade, age in Wave IV, log-earnings in Wave IV, house-ownership in Wave IV, and health insurance in Wave IV. Std. dev. control is the within cohort's standard deviation of the share of same-gendered Black peers. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table A.8: Effect of Black Peers on Future Political Preferences – Ordered Logit Regressions

	Independent variable: % Black peers		
	all	opp. gender	same gender
Dep. var.: Political preferences	(1)	(2)	(3)
Very conservative	-0.065*	0.002	-0.069**
	(0.039)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Conservative	-0.220*	0.007	-0.234**
	(0.131)	(0.103)	(0.101)
Middle of-the-road	-0.001	0.000	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Liberal	0.198*	-0.006	0.210**
	(0.118)	(0.093)	(0.091)
Very liberal	0.089*	-0.003	0.094**
	(0.053)	(0.042)	(0.040)
Mean dep. var.	3.020	3.020	
Std. dev. dep. var	0.911	0.911	
Observations	10,357	10,357	

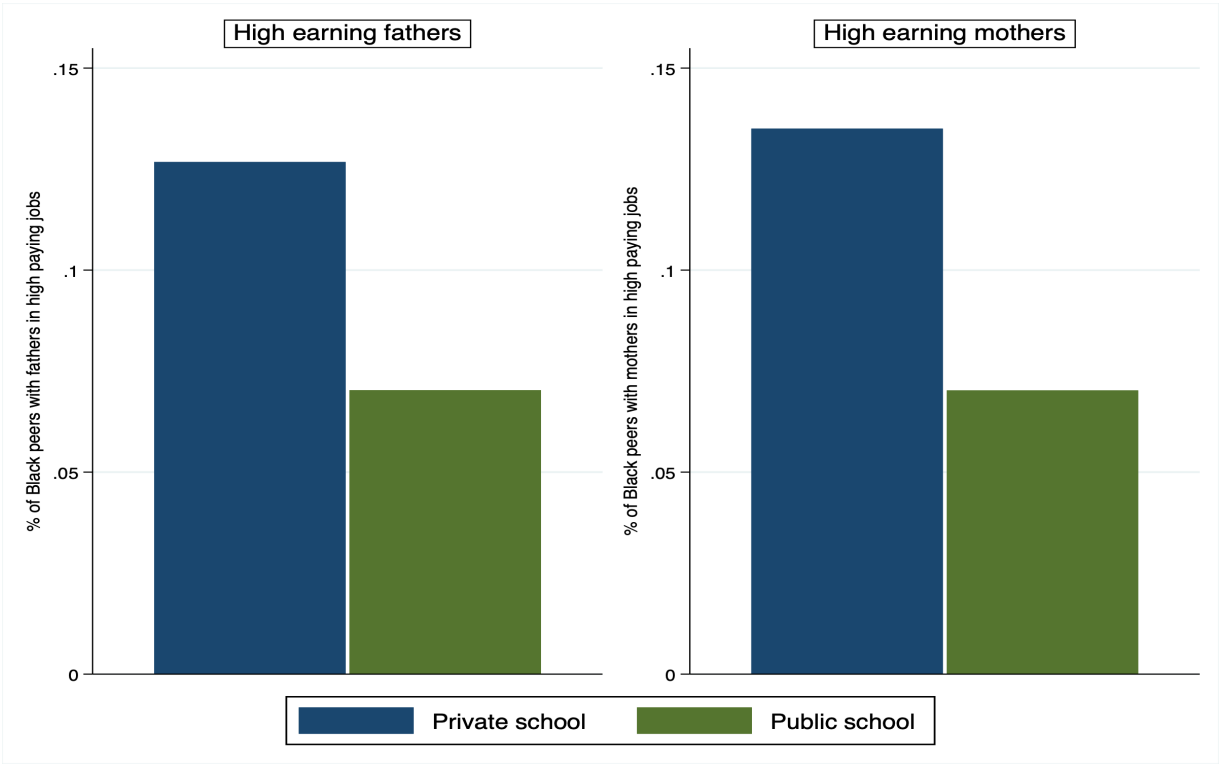
Notes: The table reports average marginal effects of ordered logit regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. Column (1) reports the results from using the overall cohort share of Black peers. Column (2) and (3) report results from the same regression, in (2) the opposite-gender Black share, and (3) for the same-gender share. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Figure A.3: Effect of Black Peers on Future Liberal Preferences – Heterogeneity



Notes: The figure reports the coefficients of the effect of same-gender Black peers on future political outcomes from OLS regressions. Standard errors are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The dep. variable in panel A is the overall liberal indicator variable, and in panel B the very liberal indicator variable (see more in detail the construction of these dep. variables in Appendix Table A.1). The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Each coefficient is accompanied by its respective 90% confidence interval. The reported p-value below each category corresponds to the hypothesis test that the coefficients in that group are equal. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Figure A.4: High-Earning Black Families in Private and Public Schools



Notes: The figure reports the share of Black peers with mothers and fathers in high-paying positions from all Black peers in the cohort, for all public and private schools in the sample. The following professions are listed as high-earning jobs: doctor, lawyer, scientist, and manager. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).

Table A.9: Heterogeneity in the Effect by School-Belonging Categories

	Get along		Close to people		Part of school		Happy at school	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A – Dep. variable: Overall conservative								
% Black peers, same gender	-0.895***	0.360	-0.379	-0.102	-0.680***	0.346	-0.334	-0.385
	(0.275)	(0.278)	(0.242)	(0.441)	(0.210)	(0.306)	(0.229)	(0.340)
Mean dep. var.	0.253	0.267	0.261	0.246	0.266	0.228	0.264	0.242
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.435	0.443	0.439	0.431	0.442	0.420	0.441	0.428
Panel B – Dep. variable: Very conservative								
% Black peers, same gender	-0.323**	0.002	-0.226**	-0.215	-0.225*	-0.140	-0.156	-0.301**
	(0.158)	(0.138)	(0.113)	(0.209)	(0.116)	(0.148)	(0.124)	(0.138)
Mean dep. var.	0.045	0.043	0.046	0.039	0.046	0.038	0.047	0.039
Std. dev. dep. var.	0.207	0.204	0.210	0.193	0.210	0.191	0.211	0.193
Observations	4,664	4,134	6,978	3,372	7,527	2,823	6,889	3,464

Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. For each category of school-belonging, the sample is divided into those with high-scoring and low-scoring answers to the respective question (see more in detail the construction of these categories in Appendix Table B.1). Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

Table A.10: Effect of Strong Political Preferences on Political Participation

Dep. variable: Voting frequency	Wave IV			Wave V		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Political preferences	0.004			-0.017		
	(0.020)			(0.024)		
Very conservative		0.082			0.219**	
		(0.083)			(0.109)	
Very liberal			0.100			0.091
			(0.071)			(0.080)
Mean dep. var.	2.308	2.308	2.308	2.464	2.464	2.464
Std. dev. dep. var.	1.155	1.155	1.155	1.145	1.145	1.145
Observations	10,332	10,332	10,332	7,328	7,328	7,328

Notes: The table reports estimate results from OLS regressions. Standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the school level. All model specifications include school-gender and grade-gender fixed effects, and control for grade size. The sample corresponds to non-Black students in Add Health that had full information for Waves I and IV. Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave IV are used in columns (1) – (3). Add Health cross-sectional weights for Wave V are used in columns (4)–(6). See more in detail the construction of the dep. variable in Appendix Table B.1. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Harris et al. (2009).
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$