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Research in Greater Depth: Movements for Racial Justice

Instructions: Read the following news article excerpts and poll data and complete the “Source Analysis” handout.

Excerpts of News Articles

Source 1

National Public Radio (NPR): “Trump’s And Biden’s Plans For Racial Equality” by Elena Moore, October 16, 2020. <<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/16/916741084/trumps-and-biden-s-plans-for-racial-equality>>

Biden’s plans for racial equality

Biden has laid out a comprehensive plan to address racial disparities within the United States on issues ranging from health to policing, zeroing in on measures to advance economic equality, access to affordable housing, education and a fair criminal justice system.

Biden pledges to support minority-owned small businesses by allocating \$30 billion—10% of the \$300 billion going toward research and development outlined in his jobs plan—specifically toward a Small Business Opportunity Fund, which would also leverage private investments. He also plans to invest \$50 billion in venture capital specifically for Black and brown entrepreneurs, put \$100 billion toward low-interest loans and provide educational and development opportunities for new entrepreneurs and students. Overall, he says, these investments through the fund will bring forward a gain of \$150 billion.

Biden also advocates for reforming the current Opportunity Zone tax deferral passed under the Trump administration to help distressed communities, assigning the U.S. Department of Treasury to increase supervision over organizations receiving the benefit.

To boost homeownership within minority communities, Biden wants to create 1.5 million new homes and public housing units and provide up to \$15,000 in tax credits for people buying their first homes. He also calls for an end to discriminatory housing policies, stressing the need to penalize

financial institutions perpetuating such policies and outlining policies to strengthen renters’ rights and provide more housing vouchers.

On education reform, Biden wants to expand student loan forgiveness and make public universities as well as private historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions tuition-free for students with household incomes under \$125,000.

Trump’s plans for racial equality

Trump has not outlined a broad policy plan to address racial inequity. Trump has repeatedly questioned whether systemic racism is a problem in the United States. He argues that his policies have helped Black Americans, in particular, often citing record low Black unemployment before the pandemic hit. Trump says his economic policies will help bring unemployment back to those record lows.

On June 11, Trump spoke about a four-step policy geared toward building “safety and opportunity and dignity.” He highlighted a need for increased federal support toward minority-owned small businesses and addressed “health care disparities,” saying more funding should go toward medical facilities that serve largely nonwhite populations.

Trump has also called for expanding Opportunity Zones, a tax deferral for distressed communities passed as part of the 2017 tax bill.

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Source 2

ABC News: “Trump vs. Biden on the issues: Racial justice” by Justin Gomez, September 29, 2020. <<https://abc-news.go.com/Politics/trump-biden-issues-racial-justice/story?id=73145335>>

Race is now at the center of the national conversation heading into the final weeks of the 2020 campaign for president, from the disproportionate impact the novel coronavirus pandemic has had on communities of color to reforms that would help address racial disparities in policing.

It has also been a complicated issue for both candidates over the course of their long careers. Former Vice President Joe Biden made history by choosing a Black woman, Kamala Harris, to be his running mate and served alongside the nation’s first Black president.

But he has also drawn criticism for his position on busing in the 1970’s to help end segregation in schools and the 1994 crime bill, which helped lead to an era of mass incarceration.

Trump set the tone for his presidency when he said Mexico was not sending its best immigrants, including “rapists,” on the day he announced his campaign. That was followed by a call to ban Muslim immigration, his perpetuation of the debunked “birther” conspiracy against President Barack Obama among other things. And he has largely ignored the sources of the racial unrest that has erupted around the country in recent months.

At the same time, Trump has claimed he is the least racist person and touted the economic opportunities he has created for African Americans during his presidency.

Here’s a look at where Trump and Biden differ on the issue of racial justice, and significant statements they’ve made related to race....

Trump 2020

In 2020, Trump called Black Lives Matter “a symbol of hate” and also stoked racist fears after overturning an Obama-era housing rule intended to fight racial segregation by linking funding to the reduction of housing inequality....

In an attempt to appeal to his base, Trump made a request in September to the Office of Man-

agement and Budget to halt anti-racism training in federal workplaces, calling it “anti-American propaganda.” He later signed an executive order expanding the ban to contractors doing business with the federal government. The order prohibits the teaching of “divisive concepts” such as white privilege, which is the analysis of the inherent advantages a white person has in America, and systemic racism, which examines discriminatory rules, practices and customs embedded in law.

Weeks later, Trump contradicted that order with the release of his economic “Platinum Plan” for Black Americans, which includes “diversity training....”

In response to a national outcry over killings of unarmed Black people by police, Trump has chosen to brand himself the “law and order” president while avoiding discussions about the root cause of the protests, despite expressing sympathy for the families of some of the people killed. He’s said demonstrators protesting racial injustice are “looking for trouble” and that companies supporting BLM are “weak” and led by “weak people.”

He’s a strict opponent to calls for stripping police departments of funds and called the “defund the police” movement a “fad....”

Trump has refused to acknowledge that systemic racism is a problem in the United States. However, in a departure from his tough-on-crime rhetoric, one of the biggest legislative achievements of Trump’s first term was signing into law the bipartisan ‘First Step Act’ in 2018, which provided the most sweeping changes to prison sentencing laws in decades, and which Trump says will “rollback” certain provisions from President Bill Clinton’s 1994 Crime Bill that disproportionately affected the Black community.

More than 3,100 inmates have been released so far as part of its enactment, including Alice Johnson, a Black grandmother who was serving a life sentence for a non-violent drug arrest and was ultimately pardoned by Trump....

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Joe Biden...

Unlike his opponent,...Biden does acknowledge systemic racism and has released the “Biden Plan for strengthening America’s Commitment to Justice,” which focuses on preventing crime, eliminating racial disparities and providing second chances for those who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

Biden’s plan, which was put forward before this year’s protests, calls for an end to private prisons, cash bail and the death penalty and would expand the Justice Department’s purview to address police and prosecutor misconduct. It would also institute an independent task force to tackle discrimination.

He also supports the decriminalization of marijuana and automatically expunging records for those who have been convicted of marijuana-related offenses. Data compiled by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) shows that Black people have been four times more likely than white people to be arrested for marijuana possession.

A pillar of his “Build Back Better” policies focuses on the economy and inclusion, specifically how he would help Black, Latino and disadvantaged communities....

Biden has embraced the concept of “Black Lives Matter” and often talks about disparities in the country....

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Polling Data

Pew Research Center: “Voters’ Attitudes About Race and Gender Are Even More Divided Than in 2016,” September 10, 2020. <<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/09/10/voters-attitudes-about-race-and-gender-are-even-more-divided-than-in-2016/>>

Overall, 44% of Americans now say that it is a lot more difficult to be a Black person in the U.S. than it is to be a White person, while 32% say it is a little more difficult and 23% say it is no more difficult. The share saying it is a lot more difficult to be Black than White is now 9 percentage points higher than it was in the summer of 2016.

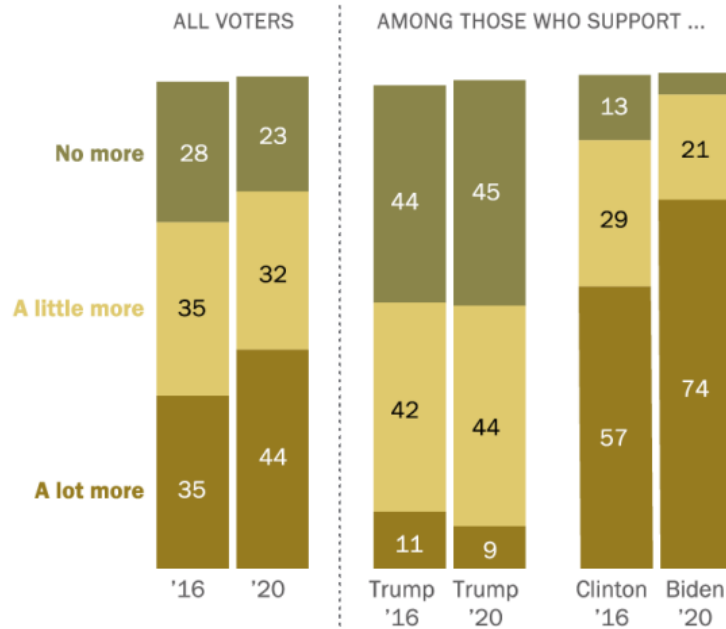
But while overall views have shifted, the shift has come exclusively from within the Democratic coalition. The attitudes of Trump supporters today look very similar to attitudes of Trump supporters

four years ago: 45% of Trump voters now say that it is no more difficult to be a Black person in the U.S. than to be a White person, while 44% say Black people have it a little more difficult. Only about one-in-ten Trump supporters say that Black people have it a lot more difficult than White people.

Biden’s backers, on the other hand, are substantially more likely today than Clinton’s backers were in 2016 to say that it is a lot more difficult to be Black than White (74% today vs. 57% in 2016)....

Since 2016, more voters – particularly Democrats – say it’s more difficult to be Black than White in U.S.

% of registered voters who say it is ____ difficult to be a Black person in this country than it is to be a White person



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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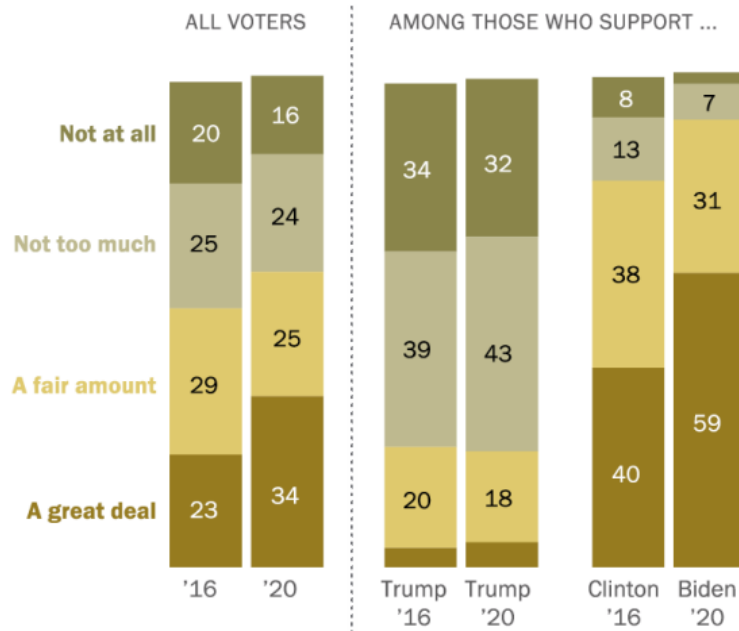
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The pattern of opinion on the question of whether White people benefit from societal advantages Black people do not have is largely parallel, with a larger share of voters now saying that White people benefit a great deal from advantages in society that Black people don't have. While Biden's

supporters are substantially more likely to say that White people have advantages than Clinton supporters were in 2016 (59% today, 40% then), just 5% of Trump supporters say this today—little different than the 4% who said this in 2016...

Most Biden voters, fewer Trump voters say White people have societal advantages Black people do not

% of registered voters who say White people benefit _____ from advantages in society that Black people do not have



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.
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