

ON-LINE MATERIAL

In *The Nature of Social Science*, Homans (1974) maintains there is a trade-off between generalization and explanation. The former details the relationships between variables and their central tendencies yet “the nature of the relationship, the function, is not very specific” (20), whereas the latter specifies the nuance, details, and possible causal mechanisms that drive that larger tendency, but is “known to hold good only to within rather narrow limits” (20). “Thinking of these,” Homans wrote, “I have sometimes entertained the hypothesis that in social science the greater the generalization, the less its explanatory power” (21). Via the content analysis and ethnographic data, I have thus far examined *explanations* for the logics used to make meaning of white domination in a racialized social system. Yet, we do not yet have a sense of whether these interpretive logics are *generalizable*.

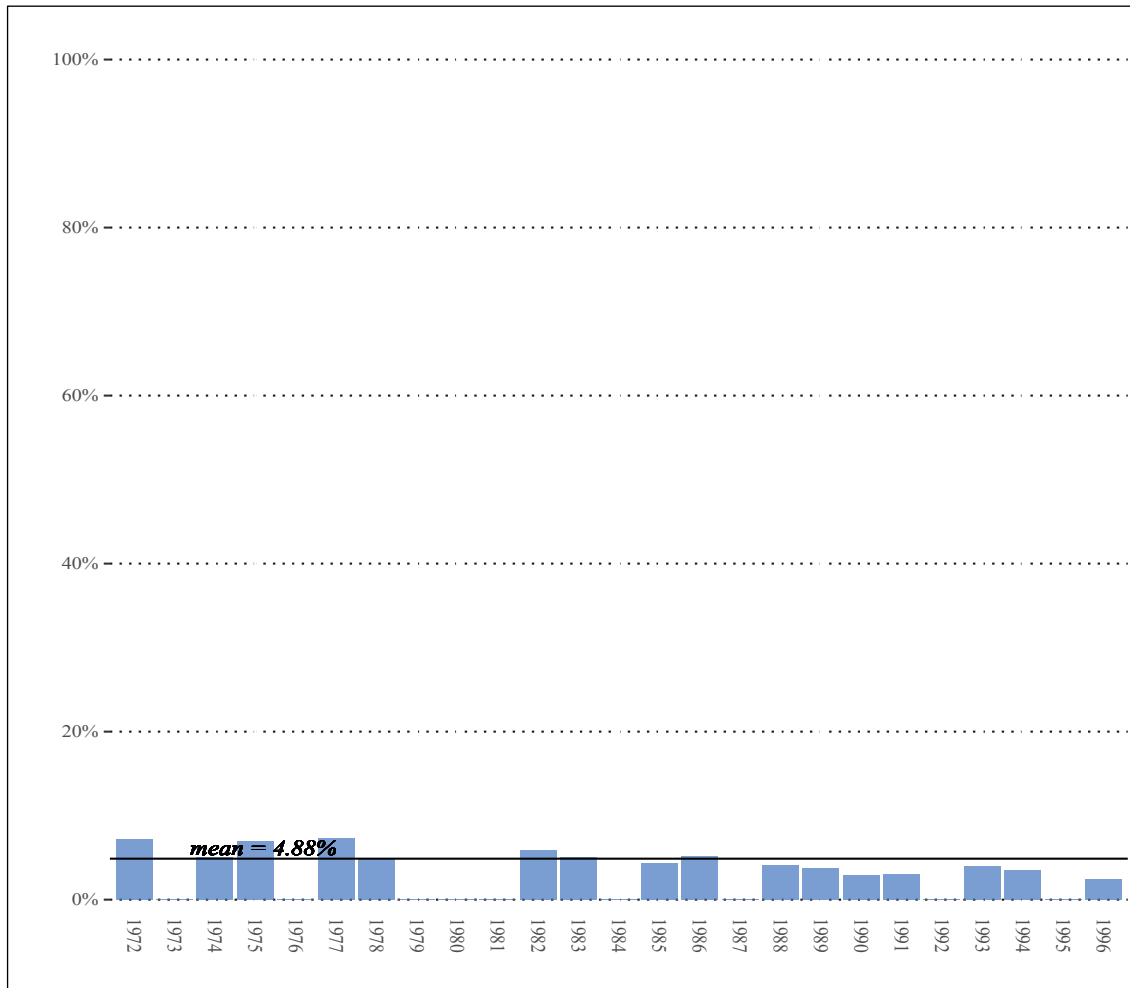
To remedy this gap, I below display data from the General Social Survey (Hereafter “GSS”) (Smith, Marsden, Hout, Kim 2017), drawn from varied years between 1972 to 2016. In particular, I show trends on white ideologies on education, employment, and housing (similar ideologies on police-community relations were not available from the GSS) This data thus provides an generalizable overview on white ideologies that supplement the racial logics that explain these ideological trends.

It will be readily apparent to the reader how invariant many of these trends are. That is the point. Invariance and stability is as valid a finding as variance and instability. That is, constants are as much reflections of social structures as are variations. Particularly given the scope of this article, the explanations for the racial logics are now contextualized within the scope of generalizable, nation-wide ideologies that are relatively constant across time and space.

Education

The following white responses pertain to sending white children to schools with black enrollment levels (See Figure 1A, 2A, and 3A below). The first question (Figure 1A) asks, “Would you yourself have any objection to sending your children to a school where a few of the children are the opposite race [Negroes/Blacks /African-Americans]?”

Figure 1A. Children to school with opposite race? Percent “Yes” White Response

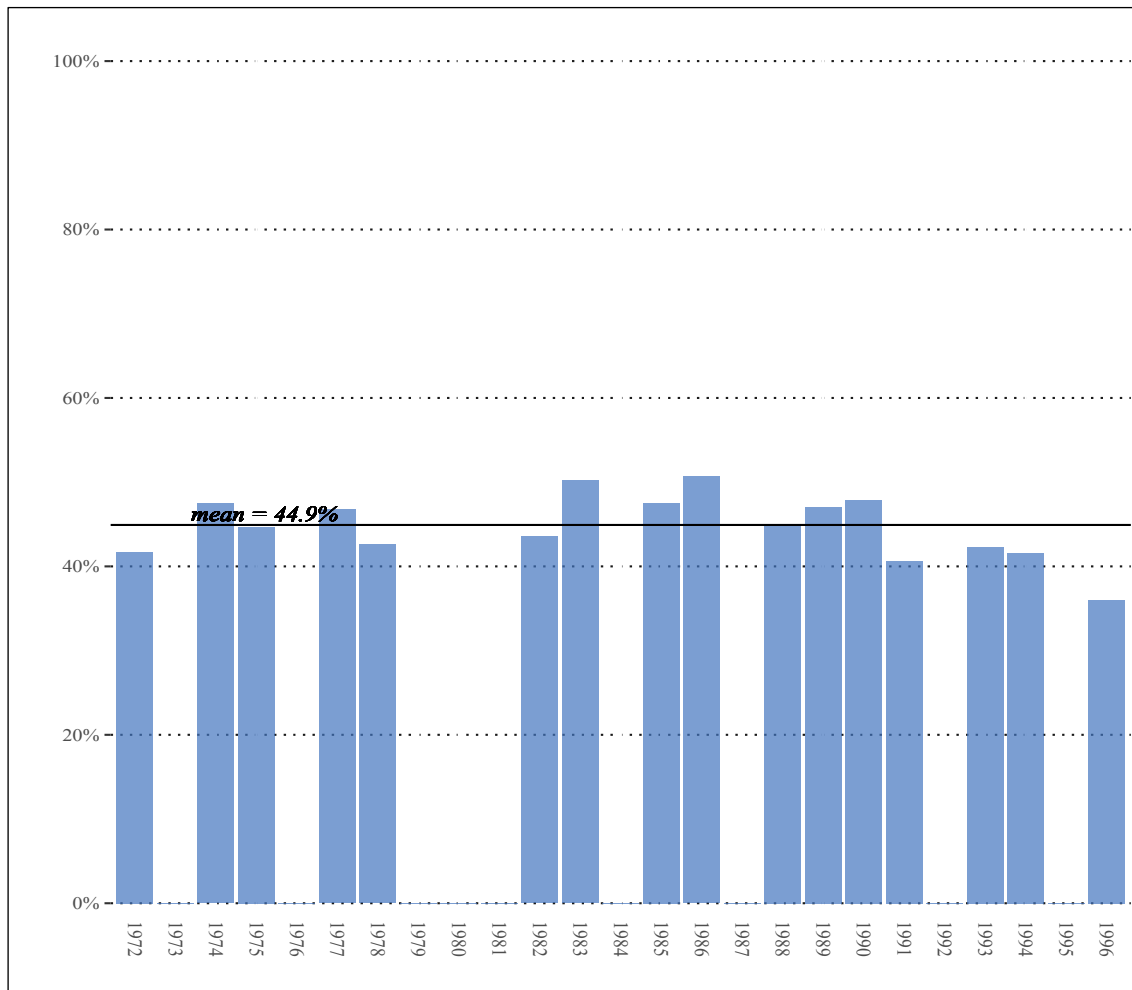


Note:

Total “RACFEW” responses over time: (N=18,821). “Yes” responses over time: (n=918; 4.9%).

Figure 1B displays white “yes” responses from the following question: “Would you yourself have any objection to sending your children to a school where half of the children are [Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans]?”

Figure 1B. Children to school half opposite race? Percent “Yes” White Response

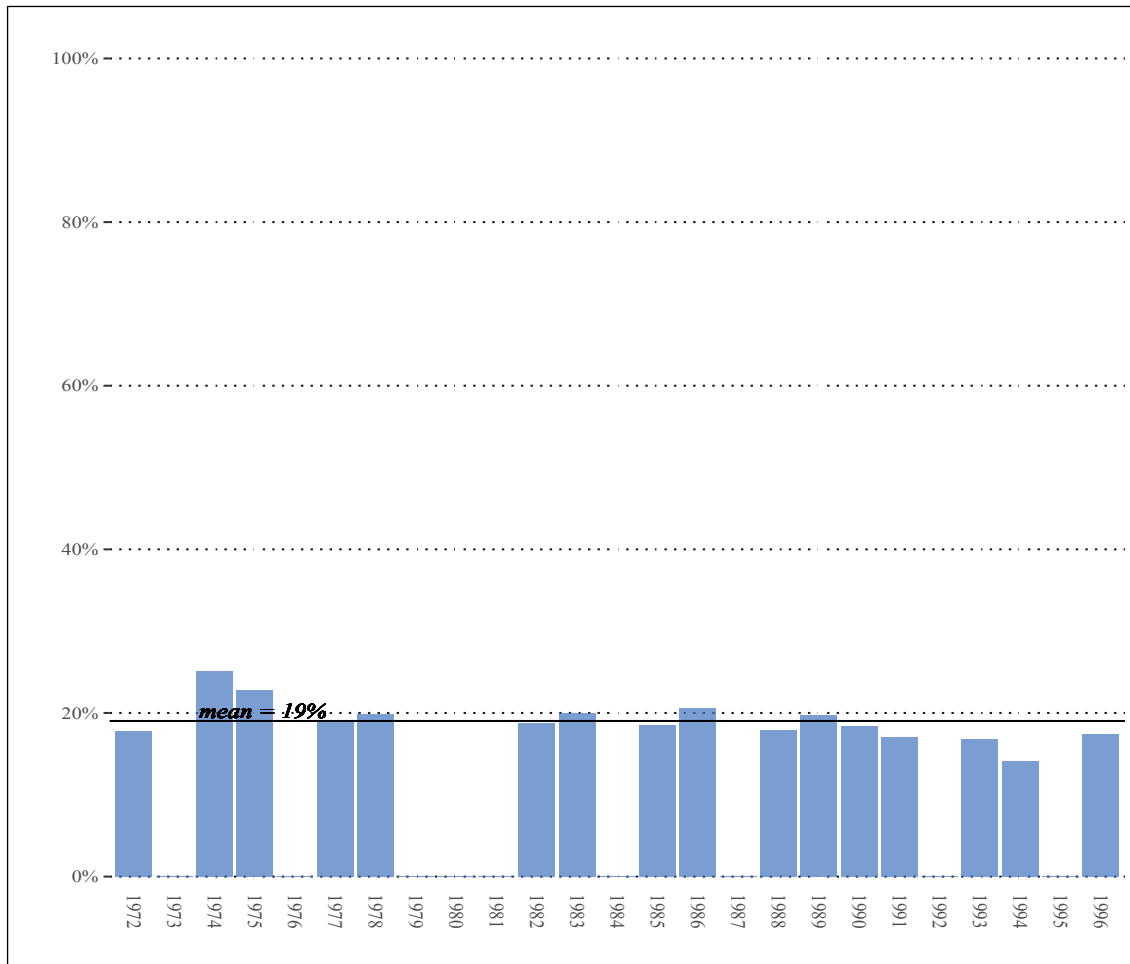


Note:

Total “RACHAF” responses over time: (N=17,507). “Yes” responses over time (n=3,330; 19.0%).

Figure 1C displays white “yes” responses to “Would you yourself have any objection to sending your children to a school where most of the children are [Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans]?”

Figure 1C. Children to school mostly opposite race? Percent “Yes” White Response



Note:
Total

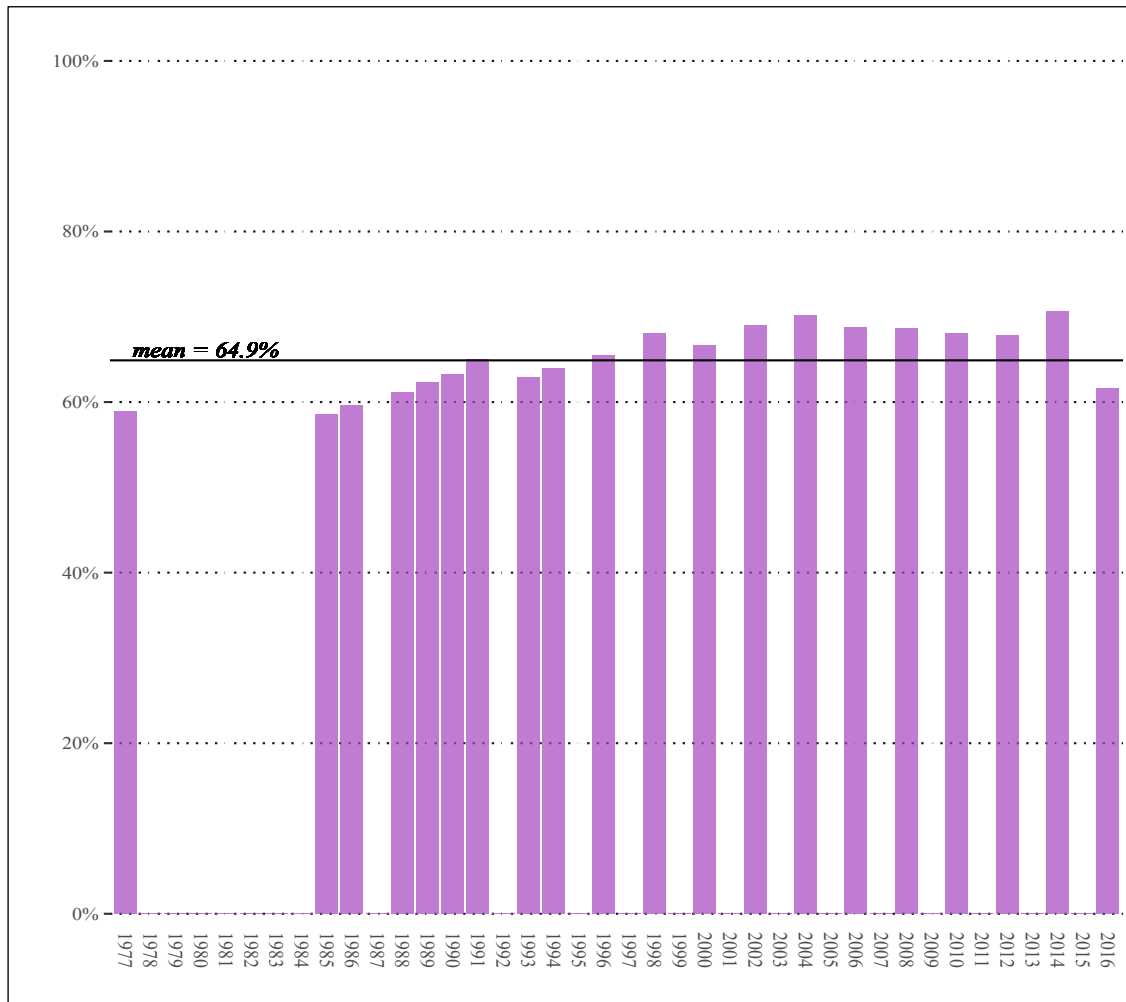
“RACMOST” responses over time: (N=13,754). “Yes” responses over time (n=6,178; 44.9%).

Across all three questions, we can observe a staple linear relationship between higher black student enrollment and whites’ refusal (increasing from an average of 4.9% refusal [Figure 1A] to an average of 44.9% refusal [Figure 1C]) to send their child to schools increasingly populated with the “opposite race” (generally understood as “African American”). These white ideologies are fairly consistent over time and show only minimal signs of weakening in recent years.

Employment

The GSS also holds white responses to five questions related to race and employment (See Figures 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E below). The first question (Figure 2A) asks: “Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it discriminates against whites. What about your opinion -- are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?” The “against” answers are displayed through a synthesis of responses that responded with “oppose” and “strongly oppose.” The across year average is 87.4% and has declined only slightly in recent years.

Figure 2A. Favor preference in hiring blacks? Percent “Against” White Response

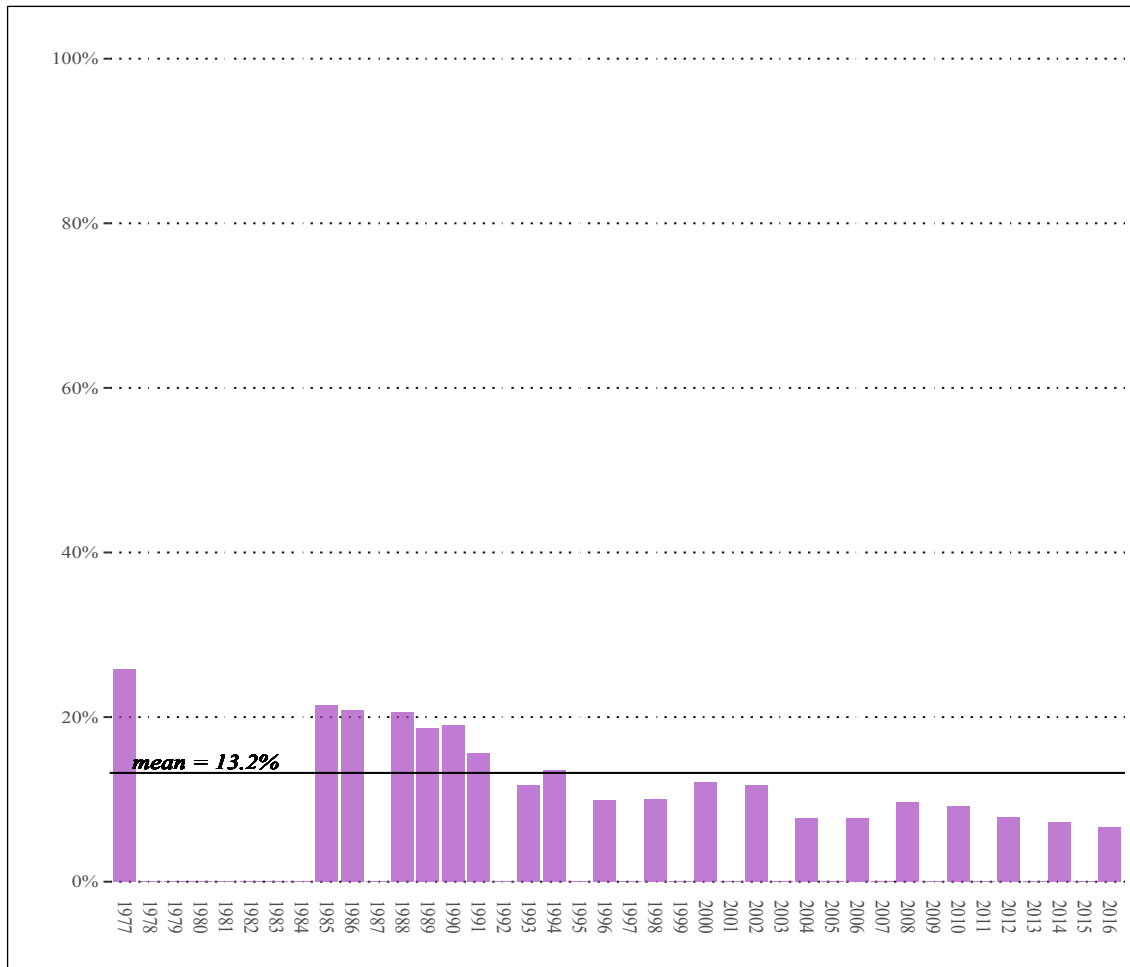


Note:

Total “AFFRMACT” responses over time: (N=13,580). “Against” responses over time: (n= 11,863; 87.4%).

The next four questions track white attitudes from 1977 to 2016 and provide the following prompt: “On the average (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people.” The first of these (Figure 2B) asks “Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?” Only “no” answers are displayed, which show a slight increase over time, with the exception of a decline in 2016, with an across time average of 64.9% “no” response.

2B. Differences due to discrimination? Percent “No” White Response

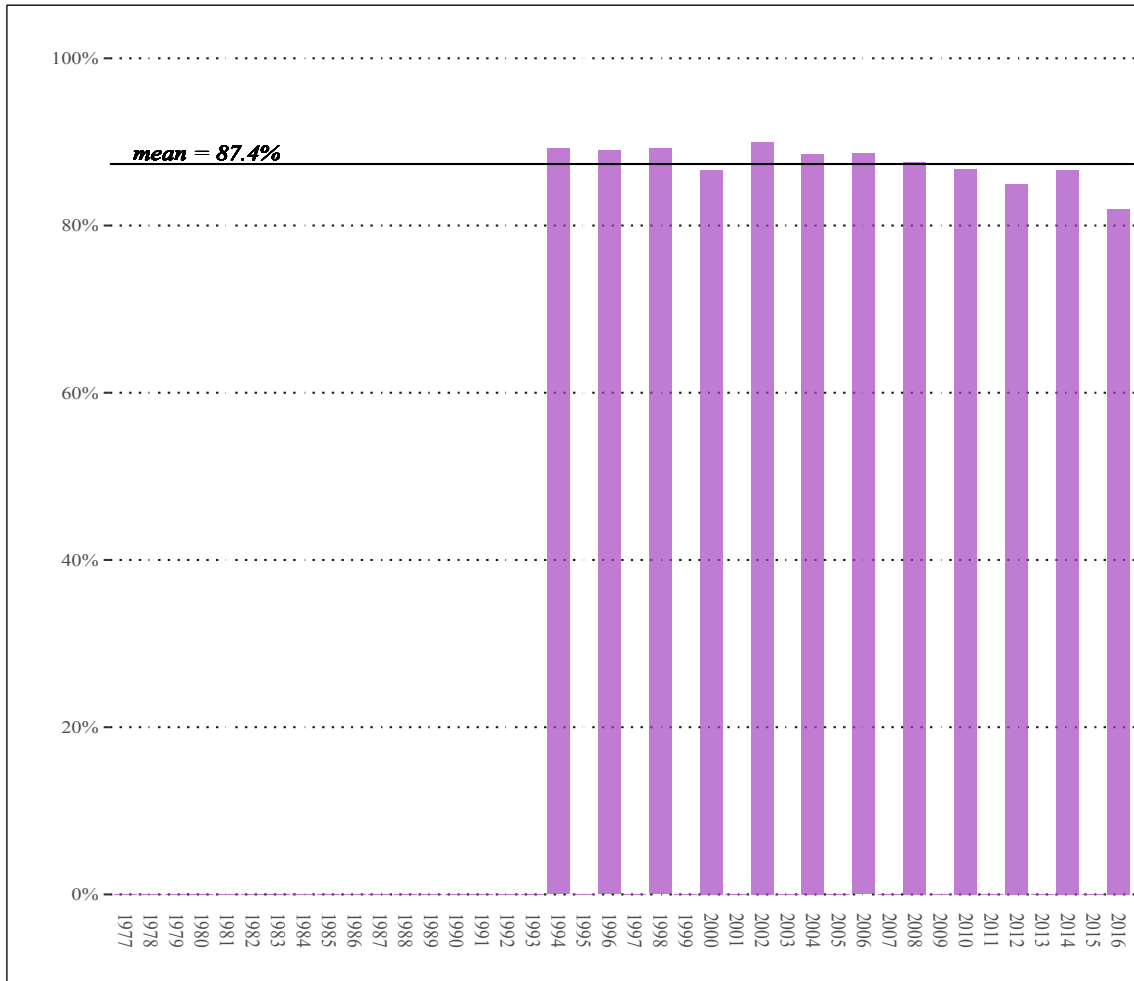


Note:

Total “RACDIF1” responses over time (N=22,177). “No” responses over time (n=14,391; 64.9%).

The next response (Figure 2C) asks “Do you think these differences are because most (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn?” Only “yes” answers are displayed, and demonstrate a steady decline over time (average of 13.2% over time).

2C. Differences due to inborn disability? Percent “Yes” White Response

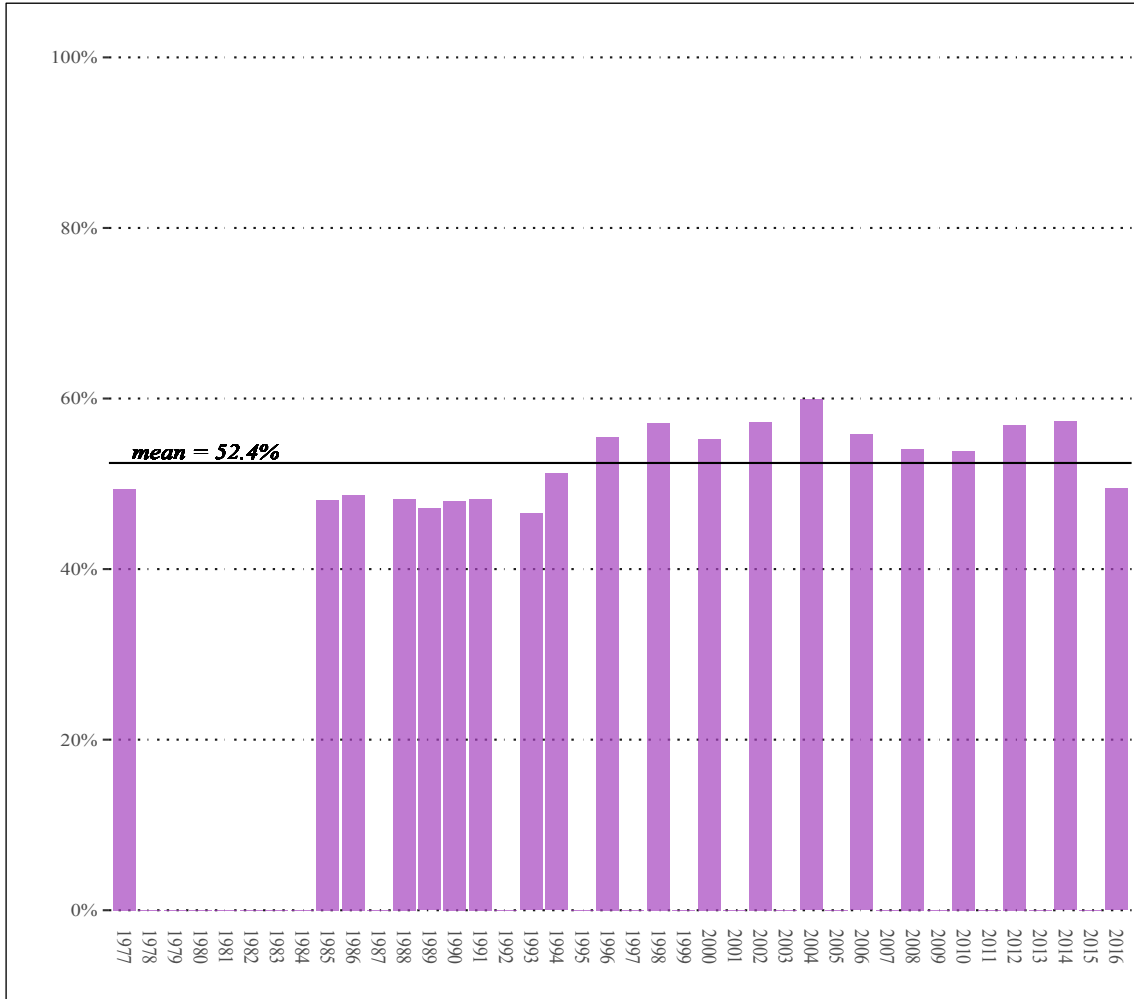


*Note:
Total*

“RACDIF2” responses over time (N=22,470). “Yes” responses over time (n=2,970; 13.2%).

Next, white “no” responses to “Do you think these differences are because most (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) don't have the chance for education that it takes to rise out of poverty?” (Figure 2D) are displayed. These “no” responses indicate a fairly steady trend line that is only slightly increased, beginning in the 1990s, for an across year average of 52.4%.

2D. Differences due to lack of education? Percent “No” White Response

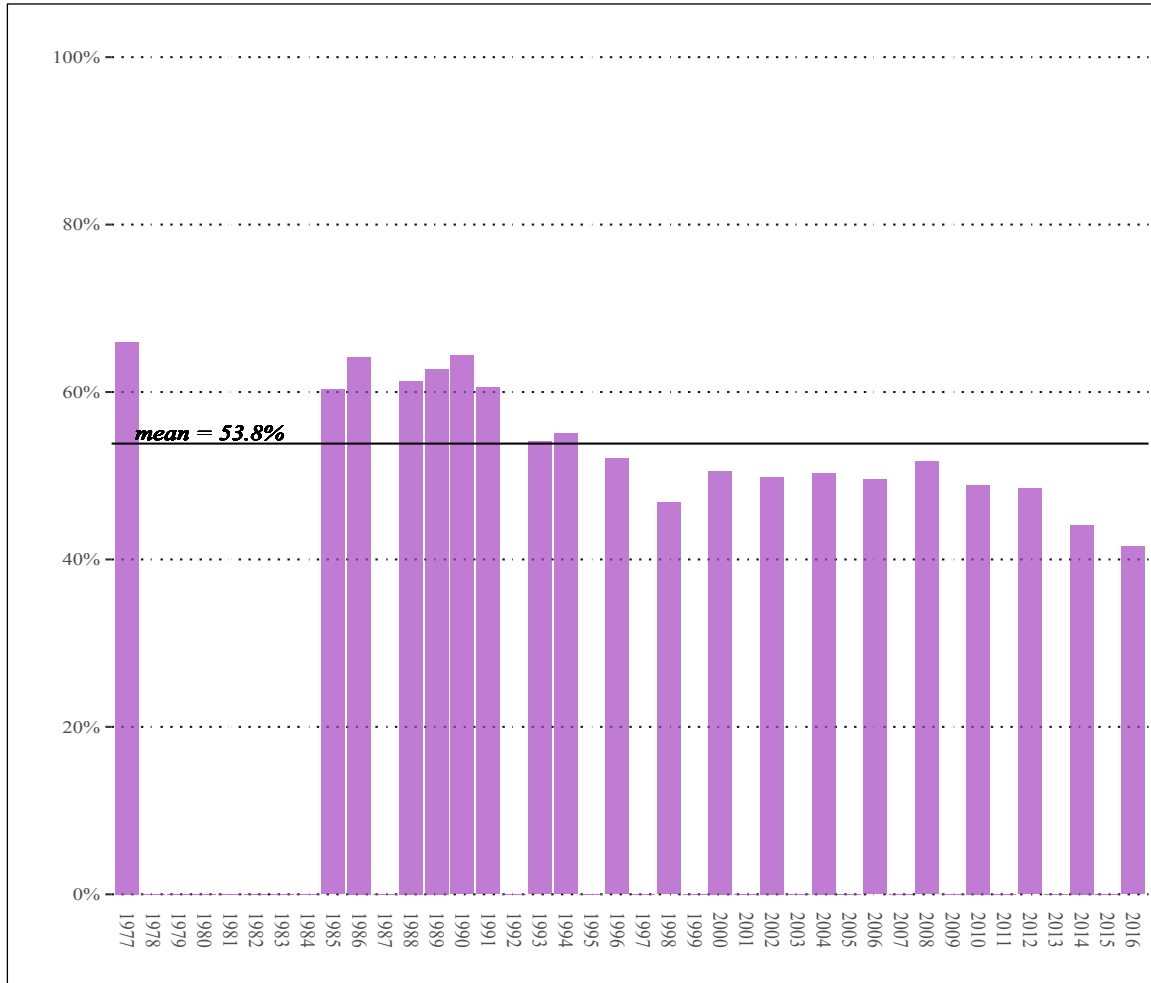


Note:

Total “RACDIF3” responses over time (N=22493). “No” responses (n=11,769; 52.4%).

And the last variable (Figure 2E) asks “Do you think these differences are because most (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) just don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty?” 53.8% of whites responded “yes” over time, with a slow decline of those responses.

2E. Differences due to lack of will? Percent “Yes” White Response



Note:

Total “RACDIF4” responses (N=21,919). “Yes” responses (n=11,801; 53.8%).

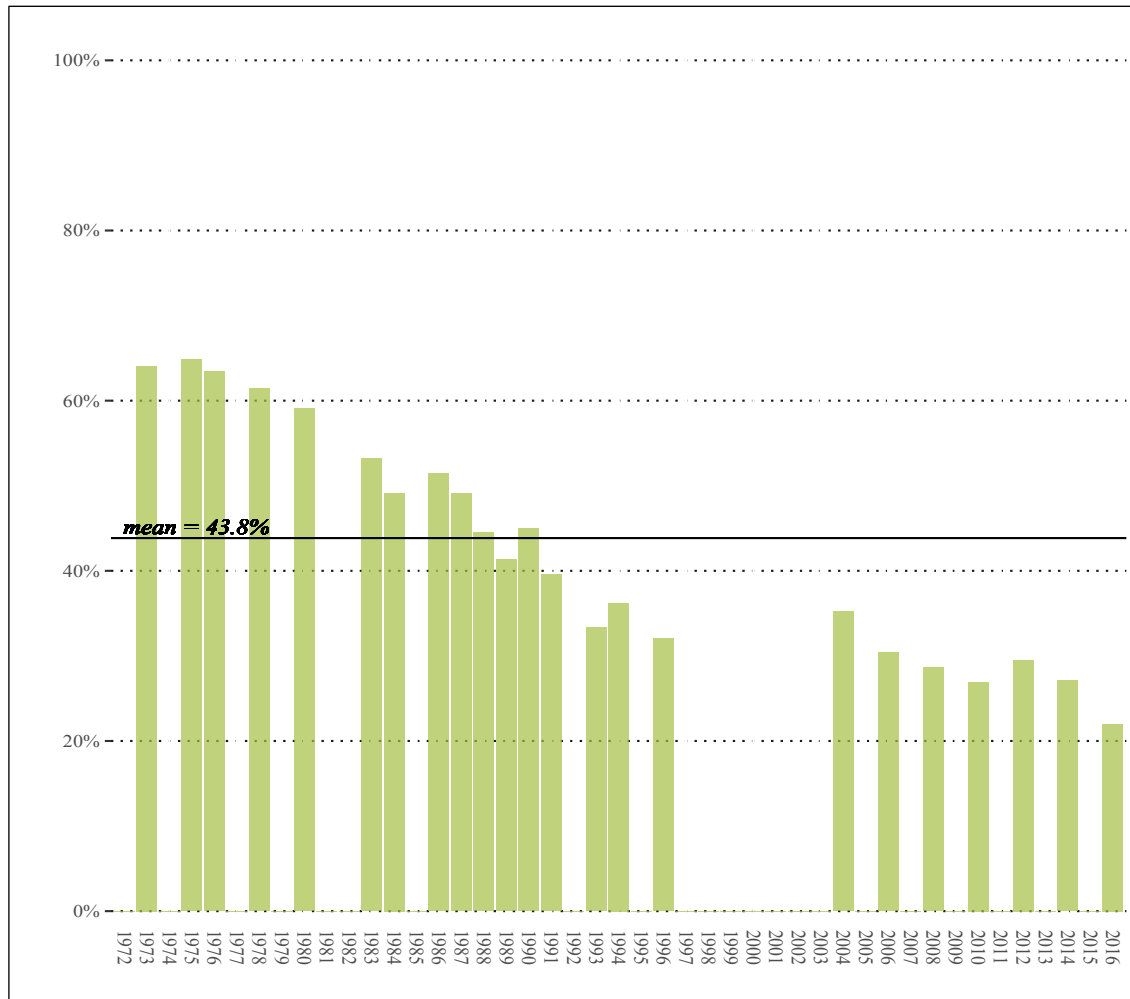
These white-held employment ideologies do well to contextualize the statements made in the Kerner Report and within the six all-white organizations. Overall, the GSS reveals mixed measures of white racist worldviews. First, white opposition to hiring blacks has remained high. Second, white explanations for racial inequality still tend to blame African Americans. Third, even as there are declines in the use of explanations for inequality related to biology (“inborn disability”) and motivation (“lack of

will”), whites’ refusal to believe that inequality is a result of either discrimination or education is remarkably stable and has even increased in recent years.

Housing

I now turn to white ideologies on housing. Figure 3A below (RACOPEN) displays white responses to the following scenario: “Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on: A: One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself whom to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans). B: The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you vote for?”

Figure 3A. Vote on open housing law? Percent “Owner has right to discriminate” White Response



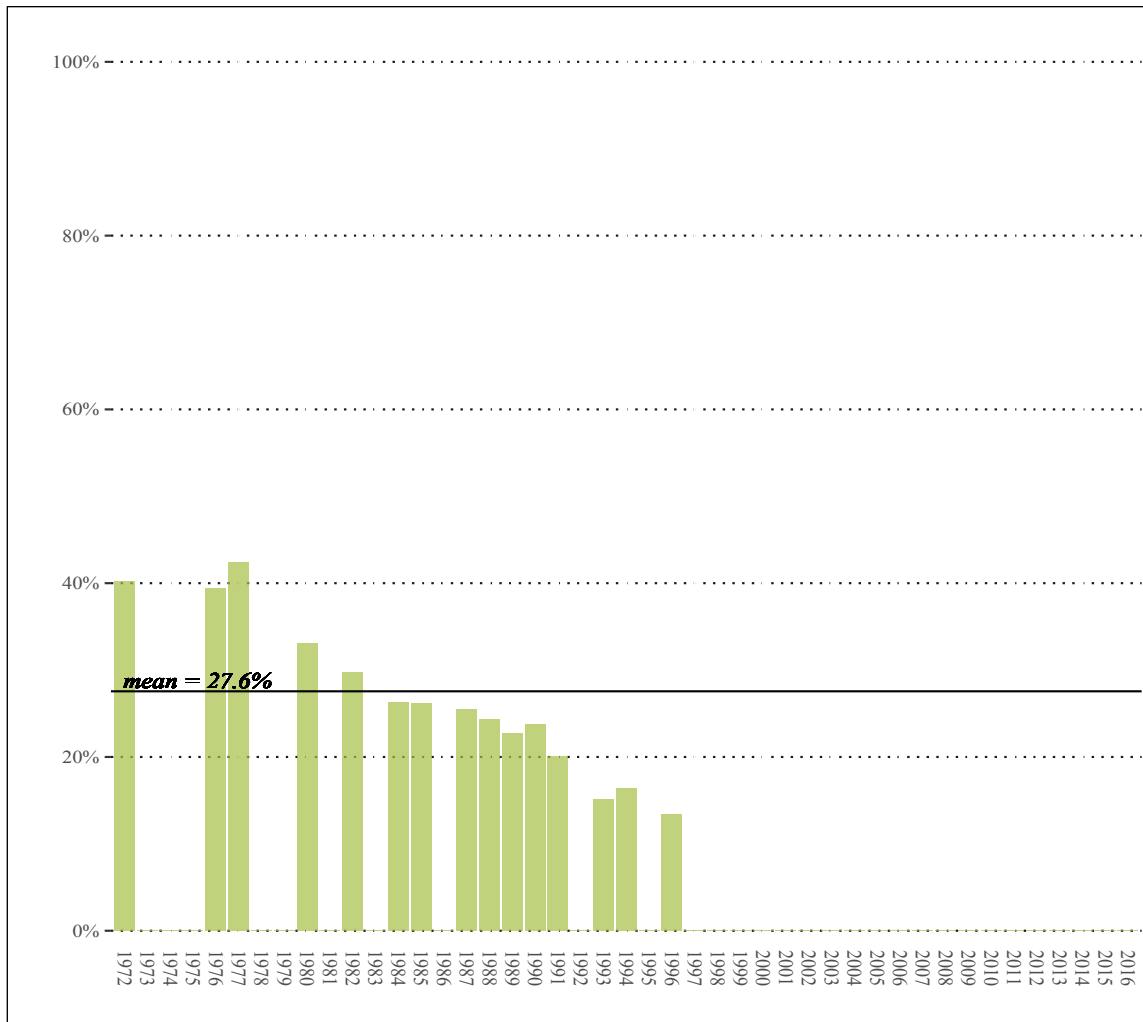
Note:

Total population for variable “RACOPEN” (N=26,264). “A” (the owner has the right to discriminate) responses (n=11,516; 43.8%).

The second variable (RACSEG) provides the following prompt: “Here are some opinions other people have expressed in connection with (Negro/Black)-white relations. Which statement on the card comes

closest to how you, yourself, feel? The first one is: White people have a right to keep (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and (Negroes/ Blacks/ African-Americans) should respect that right.” I combined “agree slightly” and “agree strongly” responses to this question. The results show another downward trend, reaching a low of 13.4% in 1996 (the last year this question was asked).

3B. Whites have right to segregated neighborhood? Percent “Agree Slightly” and “Agree Strongly” White Response

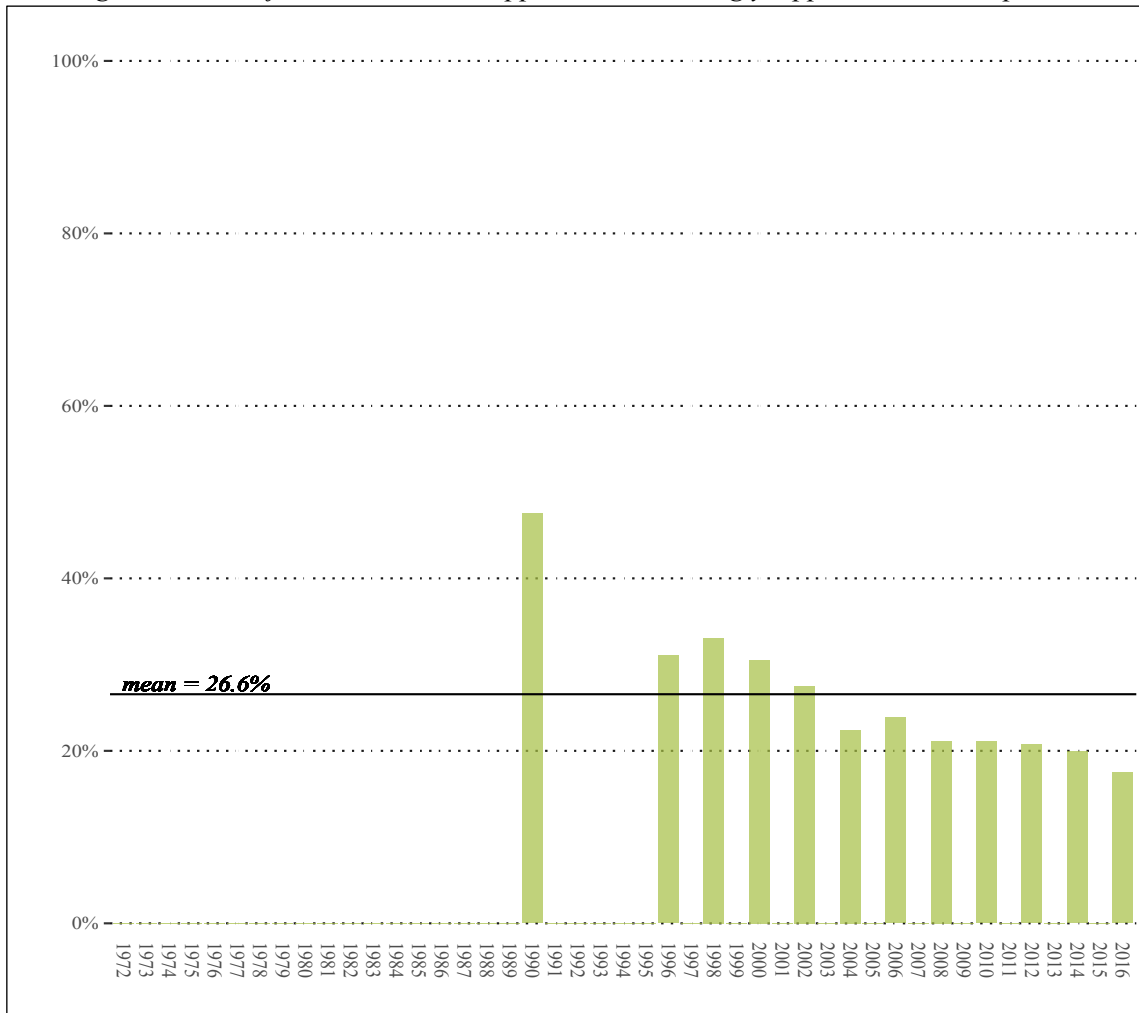


Note: Total population for variable “RACSEG” (N=16,588). “Agree Slightly” and “Agree Strongly” responses (n=4,571; 27.5%).

The third variable (LIVEBLK) prompted respondents as follow: “Now I’m going to ask you about different types of contact with various groups of people. In each situation would you please tell me whether you would be very much in favor of it happening, somewhat in favor, neither in favor nor

opposed to it happening, somewhat opposed, or very much opposed to it happening?: Living in a neighborhood where half of your neighbors were blacks?” I combined the “oppose” and “strongly oppose” responses, which shows a decline over time. Yet, this decline has begun to level off since 2004. Not shown on the graph, 49.3% (n=4,713) of whites picked “neither in favor nor opposed.”

3C. Neighborhood half black? Percent “Oppose” and “Strongly Oppose” White Response



Note: Total population for variable “LIVBLK” (N=13,639). “Oppose” and “Strongly Oppose” responses (n = 3623; 26.6%)

Figure 3A shows that 43.8% of whites responded “A” (the owner has the right to discriminate) “yes” over time, with a marked decline of this response (a height of 64.8% in 1975 and a low of 22% in 2016).

Figures 3B and 3C also show a decline. Overall, these three measures show a marked decline in overt white racial ideologies. At the same time, we must be cautious in interpreting these numbers with too much optimism, given that as recently as 2016, just around 20% (1 out of 5) of whites believe that homeowners should have the right to racially discriminate in housing sales and also oppose living in a neighborhood in which half of the neighbors are black. The racial reasoning for such attitudes is understood through a close reading of both the Kerner Report and the interviews and observation in the ethnographic material.