

Making Policy with Data

An Introductory Course on Policy Evaluation

Policy Briefing

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Background

- The distribution of wealth in the U.S is highly skewed
- More inequality, more support for redistribution?
 - Poor? Maybe. Rich? Really?
 - Inequality is an abstract concept
- **Would exposure to inequality affects rich people's support redistribution?**

A Field Experiment in Boston

- **Treatment:** presence of poverty-stricken people (clothing, body language), but no begging or panhandling
- **Control:** presence of an affluent individual portrayed by the same actor
- **Outcome:** support for taxing millionaires
 - A petitioner 20 feet of the actor

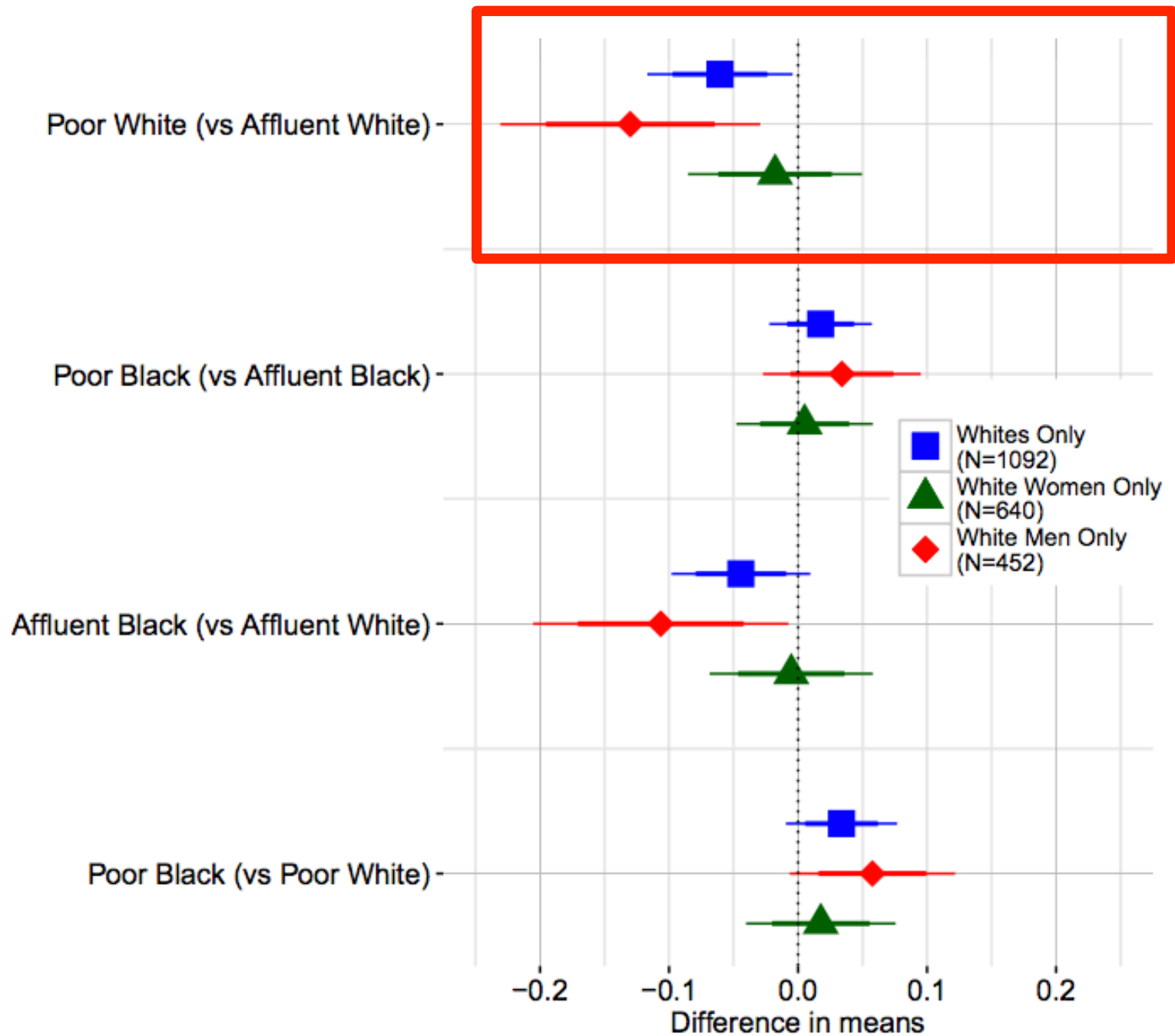


Fig. 1. Experiment in Progress. The petitioner (A) approaches a subject (C) after the subject passes the confederate (B).

Results

Table 2. Cluster-level treatment effects

Variable	Signed petition			
	Millionaire's tax		Plastic bags (placebo)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Poor actor	−0.044* (0.024)	−0.082** (0.035)	0.036 (0.030)	0.027 (0.047)
Black actor		−0.051 (0.032)		−0.040 (0.044)
Poor actor × Black actor		0.070 (0.047)		0.013 (0.061)
Constant	0.114*** (0.016)	0.142*** (0.024)	0.180*** (0.021)	0.205*** (0.034)
Clusters	38	38	36	36
Residual SE	0.073	0.072	0.089	0.090



Buzzword: Data Scientist

Data Analyst, Data Scientist, and Data Engineer

- **Data Analyst**

- Process, summarize, and visualize small and structured data; provide reports
- **Tools:** Excel, MS Office, Stata/SPSS/R

- **Data Scientist**

- Turn data into valuable and actionable insights
- **Tools:** R, Python, ML, statistics

- **Data Engineer**

- Manage “big data” infrastructure (extraction, storage, raw processing)
- **Tools:** SQL, MapReduce, Hadoop, MongoDB

Business



Tech

House-keeping: Pace

A total of **21** vote(s) in **102** hours



House-keeping

- **Quiz on Thursday**

- True or False
- Key concept covered in lectures

- **Problem Set 2**

- Out tomorrow
- Due on May 2 (midterm)

- **Midterm**

- Causality (potential outcome framework; selection bias)
- Randomized Experiments
(identification, estimation, and inference)
- Interpreting research findings