

Association Between Adolescent Participation in Welfare Programs and Political Leaning and Participation in Adulthood

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Introduction

- Adolescence is a crucial time for socialization in politics, with environmental experiences (such as involvement in welfare programs) and parental influence impacting political efficacy and attitudes (Hatemi, P. K., & Ojeda, C., 2021).
- Teens receiving means-tested aid have fewer options for political socialization facilitators, which could make it more difficult for them to get involved in politics (Barnes, C. Y., & Hope, E. C., 2017).
- Welfare recipients may reinforce support for federal policies, which may influence how adolescents from welfare homes develop partisanship (Micatka & Pacheco, 2024).
- There has been little attention paid to the association of the quantity of assistance programs received through adolescence on political affiliation in later life (Micatka, N. K., & Pacheco, J., 2024).
- Political engagement is the main emphasis of current research, rather than party affiliation or political views (Arens & Watermann, 2017).
- Adolescent and parental political engagement may be further reduced if welfare beneficiaries are stigmatized (Barnes & Hope, 2017; Hatemi & Ojeda, 2021).

Research Questions

- How is the number of welfare programs received as a child associated with having a party identification and participation as an adult?
- Does the association between quantity of welfare programs and political leaning/participation change when controlling for race and/or income?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (**n=6504**) were drawn from the 1994-2018 U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (ADDHEALTH)
 - Study began with adolescents (grade 7-12) (**Wave I**)
 - Study ended with adults (late 30's/early 40's) (**Wave V**)

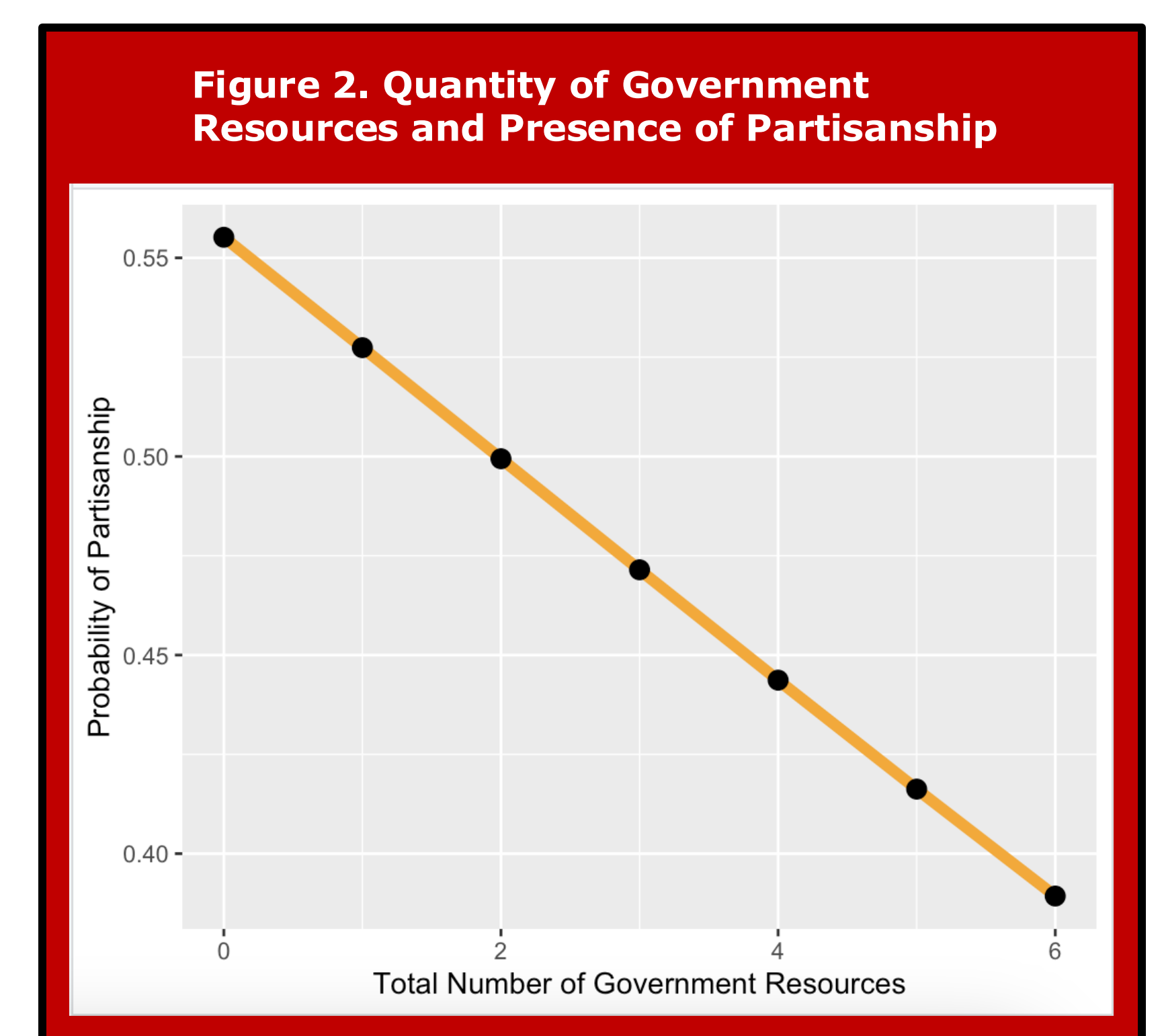
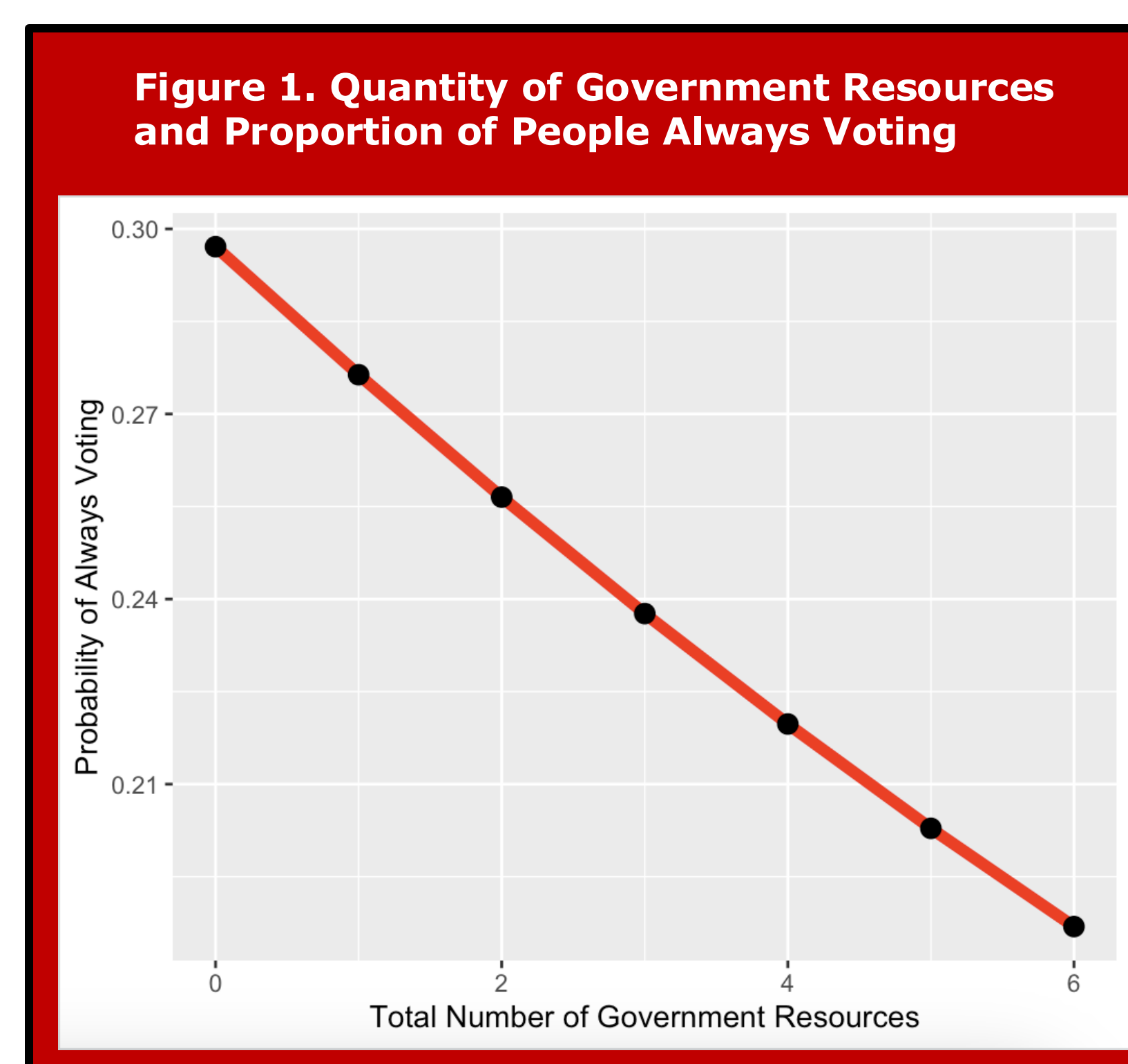
Measures

- The total number of government resources ("**Resource_Tot**") were examined using an aggregate of six variables detailing whether adolescents and their parents receive specific welfare programs ranging from a quantity of 1-6.
- The presence of partisanship ("**Partisan**") was categorized by using the political leaning of the adults in Wave V and collapsing the responses into binary values (**1=partisan, 0=not partisan**).
- The likelihood of always voting ("**votealways**") was collected by collapsing the responses from the variable examining how often the adults in Wave V vote (**1=always, 0=not always**).
- Racial groups include "**White**", "**Black/African American**", "**American Indian/Native American**", "**Asian/Pacific Islander**", and "**Other**".
- Income was reported in thousands of dollars.

Results

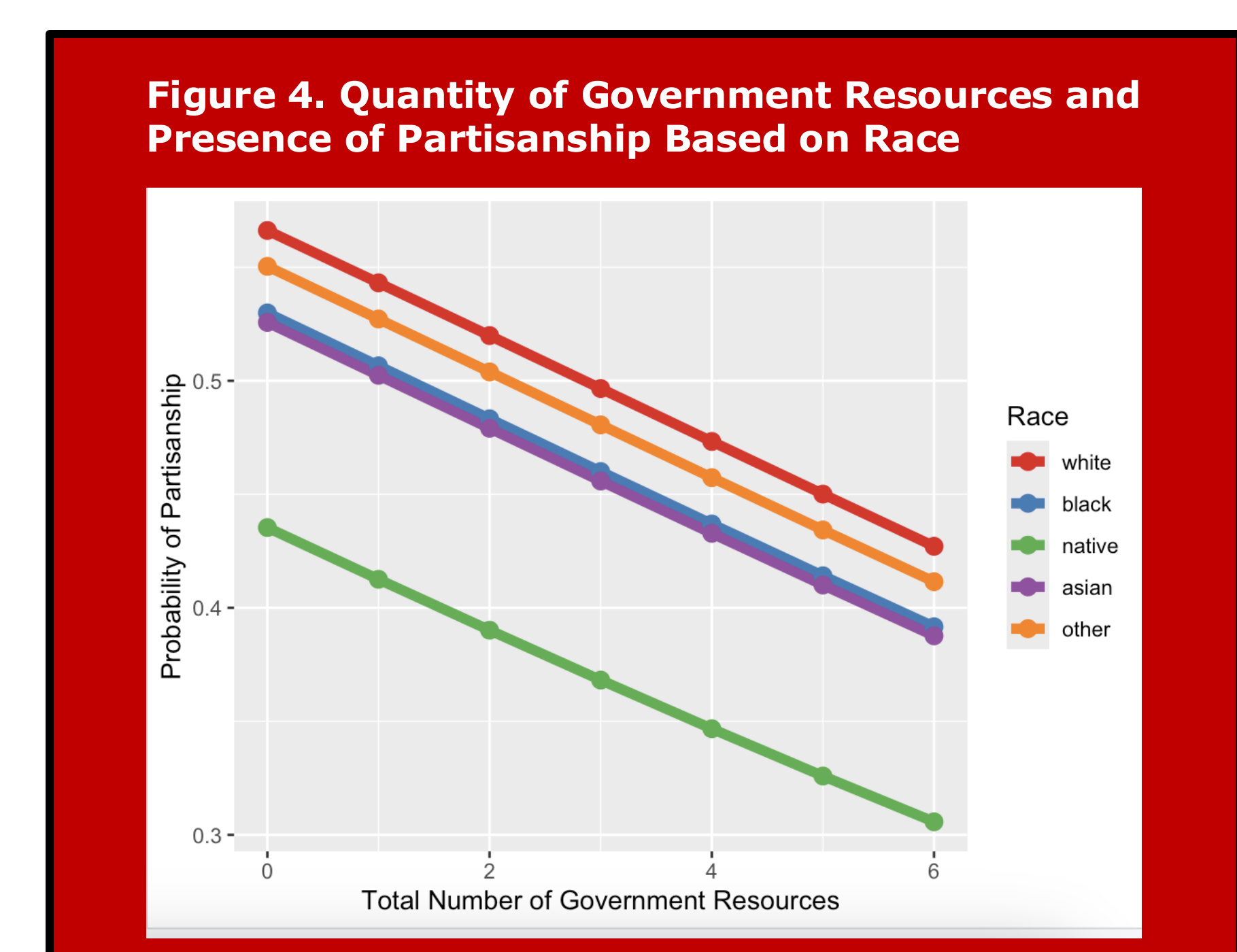
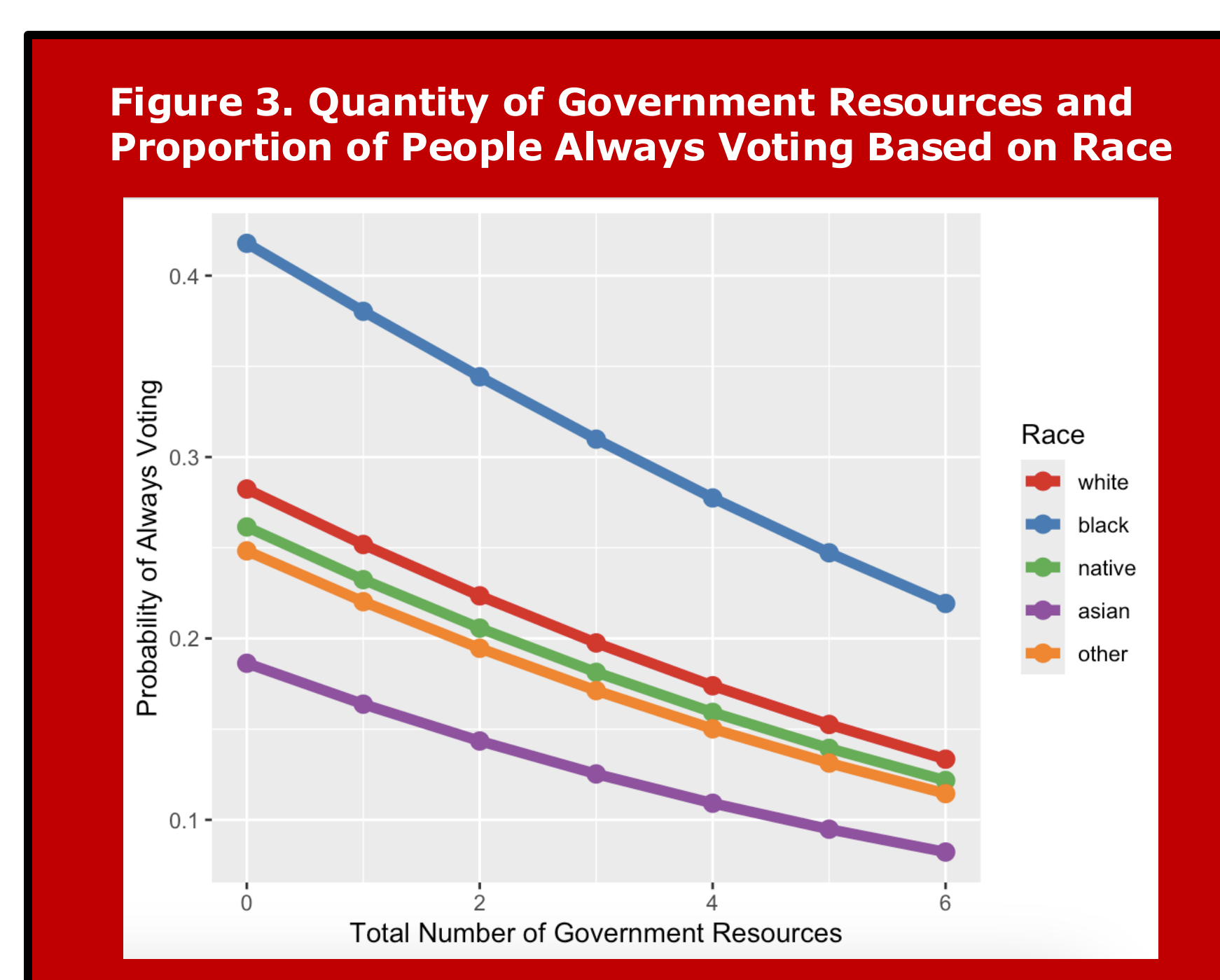
Bivariate

- A Logistic Regression model showed that **total number of government resources** were significantly and negatively associated with **proportion of people who always vote (OR=0.90, p<0.05)**. As the average total number of government resources increases by 1 resource, the **odds** of always voting **decreases by 10%** (Figure 1).
- The second Logistic Regression model resulted in a significant and negative association between **total number of government resources** and the **presence of partisanship (OR=0.89, p<0.05)**. As the average total number of government resources increases by 1 resource, the **odds** of partisanship **decreases by 11%** (Figure 2).



Multivariate

- After **controlling for race and income**, the total number of government resources is still **significantly and negatively associated** with proportion of people who always vote (**OR=0.88, p<0.05**) (Figure 3).
- However, the relationship between number of government resources and presence of partisanship is **no longer significantly related (OR=0.93, p=0.133)** suggesting **income is a confounder** (Figure 4).



Discussion

- The information gathered outlines the crucial roles that race, income, and political socialization play in determining long-term partisan results while also offering a complex view of how early encounters with government services impact political participation in adulthood.
- Government officials/politicians might use this information to address the stigma surrounding families', and specifically adolescents' use of welfare programs and increase adolescents' participation in politics in their future.