

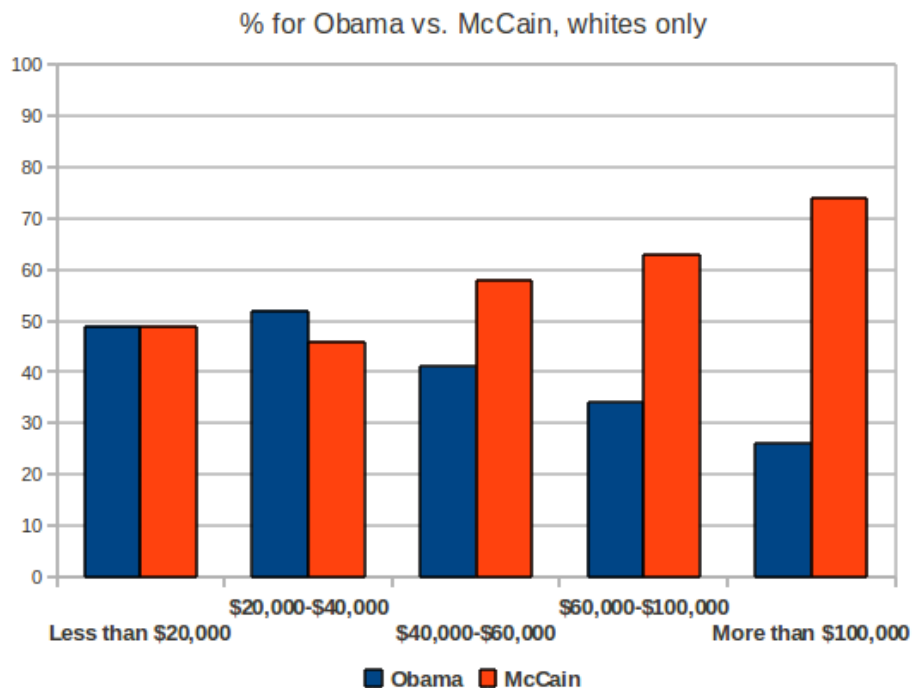
Republicans still the party of the rich

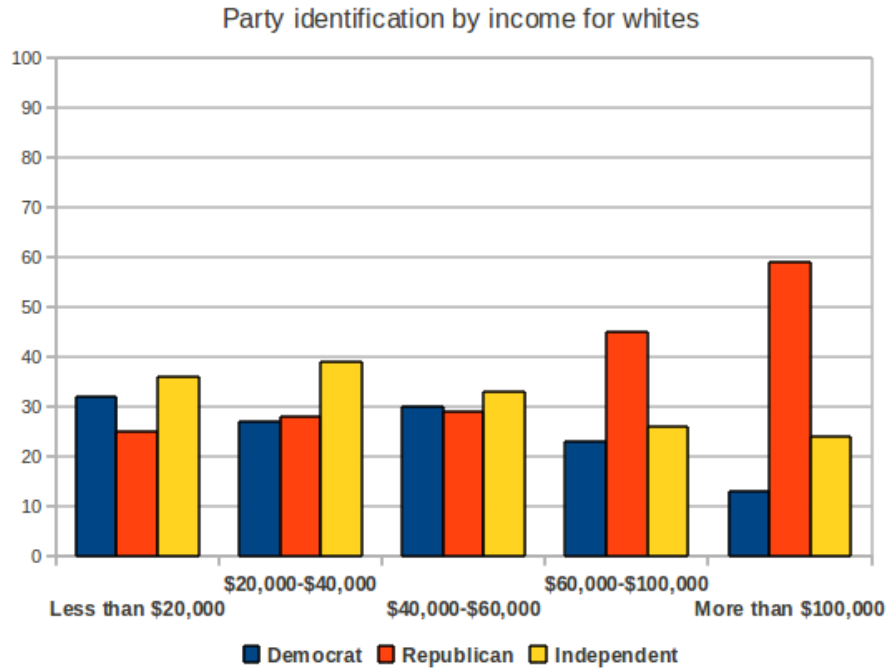
I notice that [Roger L. Simon](#) has an uninformed post up, [The Party of the Rich](#), where he says:

Back when I was a kid, we used to assume the Republicans were the party of the rich. It was a given — all those plutocrats with chauffeurs shuttling them between the penthouse in Sutton Place and the weekend manse in Southampton.

Of course that was pretty idiotic then (a Kennedy was in the White House), **but it's outright moronic now.**

There are some isolated data that the *super*-rich may now be more favorable to Democrats than Republicans, but by and large the classes with capital remain Republican. I looked at the [American National Election Studies](#) data set for 2008. Since minorities voted overwhelmingly for Obama I limited the sample to whites. Then I broke it down by income and looked at who they voted for and which party they identified with. The data seem to indicate that Roger L. Simon should not be throwing around terms like “moronic,” as he lives in quite the glass house.





I assume at this point my liberal readers may wonder if there is a vast conservative media conspiracy to create a false model of reality. Perhaps. But I think there's a less complicated answer: **liberal social and economic elites are culturally much more prominent on a day to day level than conservative social and economic elites.** By the former I mean the entertainment and media industries. So wealthy liberals may be outnumbered, but they can project their voices and attain greater visibility more easily because they have more friendly operators of the cultural megaphones. In contrast, socially liberal but broadly politically conservative plutocrats such as David Koch generally allow more folksy types such as Dick Arney to speak for them in public.

Also, there's a weird dichotomy on the Right when it comes to their self-image, and the esteem which the rich and the not-so-rich are held. I attended a Cato Institute event in the early 2000s, and among economic conservatives there was a worry that the public did not understand the critical role that the "producers" played in our society. And yet by contrast there is also an element of the Right which has internalized an almost Marxist frame whereby the economic elites, the holders of capital, are delegitimized as sources of authority. Ergo, the social conservative folksy face of the American Right which takes pride in its *petit-bourgeois* base.

Note: My own personal sympathies lean with the Right. But I am also extremely turned off by the *faux* and authentic populism which is currently ascendant. A genuine conservatism accepts hierarchy, distinction of role, a certain authority given to elites and specialists. I understand why cultural conservatives feel that the elites and specialists (technocrats) can not be trusted, but it seems to have gone too far in rejecting the very concept and idea of elites and technical knowledge, welcoming a radical and revolutionary flattening of social orders.

Variables:

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by Razib Khan