

# CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN RACIAL ATTITUDES IN THE UNITED STATES

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The data reported in this presentation are from the 1972-2012 General Social Surveys collected by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

The GSS is an ongoing series of nationally representative surveys of approximately 1500 adults in the United States fielded annually from 1972-1994 and biannually since.

# OUTLINE

1. Summary of *Scientific American* reports
2. Types of Racial Attitudes:
  - **Principles:**  
Support for norms of nondiscrimination and equal treatment in all spheres of institutional and personal life
  - **Policies:**  
Specific steps, usually but not necessarily by the federal government, designed to redress racial inequality
  - **Stereotypes:**  
Beliefs about behavioral traits and abilities of members of particular racial groups
  - **Social Distance:**  
Feelings toward intergroup contact measured on a favorable-unfavorable continuum

➤ **Causal Attributions of Racial Inequality:**

Explanations of the factors that cause black- white inequality focusing on structural vs. individual attributions

➤ **Affective:**

Socioemotional or affective feelings toward minority group members

➤ **Resentment:**

A stratification ideology that focuses on the role of racial individualism in shaping white resistance to meaningful policy change. Posits that traditional or “old-fashioned” racism has been replaced by a “modern” or “symbolic” version of anti-black affect that is rooted in the beliefs of many whites that African Americans violate such traditional values as self-reliance and hard work.

3. Over-Time Trends in Racial Attitudes
4. Summary and Implications

# SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN REPORTS

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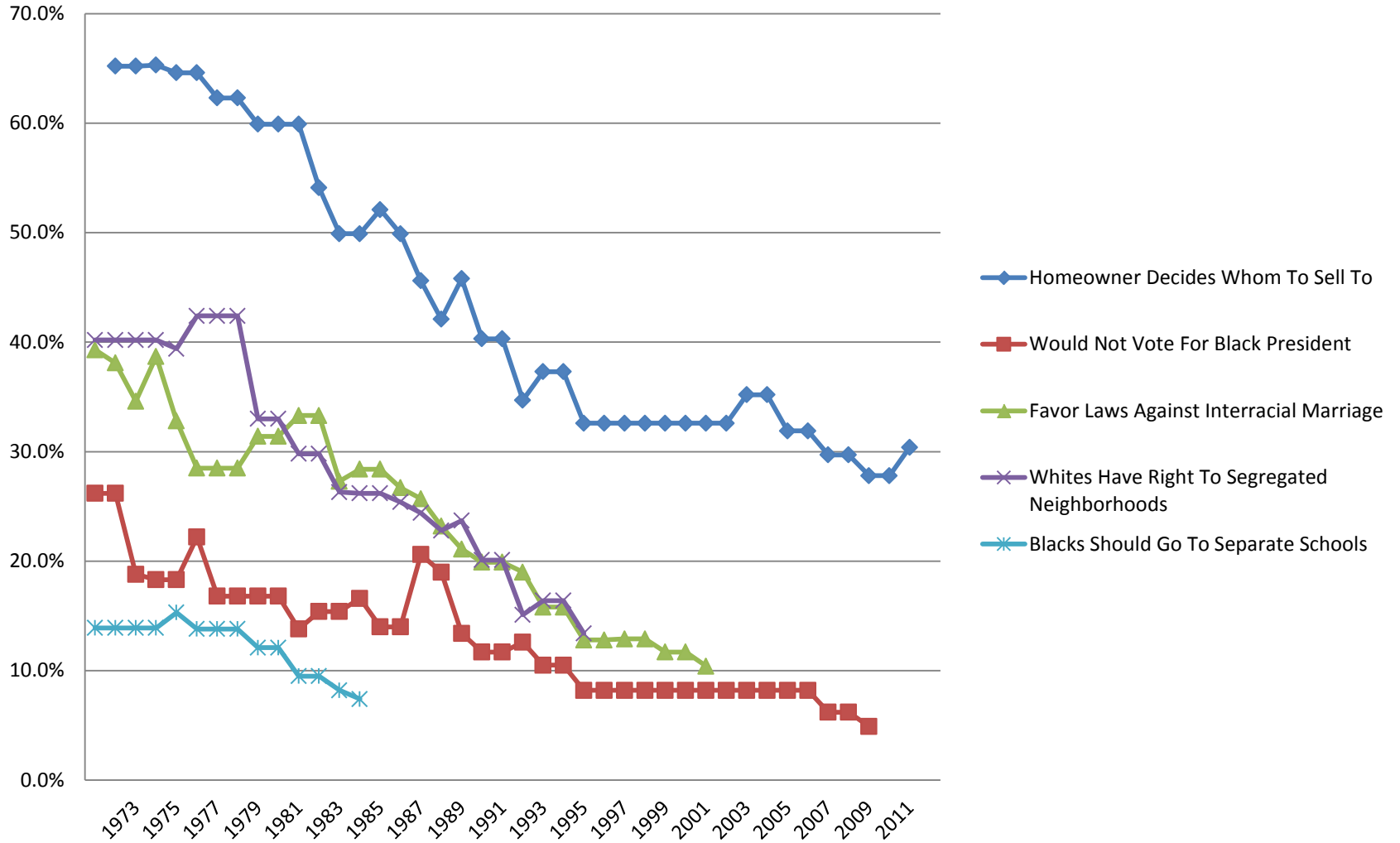
# RACIAL PRINCIPLE QUESTIONS

- Do you think white students and black students should go to the same schools or to separate schools?
- Do you think there should be laws against marriages between blacks and whites?
- White people have a right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and blacks should respect that right.
- If your party nominated a black for President would you vote for him if he were qualified for the job?

- Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself whom to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to blacks. 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?



# Racial Principles

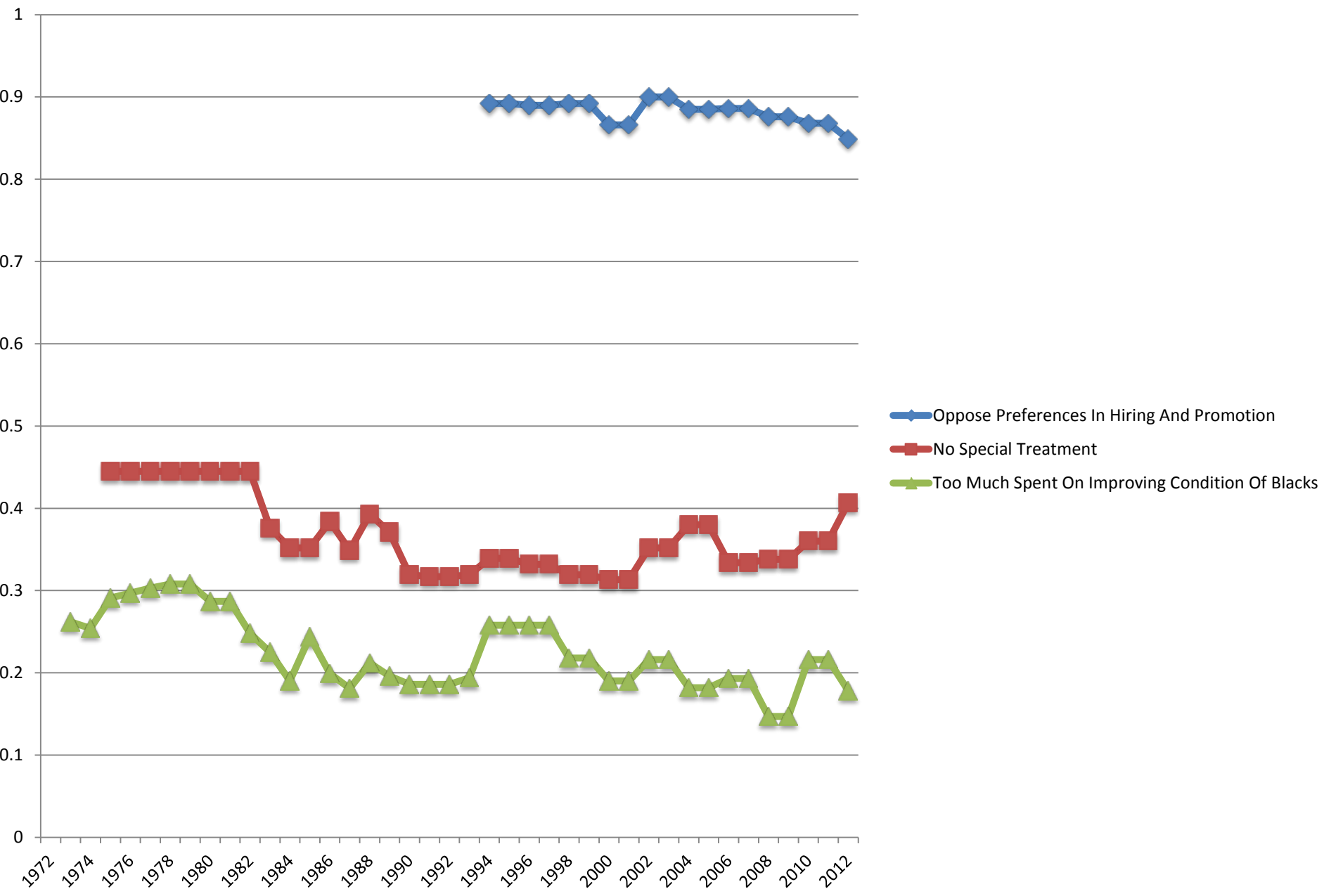


# RACIAL POLICY QUESTIONS

- 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?
- Some people think that African Americans have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to African Americans. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?

- We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on improving the conditions of blacks?

# Racial Policies



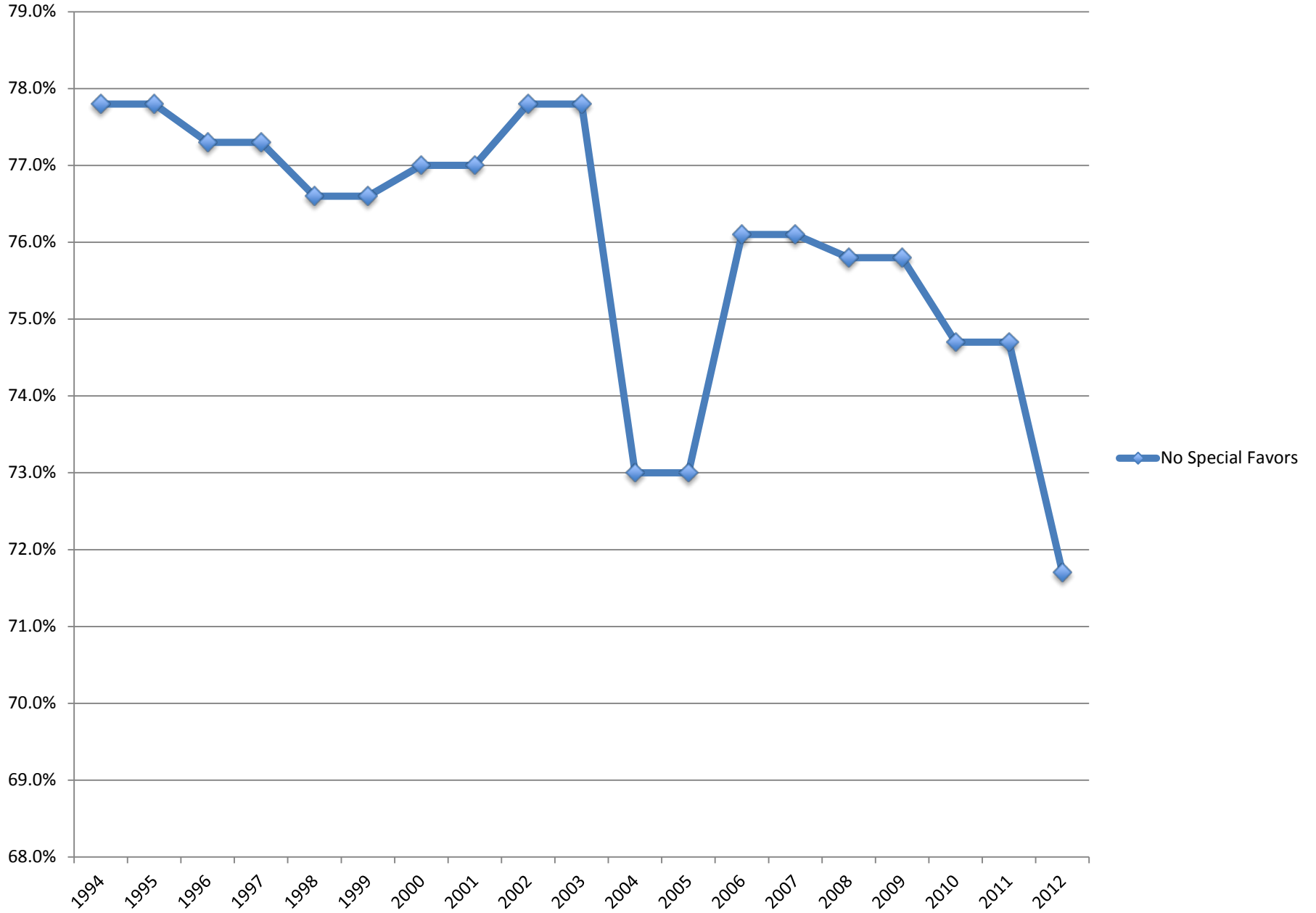
# PRINCIPLE-POLICY GAP

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# RACIAL RESENTMENT QUESTION

- Do you strongly agree, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statement? Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors.

# Racial Resentment

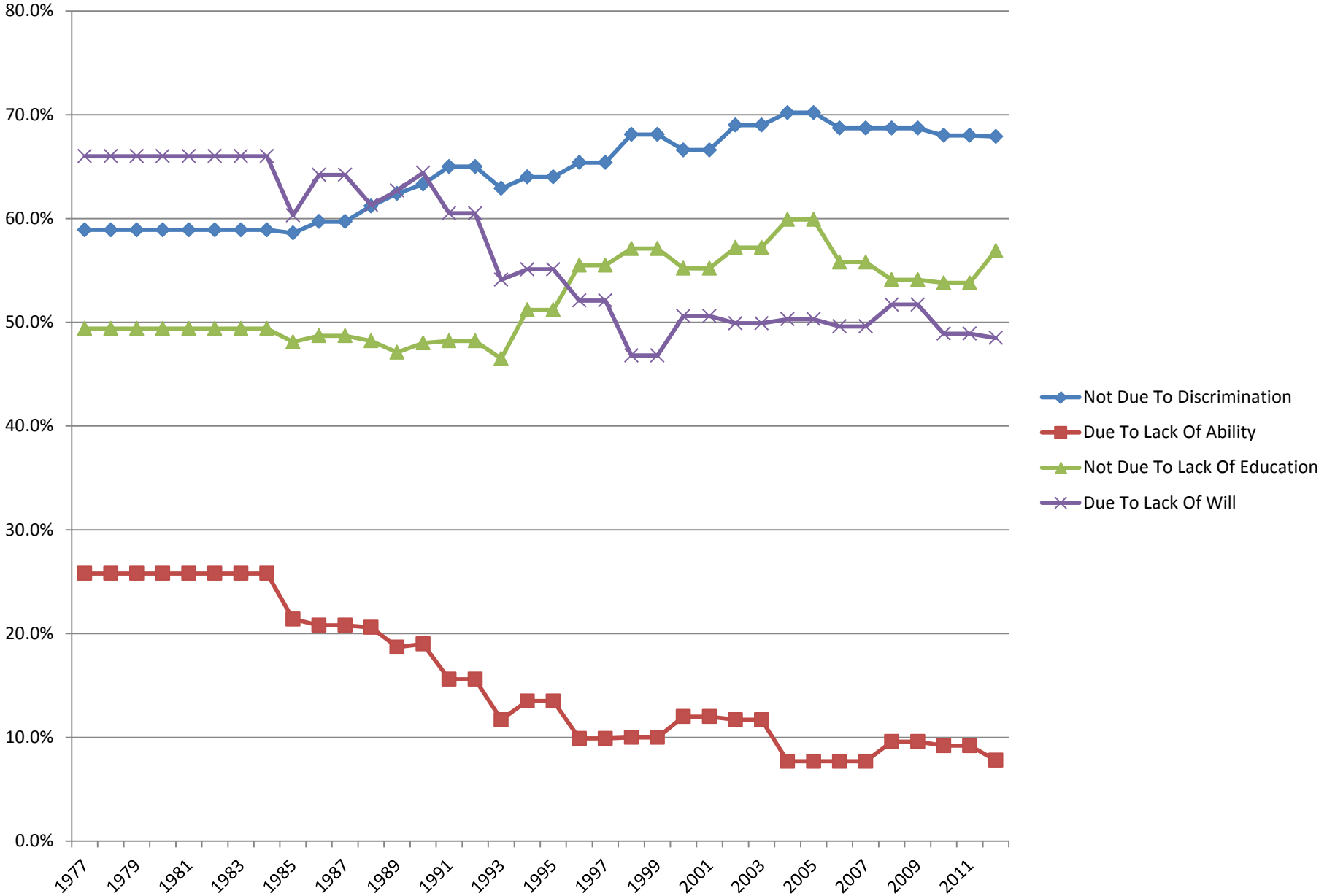


# CAUSAL EXPLANATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY QUESTIONS

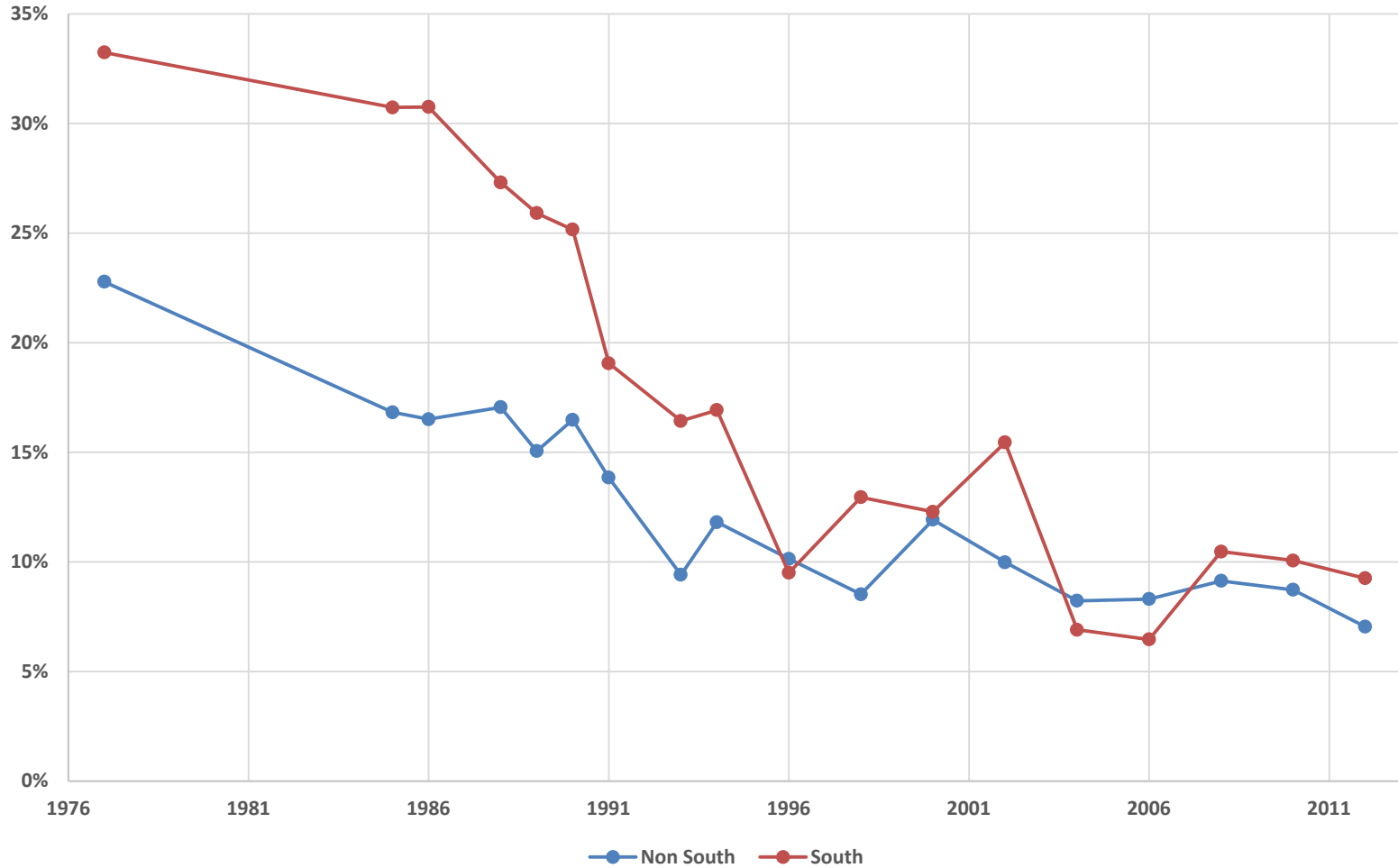
- On average blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are: (1) Mainly due to discrimination? (2) Because most blacks have less in-born ability to learn? (3) Because most blacks don't have the chance for education that it takes to rise out of poverty? (4) Because most blacks just do not have the motivation or willpower to pull themselves up out of poverty?



# Racial Inequality



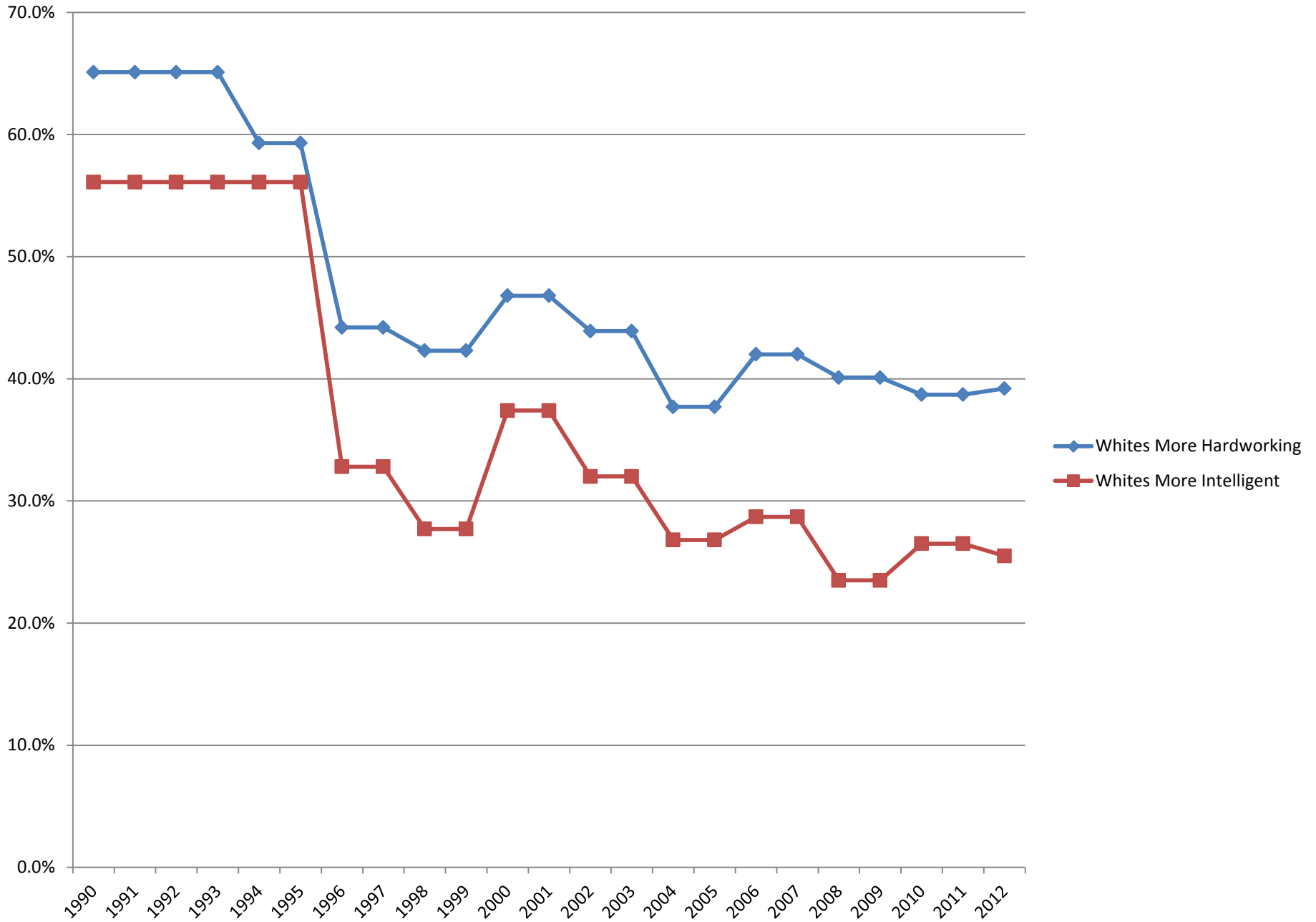
**"On the average, blacks have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are because most blacks have less in-born ability to learn?" Percentage of white respondents answering "yes," 1977-2012**



# RACIAL STEREOTYPE QUESTIONS

- Now I have some questions about different groups in our society. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the characteristics of people in a group can be rated. In the first statement a score of 1 means that you think almost all of the people in that group are hard-working. A score of 7 means that you think almost everyone in the group are lazy. A score of 4 means you think that the group is not towards one end or another, and of course you may choose any number in between that comes closest to where you think people in the group stand.
- Do people in these groups tend to be unintelligent or tend to be intelligent?

# Racial Stereotypes



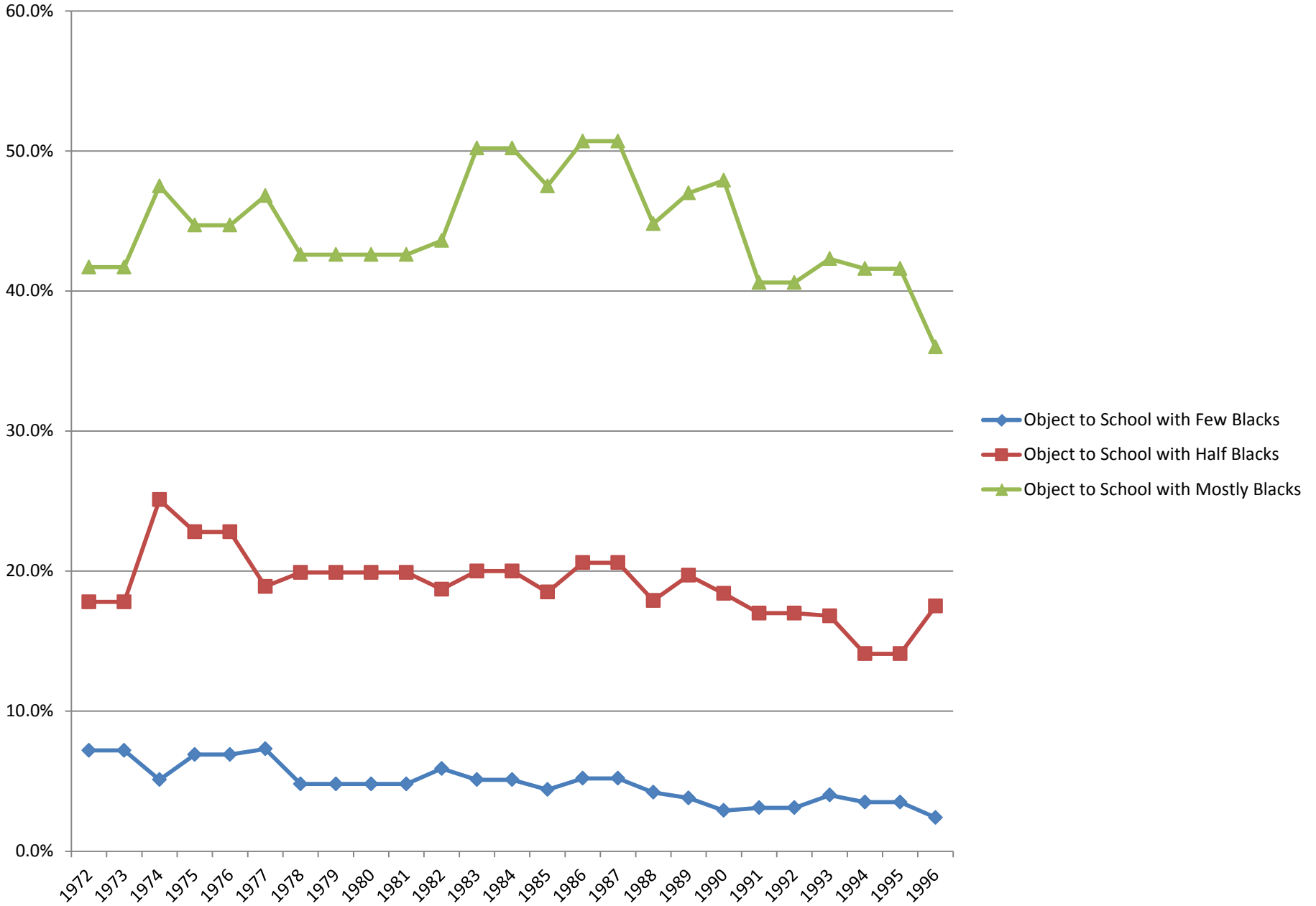
# SOCIAL DISTANCE QUESTIONS

- Would you yourself have any objection to sending your children to a school where a few of the children are black?
- Where half of the children are black?
- Where more than half of the children are black?

- During the last few years, has anyone in your family brought a black friend home for dinner?

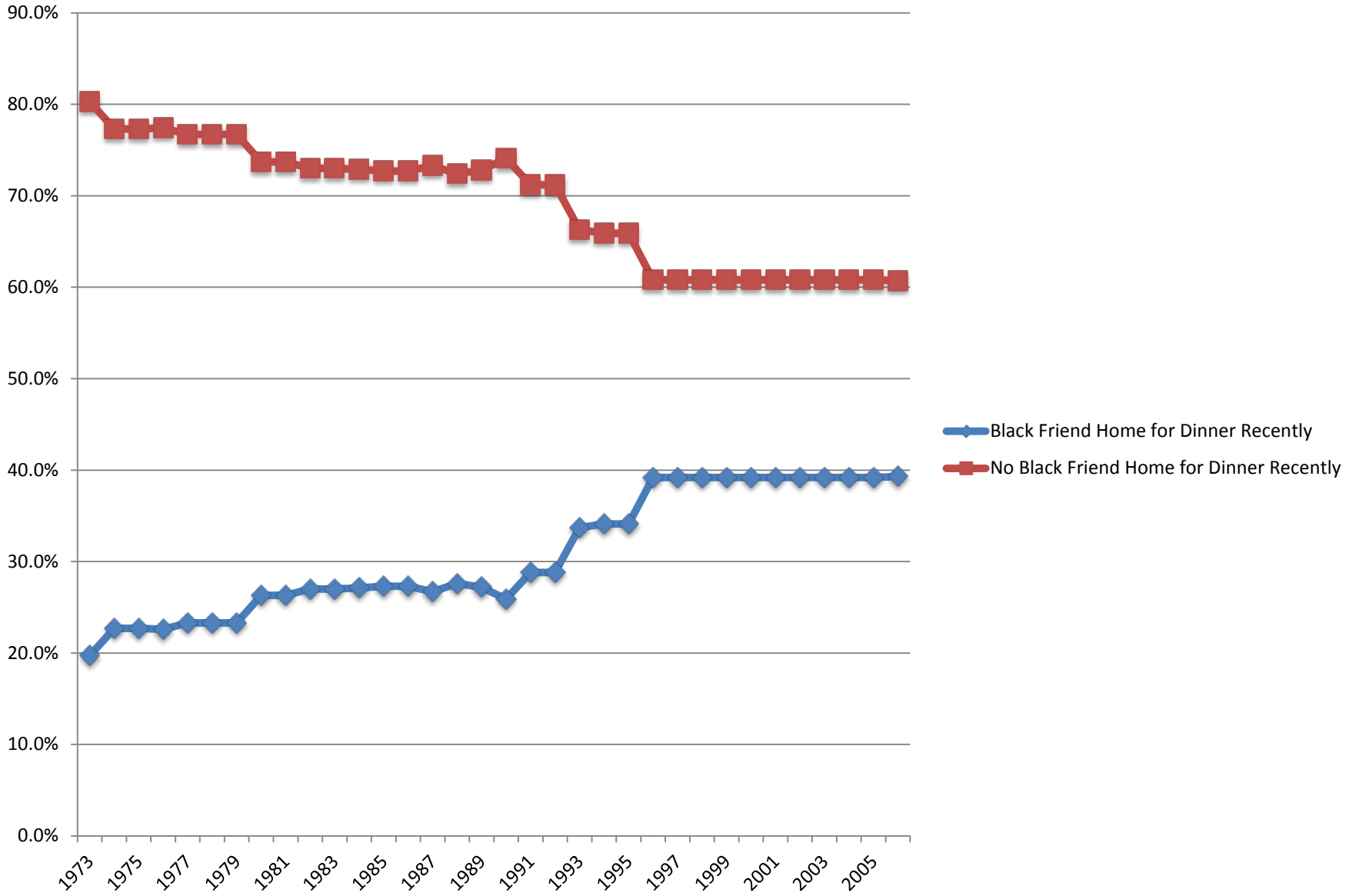
- Now I'm going to ask you about different types of contact with various groups of people. In each situation would you please tell me whether you would be very much in favor of it happening, somewhat in favor, neither in favor nor opposed to it happening, somewhat opposed, or very much opposed to it happening. Living in a neighborhood where half of your neighbors were blacks?
- How about having a close relative or family member marry a black person?

# Social Distance

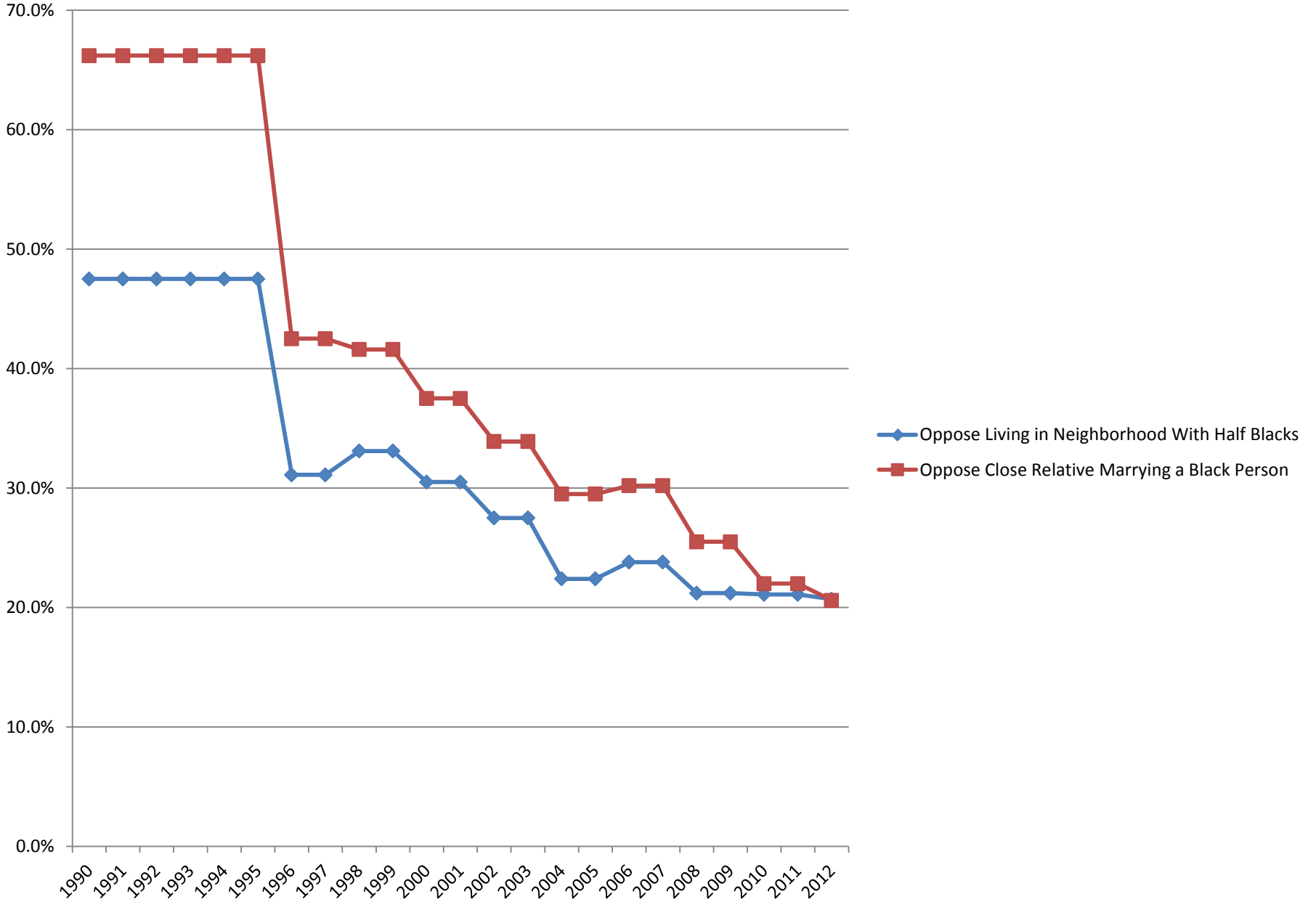




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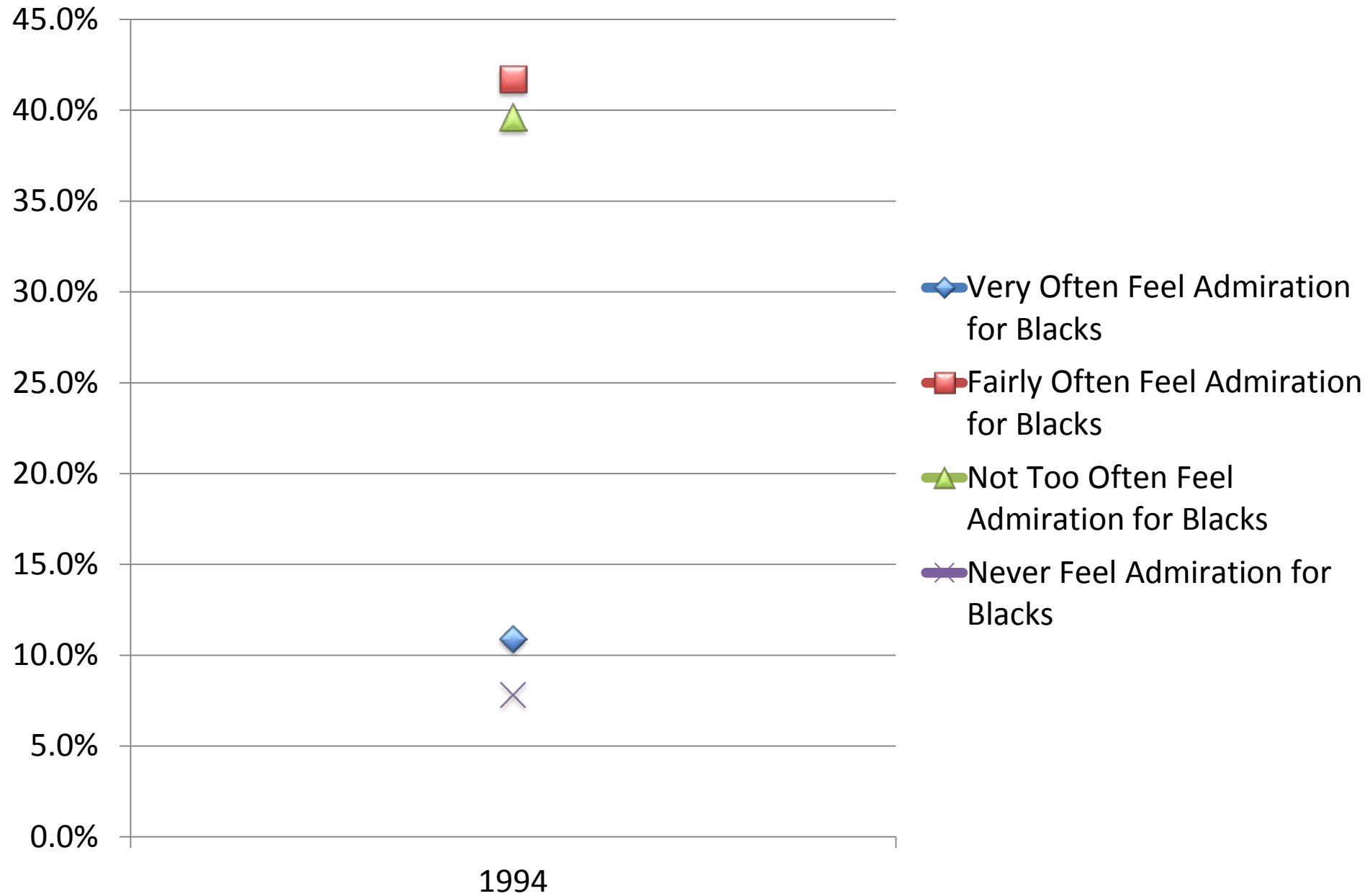
# AFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

- Now, I would like to ask whether you have ever felt the following ways about blacks and their families. For each of the feelings that I ask you about, please tell me whether you have felt that way very often, fairly often, not too often, or never. How often have you felt admiration for blacks?

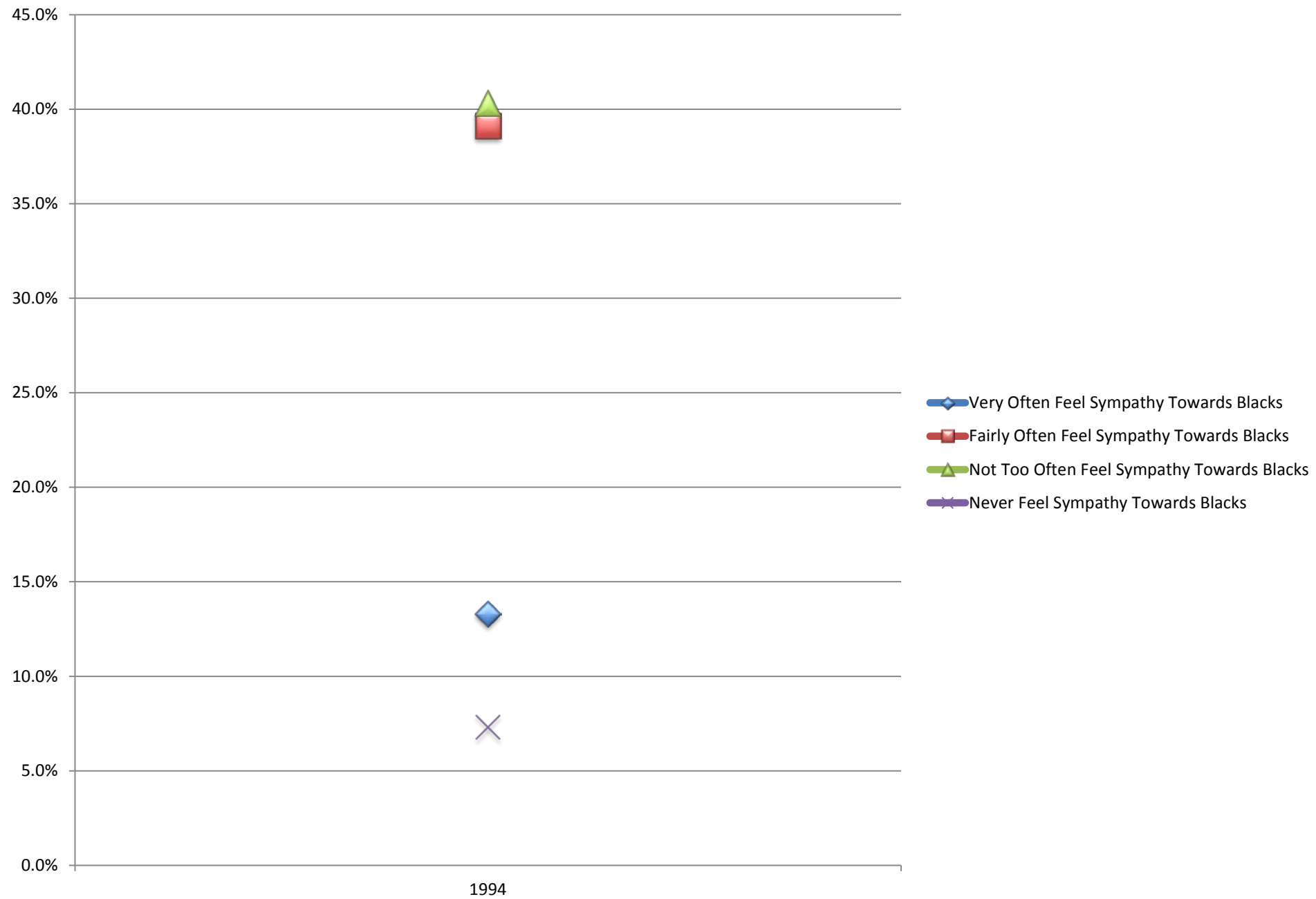
- How often have you felt sympathy for blacks?

- In general, how close do you feel to blacks?

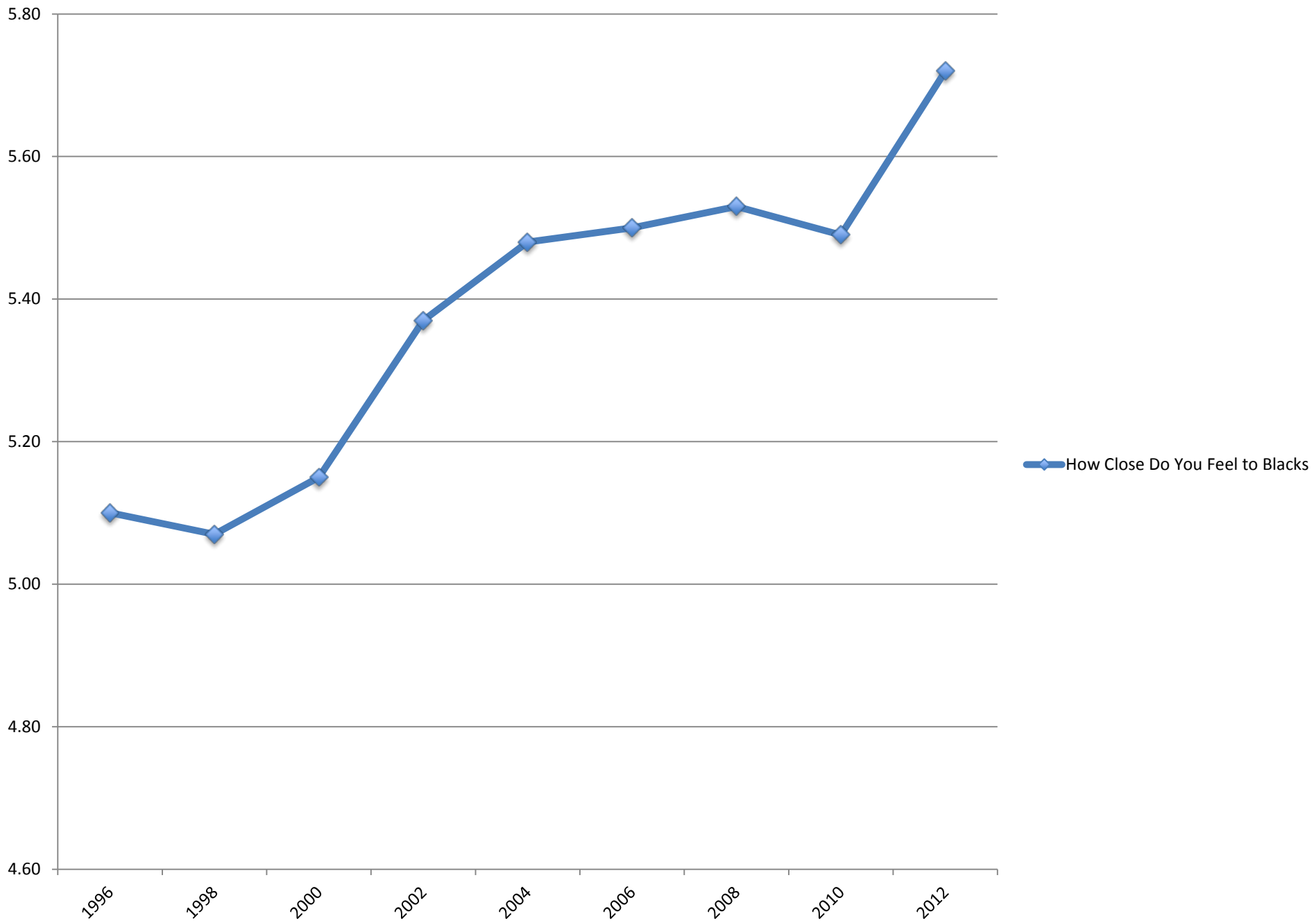
# Admiration



# Sympathy



# How Close Do You Feel to Blacks





# SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS