

# Race, Resentment & Democratic Politics: The Role of Racial Resentment in Motivating Electoral Participation

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September 2019

## Abstract

While scholarly attention has focused on the role racial resentment plays in shaping political preferences, relatively little is known how racial resentment influences the propensity of citizens to participate in politics. In this paper, we present a model positing that racial resentment motivates the degree to which white Americans participate in the political process. Using a novel measure of racial resentment at the subnational level and survey data, we make three clear findings: (1) racial resentment is associated with higher observed turnout at the congressional district and state level, (2) latent racial resentment also motivates the propensity of individual white voters to turnout to vote, and (3) latent racial resentment also motivates more sophisticated forms of political participation, such as campaign involvement. By contrast, we find no evidence that racial resentment motivates non-white Americans to participate in democratic politics. These findings compliment standing work finding that racial resentment serves as a powerful predictor of electoral choice among whites, to the benefit of Republican candidates. These findings have implications for the potency of racial resentment as a motivating factor in the electoral calculus of white Americans.

Key words: racial resentment, political participation, democratic politics, nationalized electoral contexts

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