

The Effect of Racial Attitudes on Vote Choice in the 2019 Canadian Election*

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Abstract

A large body of research shows that voters' racial attitudes, the race of candidates, and the race of party leaders have a significant effect on vote choice in elections in the United States. However, there is far less research on whether similar effects exist in Canadian national elections. Using data from the recently released 2019 Canadian Election Study, I examine the effect of racial attitudes on the electoral performance of the New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP is led by Jagmeet Singh, the first nonwhite leader of a nationally competitive Canadian political party. My preliminary findings show that Canadian voters with racially conservative attitudes were less likely to support NDP candidates in the 2019 election, even when accounting for voters' partisanship and ideology. These results suggest that racial attitudes are a salient feature in Canadian elections, and that national parties may face a real electoral penalty by selecting non-white party leaders.

Keywords: Racial attitudes, Canadian politics, Parliamentary elections, Electoral choice

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