

# Trumped by Race: Explanations for Race's Influence on Whites' Votes in 2016

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## ABSTRACT

Many analyses of the 2016 presidential election suggest that Whites' racial attitudes played a central role in explaining vote choice, and to a degree greater than preceding years. Most explanations for this outcome emphasize the role that Donald Trump's campaign played in activating these attitudes. These stories, however, elide an alternative explanation for these same results: a growing polarization in racial attitudes by party driven by changes among Democrats between 2012 and 2016. This matters because the two possibilities — campaign dynamics that increase the relevance of certain attitudes on vote choice and long-term distributional shifts — can produce observationally equivalent regression coefficients. I urge caution against offering singular explanations for why race mattered in 2016 because while it surely did, it is less clear how and, especially, for whom.

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*Keywords:* Elections; prejudice; race; research design; voting

Political observers and social scientists alike argue that Whites' racial attitudes played an important role in shaping their votes in 2016. Donald Trump, the argument goes, “moved racism from the euphemistic and plausibly deniable to

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the overt and freely claimed,” (Coates, 2017) which “inevitably made racial attitudes more important in the general election than if he had not been the Republican nominee” (Tesler, 2016b), and won him the support of voters with “more racist attitudes” (Schaffner *et al.*, 2018, p. 13). Moreover, Hillary Clinton’s embrace of racial liberalism may have motivated a backlash among “racially resentful whites” (Tesler, 2016b, see also Schaffner *et al.*, 2018, pp. 14–15). Whites’ racial attitudes thus mattered because the 2016 election activated these considerations, and especially among those holding negative attitudes, a view aligning with traditional explanations for changes in the influence of racial attitudes on vote choice (e.g., Kinder, 2013; Mendelberg, 2001). The argument, moreover, holds that racial attitudes do more to explain vote choice in the 2016 election than even the two preceding contests with a Black man as a presidential candidate (Hopkins, Forthcoming; Schaffner *et al.*, 2018; Sides *et al.*, 2018; Tesler, 2016b). What’s more, scholars interpret positive and hearty associations between voting for Trump and some measure of racial group evaluations as supporting these accounts (Green and McElwee, 2019; Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018; Hopkins, Forthcoming; Schaffner *et al.*, 2018; Sides *et al.*, 2018; Smith and Hanley, 2017; Tesler, 2016b).

Understanding race’s contribution to 2016 dynamics is important, but the specific hypotheses scholars can test are limited to the research designs used. Indeed, research design choices constrain how scholars understand the unique influence any factor has on vote choice within or across elections. As scholars of voting behavior have long noted when categorizing influences on vote choice into short-term and long-term forces (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Stokes, 1966a,b), changes in the strength of the relationship between some factor and vote choice can come either from election-specific factors or from changes in the distribution of individuals along the construct. Some research designs can conflate these distinctions while others can disentangle them.

This insight matters for understanding why Whites’ racial attitudes mattered in 2016 and how this election compares to prior years. Prevailing explanations for why Whites’ racial attitudes mattered in 2016 emphasize election-specific factors: racial attitudes mattered because Donald Trump’s campaign activated them. But the change in race’s influence may have also come from longer-term shifts in these orientations that also relate to vote choice. Importantly, the distribution of Whites’ racial attitudes in 2016 differs markedly from prior years. By way of example, I show below that over the past three decades Whites’ scores on racial resentment, a common measure of evaluations of Black Americans (Kam and Burge, 2018; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Tarman and Sears, 2005), have increasingly polarized by party (Enders and Scott, 2019; Sides *et al.*, 2018; Tesler, 2016a), due to a mix of attitude change and party switching (Engelhardt, Forthcoming). This increased alignment between Whites’ racial attitudes and their partisanship can strengthen the correlation between racial attitudes and vote choice, no influence from

election-specific factors needed (Stokes, 1966a,b). Race's stronger influence in 2016 could come from Whites changing their vote preferences to match their racial attitudes via priming, the increased alignment between partisanship and racial attitudes that has occurred over the last several years, or some combination of both.

To address this observational equivalence issue scholars have turned to panel data. These data are advantageous because they allow scholars to use attitudes measured before people are exposed to information that might encourage attitude change and apply statistical models to determine the effect of contextual changes on these attitudes' relevance (Lenz, 2012). Recognizing this advantage, scholars have constructed and analyzed panel surveys to better understand racial attitudes' unique role in 2016 (e.g., Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018) and I highlight one possible panel analysis approach below.

Polarized racial attitudes also affect substantive interpretations of why they matter. For instance, this attitude polarization increased substantially between 2012 and 2016 as White Democrats became on average much more racially sympathetic. Consequently, accounts that racial resentment's increased influence on vote choice in 2016 is a product of the racially resentful uniquely responding to Trump's rhetoric are potentially incomplete (e.g., Coates, 2017; Green and McElwee, 2019; Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2018; Schaffner *et al.*, 2018). A more complete story acknowledges that Whites holding more positive racial attitudes may have also mattered (see Tesler, 2016a; Tesler and Sears, 2010). Here, Whites' racial attitudes gained influence because those holding more positive views rejected the racist candidate and doubled down on support for Hillary Clinton and her more racially progressive platform, a position suggested in part by White Democrats' openness to adopting more positive views about Black Americans (Engelhardt, Forthcoming).

I do not claim that race did not matter in the 2016 election. Rather, I want to emphasize that scholars should consider the specific hypotheses their research designs can test given potential temporal changes in their explanatory variables of interest. White partisans can respond differently to a racialized electoral context where one candidate openly endorsed racially liberal policies and the other's rhetoric could be interpreted as racist. Understanding the myriad reasons for why Whites' racial attitudes may have mattered can help deepen our understanding about a force long-organizing, and increasingly central to, American politics (Hutchings and Valentino, 2004; Tesler, 2016a).

## **Changing Distributions Affect Coefficient Interpretations**

I focus on the role Whites' racial resentments played in the 2016 election contest. Racial resentment captures structural versus individual attributions for Black Americans' social and economic status (Kam and Burge, 2018; Kinder and

Sanders, 1996; Tarman and Sears, 2005). More resentful attitudes correspond with explanations emphasizing moral failings rather than structural obstacles for group disparities. As a result, any special consideration Blacks receive is illegitimate.

To shed light on racial resentment's changing influence, consider a vote choice model using data from the American National Election Studies. I focus on seven of the last eight presidential elections, excluding 1996 because racial resentment was omitted from the data collection. The outcome is whether a respondent votes for the Republican candidate over the Democratic candidate. I explain this using racial resentment operationalized with four items consistently offered in the ANES,<sup>1</sup> a series of demographic factors (sex, age, income, college education, and Southern residence), and ideological and partisan self-identification. I apply this model to non-Hispanic Whites. I make no claim that this specification completely captures dynamics within each year; rather, it facilitates comparing racial resentment's influence on vote choice over time and how this relates to distributional changes.<sup>2</sup> I scale all explanatory variables to run 0–1 or include them as indicators. The outcome is scaled 0–100. Figure 1 presents the estimated effect for racial resentment by year. I include the full model results in the Appendix and also report there the results from a bivariate model including only racial resentment as a predictor of vote choice.

As the results make clear, racial attitudes had a substantial influence in 2016. Moreover, this effect was an outlier relative to most any other election considered. In 2016, the most racially resentful Whites were on average about 45 percentage points more likely than the least racially resentful to support Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton. This is greater in absolute magnitude than any preceding election, including 2008 and 2012 (although the difference between 2008 and 2016 is not significant ( $p = 0.190$ )). From this perspective, racial attitudes are central to understanding Whites' voting behavior in 2016.

But two important points restrict applying a single explanation to these results. First, these coefficients do not indicate for whom race mattered more in terms of the increasing correlation between votes and attitudes. A larger correlation could coincide with greater responsiveness among the racially resentful. Trump's hostile rhetoric motivated those holding negative racial attitudes to support him. Alternatively, this same rhetoric could inspire a backlash among the racially sympathetic. The increased correlation between vote choice and racial attitudes actually comes from those holding more positive racial attitudes rejecting Trump and supporting Clinton instead. Or it is some combination of both. The regression coefficients cannot disentangle these possibilities.

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<sup>1</sup>Question wording included in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup>This reflects conventional models assessing racial attitudes' impact on vote choice (e.g., Schaffner *et al.*, 2018; Sides *et al.*, 2018; Tesler, 2016a; Tesler and Sears, 2010).

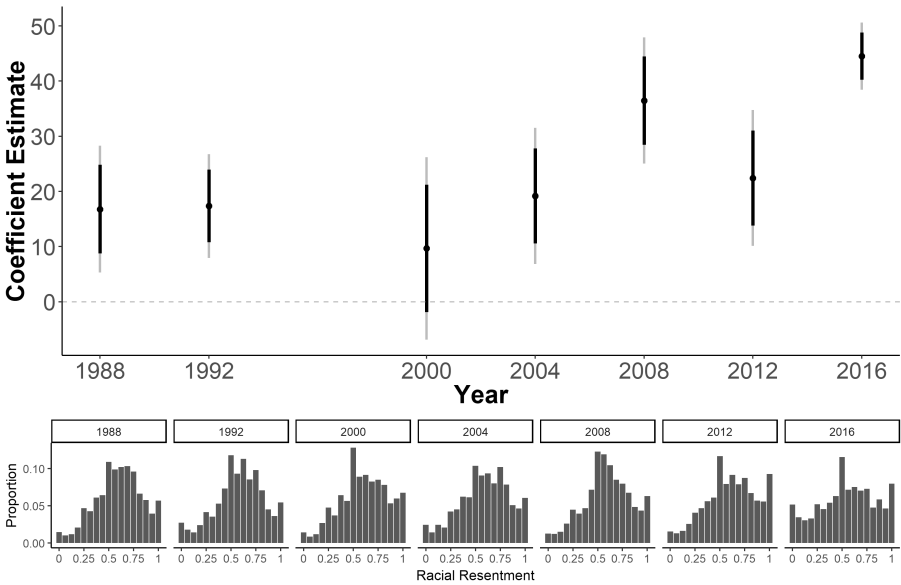


Figure 1: The top panel presents racial resentment’s effect on Republican vote choice. Results from OLS regression models run on individual years using population weights. Thicker lines denote 83% confidence intervals where non-overlap indicates significant differences between coefficient magnitudes at the 95% level (Bolsen and Thornton, 2014) and thinner lines signify 95% confidence intervals. The bottom panel shows racial resentment’s distribution.

Second, these estimates cannot separate differences in election context from changes in attitude distribution for 2016’s comparatively large effect. The last three decades have seen an increased association between partisanship and racial resentment (see also Enders and Scott, 2019; Sides *et al.*, 2018; Tesler, 2016a). Figures 2(a) and 2(b) shed light on this strengthening relationship. Figure 2(a) shows that while the average White Republican and Democrat differed little in their views of Black Americans in 1986, a partisan gap grows over time, especially between 2012 and 2016. What was once a slight 0.041 point margin is now a 0.291 point gap on the 0–1 outcome. Moreover, as Figure 2(b) shows, these changes coincide with consequential distributional shifts. While differing little in 1988 ( $\chi^2 = 25.5, p = 0.061$ ), by 2016 Whites’ racial attitudes diverge substantially by party. Where the modal White Democrat and Republican differed by only 1 category on the 17-category measure in 1988, they now score at the scale’s racially sympathetic and resentful extremes, respectively. Most importantly, with Democrats driving this recent polarization, explaining 2016 by focusing only on Republicans or the racially resentful misses an integral part of the story. What’s more,

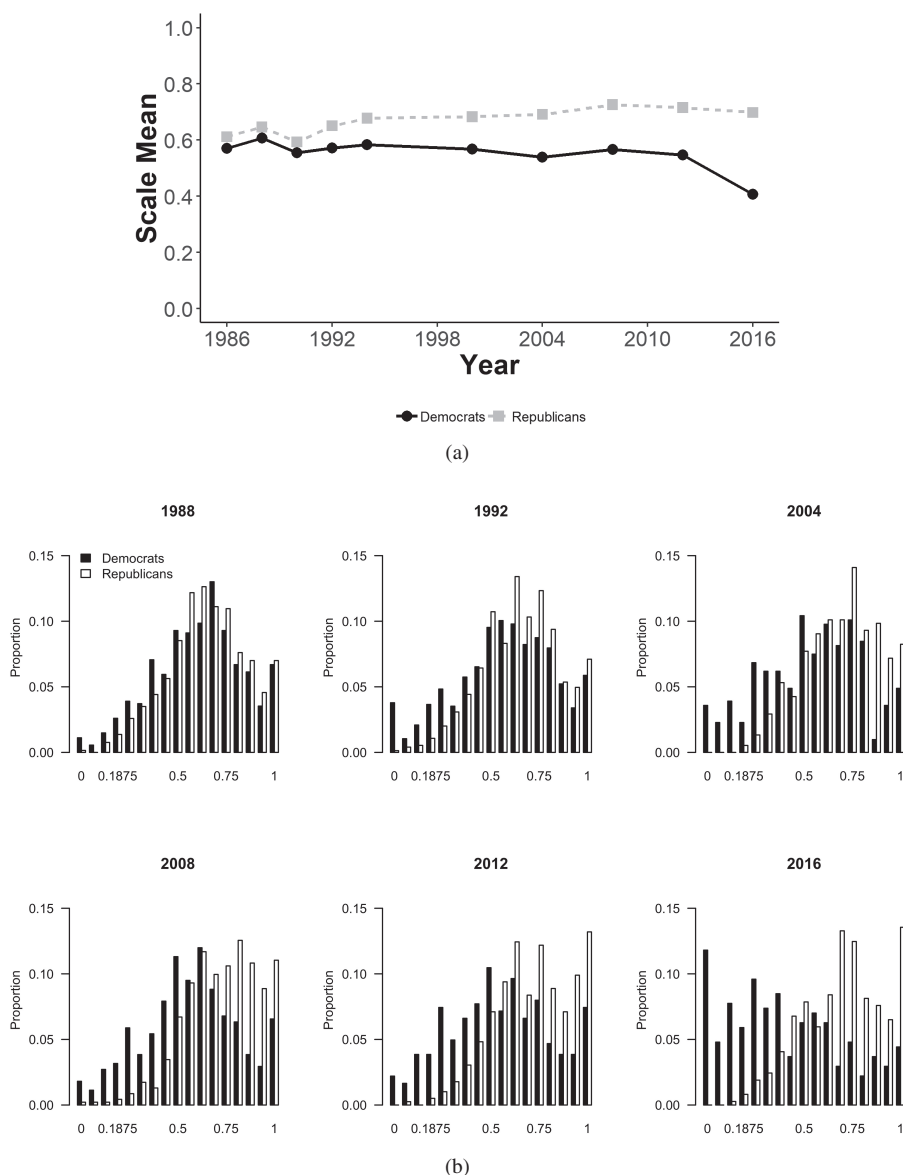


Figure 2: Polarization in racial attitudes by party. Four-item racial resentment index scaled 0–1, with higher values denoting more racial resentment. Face-to-face interviews. (a) Non-Hispanic Whites' average levels of racial resentment by party affiliation, including independent leaners with strong and weak partisans. (b) Racial resentment's distribution among Non-Hispanic Whites by party in select years. Bars indicate proportion of party identifiers, including independent leaners, with that level of racial resentment.

changes in which Whites are Republicans and Democrats do not fully explain this polarization in racial attitudes; panel data indicate that the relationship between Whites' racial attitudes and their partisanship is dynamic (Engelhardt, Forthcoming). The relationship's dynamism makes further sorting on racial attitudes even more likely, given race's importance in a more party-centric political context (Mason, 2018; Tesler, 2016a).

These temporal changes matter because they affect interpretations of regression results. The positive and statistically significant estimate for racial resentment in 2016 that Figure 1 displays can support a story that an electoral context including Trump's campaign primed racial attitudes, making them more important in voters' decision-making. Or it could reflect this polarization in racial resentment. Whites' partisanship predisposes them to support one candidate over another, so parties better sorted on racial attitudes increase the influence these views have on vote choice (see Lenz, 2012).<sup>3</sup> The individuals populating one end of the racial resentment scale are disposed to vote for one party's candidate while those at the other end favor the opposite party.

These explanations are observationally equivalent in cross-sectional analyses. Empirically, priming implies that the variance in vote choice changes but the variance in racial resentment does not because Whites are changing their vote preferences to match stable racial attitudes. Conversely, polarizing racial attitudes implies an increase in racial resentment's variance but without necessarily changing the distribution of vote preferences. Whites have the same propensity to support a given political candidate but are better sorted on racial resentment according to this probability. Each of these possibilities increases the covariance between racial attitudes and vote choice, resulting in a larger regression coefficient and creating the observational equivalence between priming and predisposition change as explanations for racial attitudes being more influential in 2016 than prior years.

One way to assess whether changes in Figure 2(b) affect comparisons across years is to disaggregate the analysis by party. If changes in the variance of racial attitudes matter as claimed, then the correlation between racial resentment and vote choice should fluctuate more for Democrats than for Republicans. Figure 3 presents the results from this investigation, plotting the coefficients from linear regressions of vote choice for the Republican candidate on racial resentment by party across over time (I include independent leaners with their respective parties). The top panel provides the correlation for

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<sup>3</sup>Lenz (2012) considers partisans adopting the issues positions of liked candidates. This makes the issue position in some sense a rationalization for prior candidate preference. Vote choice could be said to cause the issue position held. My argument parallels this but differs slightly in that vote choice *per se* is not shaping racial attitudes; rather, because partisanship is closely related to vote choice, any changes in the relationship between it and predispositions like racial attitudes can also increase the influence these orientations have on vote choice.

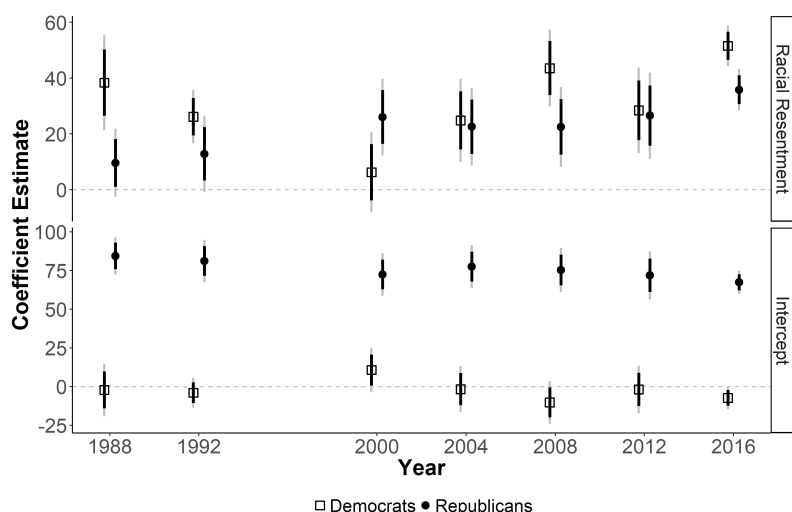


Figure 3: Racial resentment's effect on Republican vote choice by party. Results from OLS regression models run on individual years using population weights. Thicker lines denote 83% confidence intervals where non-overlap indicates significant differences between coefficient magnitudes at the 95% level (Bolsen and Thornton, 2014) and thinner lines signify 95% confidence intervals.

racial resentment while the bottom panel provides the model intercept, or baseline support for the Republican candidate for those at racial resentment's minimum. In line with evidence on partisanship's centrality to vote choice (Campbell *et al.*, 1960), the bottom panel shows marked consistency in whether someone supports their party's candidate. The results in the top panel reveal striking stability in the correlation between racial resentment and vote choice for Republicans. Although racial resentment's estimated effect is larger in 2016 than any other year, these estimates are not statistically different for any year but 1988 and 1992 ( $p < 0.01$  for each).

The estimates for Democrats, however, speak more directly to the observational equivalence issue I note. As with Republicans, racial resentment's effect among Democrats is largest in 2016, and this is statistically distinguishable from all prior years except 1988 and 2008. But the results also reveal much greater variation over time in the relationship between racial resentment and vote choice for Democrats. This suggests that the variation across elections shown in Figure 1 is driven more by changes in the relevance of racial attitudes for Democrats than Republicans. Republicans' racial attitudes do not appear to have responded differently to Trump's candidacy than to the 2000 or 2004 campaigns, elections where race was largely absent. Further, with Figure 2(b) showing that Republicans overwhelmingly populate the racially

resentful end of the scale, claims that Whites holding negative attitudes about Blacks uniquely responded during the 2016 election appear incomplete (Coates, 2017; Green and McElwee, 2019; Schaffner *et al.*, 2018; Tesler, 2016b). To be sure, it could be racially resentful Democrats driving change over time, but the inferential issues present in Figure 1 merely shift to explaining changes among White Democrats, the very group driving the polarization in racial attitudes complicating explanations for racial attitudes' impact in 2016.

While informative, these results still do not offer insight into *why* the correlation is changing over time. To illustrate one way to address the observational equivalence issue I follow Sides *et al.* (2018) and use panel data from the Democracy Fund's Views of the Electorate Research (VOTER) survey which cover the 2012 and 2016 elections (Democracy Fund Voter Study Group, 2017).<sup>4</sup> To test the claim that the 2016 election primed racial attitudes, I adopt a test of priming developed by Lenz (2012) and similar to Sides *et al.*'s (2018) approach.<sup>5</sup> This regresses vote choice on racial resentment and the other covariates used in Figure 1. To facilitate this test, I stack the data by election year (2012 and 2016), but instead of using covariates measured concurrently with vote choice I use baseline responses from December 2011. Finally, I test for priming by interacting each predictor with an indicator for 2016, where a positive and significant coefficient provides support for the priming hypothesis — racial attitudes measured in December 2011 are more strongly correlated with voting for the Republican in 2016 than in 2012.<sup>6</sup>

The results from this exercise, reported in Table 1, are consistent with work showing the 2016 election primed Whites' racial attitudes (Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018). The coefficient estimate for racial resentment in the first row offers evidence that these attitudes shaped support for Romney over Obama in 2012. The second row provides the key test, interacting racial resentment with 2016. The results suggest that the influence of racial resentment on vote choice in 2016 was over 12 percentage points greater than in 2012. This test reveals that at least part of the explanation for racial attitudes mattering in 2016 is from their activation relative to the preceding presidential election.

This approach suggests that priming does help explain why Whites' racial attitudes mattered in 2016, but it still says nothing about their impact relative to years other than 2012. But similar research designs and richer panel

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<sup>4</sup>VOTER Survey participants come from YouGov's non-random respondent pool with completed surveys weighted according to population benchmarks. These data consist of interviews conducted in December 2011, December 2012, and November/December 2016.

<sup>5</sup>While Sides *et al.* (2018) offer a similar priming test, my model differs in the covariates included and linear model used. Hopkins (Forthcoming) uses a different modeling approach, panel data source, and racial attitude measures.

<sup>6</sup>This approach seems preferable to using vote recall items in cross-sectional surveys (e.g., Schaffner *et al.*, 2018). Even if they provide reliable measures observational equivalence may still affect certain types of analyses.

Table 1: Priming Whites’ racial attitudes in 2016.

	Republican presidential vote
Racial resentment	29.72 (2.16)
—*2016	12.59 (3.05)
Partisanship	72.30 (1.79)
—*2016	−16.21 (2.52)
Ideology	35.14 (2.58)
—*2016	8.11 (3.65)
Female	−5.25 (0.92)
—*2016	1.39 (1.30)
Age	11.21 (2.08)
—*2016	2.05 (2.94)
Income	3.50 (1.71)
—*2016	−6.53 (2.42)
College Degree	−2.05 (1.08)
—*2016	0.43 (1.52)
Southerner	4.90 (1.02)
—*2016	0.58 (1.44)
2016	−0.41 (2.51)
Constant	−25.02 (1.77)
Observations	8,942
$R^2$	0.63
Residual Std. Error	26.42

**Note:** OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. Outcome scaled 0–100. Covariates scaled 0–1 and are measured in December 2011. Analyses use survey weights.

data suggest 2016 is unique even compared to 2008 (Hopkins, Forthcoming). This approach points to the importance of proper research design and conceptualization when scholars wish to offer specific explanations for why some orientation's correlation with vote choice changes across elections (e.g., Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018).

As a final point, the preceding analyses emphasize how observational equivalence issues complicate explanations for why racial resentment influenced vote choice in 2016 and its influence changed relative to prior years. This focus assumes that the regression coefficients I present should carry a substantive interpretation, a position in line with traditional explanations for the relationship between racial attitudes and vote choice (e.g., Kinder, 2013; Mendelberg, 2001) but one requiring that racial resentment's meaning does not also change over time. Critically for this assumption, research on expressive survey responding suggests that measures changing over time in ways related to partisanship may come more from partisan cheerleading than substantive attitudinal shifts (e.g., Bullock *et al.*, 2015); surveys provide partisans with an opportunity to report party-consistent messages. From this perspective, the decrease in Democrats' racial resentment may thus not come from actual changes in racial attitudes or partisanship, but from changes in how Democrats answer the racial resentment items. Such changes matter because they violate the measurement invariance assumption needed to make valid comparisons between racial resentment and vote choice over time because the comparison is apples to oranges; 2016 responses are contaminated by additional considerations.

To address this, I use confirmatory factor analysis to test whether the meaning of racial resentment changes over time for VOTER Survey respondents.<sup>7</sup> This procedure assesses changes in model fit between two nested models (Brown, 2015, see Davidov, 2009; Pérez and Hetherington, 2014 for political science applications of this approach). The first model estimates separate factors for racial resentment in 2012 and 2016, correlating item error variances over time but allowing the racial resentment items to load differently between years. This tests configural invariance which requires all four racial resentment items to load on the 2012 and 2016 dimensions. The second constrains each item's factor loading to be the same for 2012 as for 2016. This tests metric invariance and establishes whether the factors have the same meaning. If this second model fits worse than the first model, then racial resentment's meaning changed between 2012 and 2016. Conventionally, a significant change in  $\chi^2$  values between these two models is used as evidence against invariance (Brown, 2015). But recent recommendations suggest evaluating multiple measures of model fit (Chen, 2007). Consequently, I look at changes in  $\chi^2$  as well as

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<sup>7</sup>Analyses conducted in *R* (version 3.5.0) using the *lavaan* package (version 0.5–23.1097) (Rosseel, 2012).

Table 2: Measurement invariance of racial resentment, 2012–2016.

	$\chi^2$	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta\chi^2$ $p$ -value	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ SRMR	$\Delta$ RMSEA
Configural	177	0.996	0.0114	0.0485					
Metric	207	0.995	0.0202	0.0464	29.7	<0.001	−0.000708	0.00878	−0.00217

**Note:** The configural model freely estimates item loadings using the *try harder* item to define the dimensions. The metric model constrains item loadings to equality between 2012 and 2016. Data from 2012–2016 VOTER Survey.

changes in the comparative fit index (CFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

The results offer little support for the view that racial resentment’s meaning changed between 2012 and 2016. The model fit results reported in Table 2 provide no clear evidence that imposing the equality restriction for item loadings between 2012 and 2016 decreases model fit.<sup>8</sup> Although there is a significant  $\chi^2$  change ( $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 28.7, p < 0.001$ ), the change in the CFI of −0.000708 is well below the −0.010 level suggesting non-invariance (Chen, 2007). Similarly, changes in the SRMR and RMSEA are well below suggested benchmarks of 0.030 and 0.015, respectively. It is thus unlikely that changes in the relationship between racial resentment and vote choice between 2012 and 2016 come from measurement artifact produced by expressive responding.

Conclusion

I argue that claims that the 2016 presidential campaign and Donald Trump uniquely primed Whites’ racial attitudes, making them more influential vote determinants, require evidence from appropriate research designs. Regression coefficients revealing a strong, positive association between racial attitudes and vote choice in cross-sectional survey data can support this conventional attitude priming account, but they can also come from a growing polarization in racial attitudes between 2012 and 2016 driven by Democrats because this change relates to later vote choice. To address this I follow prior work (e.g., Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018) and show how analytical approaches introduced by policy voting scholars (Lenz, 2012) can overcome this observational equivalence issue. Panel data suggest that racial attitudes mattered more in 2016 than 2012 (see also Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018) and rule out changes in the meaning of racial resentment between years. This demonstrates that scholars must carefully consider alternative explanations for their results in future elections and adopt appropriate research

<sup>8</sup>Full CFA results, including the factor loadings, are reported in the Appendix.

designs. With Whites better sorted on their racial attitudes, these views may influence vote choice in 2020 in ways that look like 2016, even if race is not central to the campaign.

These distributional changes also call attention to the need to carefully consider for whom racial attitudes mattered. An alternative and more optimistic takeaway from 2016 is that Whites' racial attitudes led many to reject the racist candidate and embrace the candidate and party advocating racial liberalism.<sup>9</sup> While racially resentful Whites likely rallied around Trump's candidacy, a more complete story must acknowledge Whites who may have increasingly *rejected* him on the basis of race (consider the Tesler and Sears (2010) "two sides of racialization" story where racially liberal Democrats went out of their way to support Barack Obama in the 2008 primary contest). With fewer voters cross-pressured by their racial attitudes and their partisanship, partisans at both the elite and mass levels are demonstrating seemingly unprecedented clarity in racial views. Explanations highlighting racism's "sobering role" are therefore incomplete because they focus on those possessing negative racial attitudes as a driving force behind Trump's victory (e.g., Schaffner *et al.*, 2018). Analysts need to consider the full distribution of the construct, not simply the behaviors of individuals at one end, if they want to fully appreciate the role of orientations central to American politics (Hutchings and Valentino, 2004; Tesler, 2016a).

Attention to these dynamics may help shed light on events during the early months of the Trump administration. Central among these is the apparent emboldening of White nationalists as evidenced by rallies in Charlottesville, Virginia, and elsewhere. Commentators may rightly point to changing norms surrounding expressing racist sentiments as enabling this (Valentino *et al.*, 2018). But the picture I present here is that White Democrats are actually the unique group in this period. They increasingly hold a perspective that acknowledges racism and discrimination as obstacles to Black success. White nationalist rallies may gain the most attention, in part because they may play on pundits' priors about the Trump administration's bases of support (Coates, 2017). But this neglects the effects these events may have on the formation of more positive racial attitudes among those opposed to Trump and his administration (Engelhardt, Forthcoming; Hopkins and Washington, nodate; Luttig *et al.*, 2017; Sides *et al.*, 2018). Concern with prejudice's political impacts is rightly placed, but it should not come at the expense of considering the forces at play among less prejudiced individuals.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the interpretational issues I present can extend beyond racial attitudes to other politically relevant orientations. To the degree the parties become better sorted on other orientations, then this can affect inferences about relationships between vote choice and

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<sup>9</sup>I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for emphasizing this point.

these characteristics. This is a critically important point, given an increasingly sorted mass public in the United States (Mason, 2018). As noted, scholars already acknowledge these concerns as they relate to issue positions (Lenz, 2012). But present theorizing about the presumed individual-level stability of orientations like racial or gender attitudes (Tesler, 2015) may lead scholars to not consider alternative explanations for their results (but see Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018). Yet, presumptively fundamental orientations can change, and in ways related to party (Engelhardt, Forthcoming; Goren, 2005; Margolis, 2018). Consideration of trends preceding an election, when combined with proper research designs and theorizing (e.g., Hopkins, Forthcoming; Sides *et al.*, 2018), can thus help scholars more completely explain changes in the correlation between some orientation and vote choice.

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# Appendix: Trumped by Race: Explanations for Race's Influence on Whites' Votes in 2016

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## **Abstract**

The included tables and figures provide supplementary information for the main text analyses.

# Appendix

## Racial Resentment Measure

Past discrimination: “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.”

Deserve less: “Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.”

Try hard: “It’s really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.” (Reverse Coded)

Special favors: “Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.” (Reverse Coded)

All responses are recorded on 5-point Likert-type scales anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree.

## Full Model Results

As discussed in the text, the OLS results reported here relate a series of predictors (racial resentment, sex, age, income, college education, Southern residence, and ideological and partisan self-identification) to whether a non-Hispanic White respondent votes for the Republican candidate over the Democratic candidate in a given year. I scale this to run 0-100. All other variables are scaled 0-1, or included as indicators (having a college degree, being female, or being a Southerner).

Table A.1: Predictors of Supporting Republican Presidential Candidate, 1988-2016

	1988	1992	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Racial Resentment	16.787 (5.860)	17.355 (4.798)	9.678 (8.434)	19.168 (6.296)	36.468 (5.835)	22.440 (6.287)	44.534 (3.110)
Partisanship (Republican)	81.038 (3.797)	87.824 (3.411)	86.523 (5.962)	86.494 (4.859)	75.421 (4.608)	79.533 (5.844)	67.641 (2.813)
Ideology (Conservative)	30.741 (6.846)	38.259 (5.732)	34.993 (9.511)	29.368 (8.089)	31.821 (7.010)	34.598 (8.768)	21.348 (4.268)
Female	-0.025 (2.453)	2.388 (2.106)	1.463 (3.656)	-0.520 (2.707)	2.704 (2.445)	2.212 (2.762)	1.159 (1.412)
Age	1.011 (6.174)	1.316 (5.110)	-14.110 (9.591)	3.313 (6.624)	11.387 (5.641)	-1.829 (6.679)	1.658 (2.941)
Income	4.113 (5.260)	0.452 (4.240)	-13.502 (7.158)	-1.891 (5.163)	6.431 (4.871)	10.249 (5.307)	-6.191 (2.660)
College Degree	-0.934 (2.833)	3.698 (2.487)	-9.985 (4.048)	-1.205 (3.118)	5.762 (2.725)	-2.370 (2.995)	-4.232 (1.566)
Southerner	11.710 (2.976)	4.282 (2.481)	7.567 (4.014)	3.090 (3.230)	2.846 (2.516)	-0.109 (3.156)	4.346 (1.644)
Constant	-16.636 (6.337)	-30.494 (4.670)	-2.936 (8.708)	-20.252 (6.075)	-38.566 (5.362)	-23.394 (5.985)	-12.866 (2.923)
Observations	854	953	358	535	727	2,434	1,732
R <sup>2</sup>	0.491	0.598	0.583	0.617	0.591	0.592	0.660
Residual Std. Error	34.883	31.763	30.827	30.138	38.987	41.008	28.003

*Note:* OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. Outcome scaled 0-100. Covariates scaled 0-1. Analyses use survey weights. 1996 omitted because racial resentment was not collected.

## Bivariate Relationship between Vote Choice and Racial Resentment

Figure A.1 presents the bivariate relationship between support for the Republican candidate over the Democratic candidate and racial resentment. As with the other analysis, the outcome is scaled to run 0-100, while racial resentment is scaled 0-1. 2016 is again an outlier in terms of the correlation between racial resentment and vote choice, here even compared to 2008 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

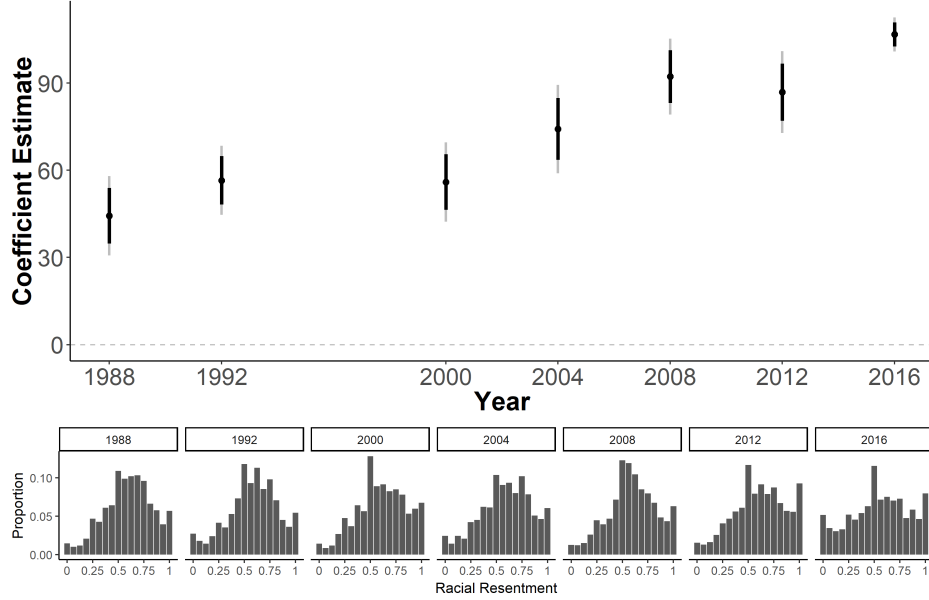


Figure A.1: The top panel presents racial resentment’s effect on Republican vote choice. Results from OLS regression models run on individual years using population weights. Thicker lines denote 83% confidence intervals where non-overlap indicates significant differences between coefficient magnitudes at the 95% level (Bolsen and Thornton 2014) and thinner lines signify 95% confidence intervals. The bottom panel shows racial resentment’s distribution.

## Full Measurement Invariance Results

Table A.2 provides the full model results for the temporal measurement invariance analysis using the VOTER Survey reported in the text (on the method, see Brown 2015). The first two columns provide the estimated factor loadings and fit statistics for the configural invariance model. This freely estimates the factor loadings across years, fixing the factor loading for *try hard* to 1 to identify the model. The second two provide the estimated factor loadings and fit statistics for the metric invariance model which constrains each item to load the same on the 2011 dimension as the 2016 dimension. Columns 1 and 3 denote factors defined by responses to the racial resentment items from December 2011 while columns 2 and 4 indicate factors defined by responses to the same items but in November/December 2016. As discussed in the main text, if the metric model fits the data worse, then the meaning of racial resentment differs between 2012 and 2016. While there is a significant change in  $\chi^2$  after constraining the loadings ( $p < .001$ ), changes in the CFI, SRMR, and RMSEA do not

rise to levels suggesting non-invariance (changes of  $\geq -.01$ ,  $.030$ , and  $.015$ , respectively).

Table A.2: Measurement Invariance Results

	2011	2016	2011	2016
Try Hard	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	—	—	—	—
Special Favors	1.00	1.02	1.01	1.01
	(0.0132)	(0.0116)	(0.00939)	(0.00939)
Deserve Less	0.964	1.06	1.02	1.02
	(0.0167)	(0.0156)	(0.0129)	(0.0129)
Past Discrimination	1.17	1.18	1.18	1.18
	(0.0197)	(0.0169)	(0.0147)	(0.0147)
$\chi^2$	177		207	
DF	11		14	
CFI		0.996		0.995
TLI		0.989		0.990
SRMR		0.0114		0.0202
RMSEA [90% CI]	0.0485	[0.0424, 0.055]	0.0464	[0.0409, 0.0521]
N		6398		6398

Note: Models estimated using maximum likelihood. Parameter estimates with standard errors in parentheses. Estimated error-variances are omitted.

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