

Responding to Racial Resentment:
How Racial Resentment Shapes the Rhetoric of Members of Congress*

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During President Barack Obama's first State of the Union, not eight months into his first term in office, Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) broke with House rules of decorum by yelling "You lie!" when the President said that his health care policy would not cover those who immigrated to the United States illegally. What's unique about this is not that a member of the opposing party would disagree or condemn the president. Presidents are regularly and harshly criticized not only by their opponents, but also the media. Rather it was the undercurrent of disrespect and delegitimization of the nation's first black president in Wilson's outburst that stood out as distinct from the criticism faced by past presidents.

This was not the first or last time Obama's legitimacy would be questioned by Republican members of Congress. On the campaign trail and well into his first term in office Republican lawmakers, including Rep. Cliff Stearns (FL), Rep. Mike Coffman (CO), and Rep. Vicky Hartzler (MO),¹ publicly questioned whether Barack Obama could legitimately serve as president by questioning if he was born in the United States. Throughout his term in office, Republican members regularly criticized the president's actions as illegal.² And, in 2016, in a move that some have argued severely undercut the President's position as the chief diplomat of the U.S., Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark) and other Senate Republicans broke with centuries of precedent deferring authority to the president in negotiating with foreign countries when they

¹ Hamby, Peter. "Despite a Frustrated GOP, Anti-Obama 'birthers' still persist." CNN. May 23, 2012. html

² Shabad, Rebecca. Republican Senators Question Legality of Obama Flood Order." The Hill February 6, 2015.; Zezima, Katie and Robert Costa. "Republicans Challenge Obama's Executive Actions, File Lawsuit over Obamacare." Washington Post. November 21, 2014.

sent a letter to the Iranian government designed to kill any potential deal President Obama could make pertaining to the country's nuclear program.³

While some argued that this was politics as usual, to the former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), the root of this behavior was clearly distinct. Rep. Butterfield explained, "I understand how government works and I know the deference traditionally given to the president that you do not see now [for President Obama]. You put all of these incidents together – questioning his citizenship, the Muslim stuff, the idea that he has been infected with anti-colonists' views by his father he barely knew – and you have a strong circumstantial case. It certainly smells like racism."⁴

The claim that Obama's presidency was viewed through a racial lens is not new. Several scholars have detailed the ways in which racial bias became a stronger predictor of support for Obama than it had been for previous Presidents *among the electorate* (see Tesler and Sears 2010, Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012, Tesler 2016). However, it is not known what was driving racially charged rhetoric about Obama *among elected officials*. Is it possible that representatives responded to the racial environment in their districts when deciding to critique Obama? If so, representatives' personal attacks on Obama could be attributed to racism in the electorate as much as or even more than differences in partisanship and ideology in the public.

By answering these questions, we gain additional insight into the factors which influence racial biases in Congress as an institution. Several scholars note that racism seems endemic to the institution of Congress (Hawkesworth 2003). Our work sheds light on whether racist actions

³ Capehart, Jonathan. "Tom Cotton Picked Apart by Army General over 'Mutinous' Iran Letter." Washington Post. March 13, 2015.

⁴ Fletcher, Michael A. "A Question of Racism: What's Behind the Vitriol in the Opposition to Obama?" The Undeclared. June 1, 2016.

taken by elected officials could be tied to an electoral connection. If so, one reason that Congress may remain racially conservative even as representatives cycle in and out of office may be attributed to continuing electoral pressures to display racially biased behaviors from voters.

To test whether racial attitudes within a member's home district influences their criticism of President Obama we use the content analysis of over 55,000 press releases made by almost 400 members of the 114th Congress. Due to electoral incentives and the growing salience of race in recent years, we argue that U.S. House members from racially conservative districts will be more prone to engage in statements meant to de-legitimize and personally attack President Barack Obama. We expect that this will be particularly true for Republican representatives because their electorate was more mobilized around issues of race during the age of Obama (Tesler 2016).

Ultimately, we find that Republican lawmakers from districts with high levels of racial resentment are significantly more likely to attack Obama than Republicans in low racially resentful districts and Democrats from districts with high levels of racial resentment. The findings presented here not only provide insight into understanding how race shapes legislative behavior, but also allows for greater insight into the racialized nature of American political institutions, namely the U.S. Congress.

Racialized U.S. Congress

A growing body of scholarship has urged congressional studies to seriously consider the racialized nature of the institution. Scholars of American political development have asserted that race shapes “institutional goals, structures, procedures and political actions” (King and Smith 2005: 85). The U.S. Congress does not exist in isolation from the society with which it lives or the history from which it originates. As a result, “Congress is not immune from the

insidious nature of prejudice” (Tyson 2016: 33). This was certainly true of Congress in the 1950s, when the institution was racially segregated and racial epithets were routinely espoused on the House floor. And, it remains true today, despite the diminished presence of overt racism within Congress.

The prejudice African Americans face in their everyday lives does not stop once they step on Capitol Hill as legislators. As Sen. Tim Scott and other black legislators have long reported, black members of Congress are frequently stopped by Capitol police, despite wearing their Congressional pins, and asked for identification.⁵ Once within the walls of Congress, race continues to shape their experiences. It does so first by defining their interactions with fellow legislators. Black legislators report that their race regularly shapes their interactions with fellow members of Congress. For instance, in 1993, Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun, the only African American in the United States Senate at the time, recalled an instance where Sen. Jesse Helms began singing Dixie when he stepped into an elevator where she was standing. She recalled that he turned to fellow Senator, Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and said “I’m going to sing ‘Dixie’ until she cries.”⁶ Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) also found that her race defined many of her interactions with other legislators when she noticed that slavery was often brought up around her. In fact, Rep. Helen Chenoweth (R-ID) once told her that she’s “lucky to have survived slavery” (Hawkesworth 2003: 534).

Race also seems to play a significant role in the institutional positioning of black legislators. Canon (1999) and Tate (2003) find that black members of Congress are less likely to

⁵ Gangitano, Alex. “Scott: Police Asked for ID Even When Wearing His Senator’s Pin.” Roll Call. July 13, 2016.

⁶ AP. “Helms Sings a Song of ‘Dixie’: Moseley-Braun Looks Away.” LA Times. August 6, 1993.

serve on prestigious committees and hold leadership positions than their equally positioned white counterparts. And, while Rocca et al. (2011) find that black legislators attain leadership positions in committees at faster rates than white legislators, they attribute this to tendency of black legislators to serve on less prestigious committees. This provides them an enhanced opportunity to work their way up the committee leadership ladder. Moreover, Bratton and Haynie (1999) show that bills sponsored by black legislators are less likely to get enacted into law than those sponsored by white legislators. Tate (2003), however, shows that in the 104th Congress black legislators were slightly more successful than white Democrats in getting their policies passed. In contrast, though, the bills sponsored by black legislators tended to be largely symbolic rather than substantive in nature.

Studies like these suggest that racism is alive and well in Congress. Moreover, they show that racism may significantly influence legislative behavior and the representation minority legislators are able to provide their constituents. Despite this, few studies have systematically examined racism in Congress. A significant and noteworthy exception is the work of Hawkesworth (2003). Through interviews with Congresswomen of color, Hawkesworth (2003) shows that Congress is a raced and gendered institution whereby Congresswomen of color face distinct forms of discrimination and marginalization. As a result, they are systematically silenced and marginalized in the lawmaking process. Beyond this, however, little work has empirically examined racism within the walls of Congress. We seek to fill this void by considering the effect that racial resentment in a member's district has on their legislative behavior.

Racial Resentment and Legislative Behavior

A central question among scholars of legislative behavior centers on understanding why members of Congress do what they do. Canonical studies of congressional participation predict

that members will behave in ways that appeal to their constituents, please party leaders and satisfy their personal policy goals (Mayhew 1974; Kingdon 1989). Mayhew (1974) and Fenno (1978) in particular argue that legislators are vote maximizers who respond to conditions in their districts in hopes of gaining the most votes possible come election day.

It is clear that racial attitudes have played a growingly important role in American politics. In fact, Parker (2016) argues that “race has rarely mattered more in U.S. politics than it does now” (217). We argue that this increased racialization that occurred under the Obama administration interacts with representatives’ interest to maximize support in their district to influence their legislative behavior. More specifically, we argue that what members of Congress say is at least partially shaped by the racial attitudes of their constituency. That is, members from districts that are racially conservative should appeal to their constituents through negative statements about the country’s first black president.

We expect that racial attitudes will shape how legislators behave around Obama because initial findings show that racial resentment is at least correlated with what happens in Congress. Tesler (2016) shows that racial resentment was strongly tied to support for the 2013 government shutdown. He shows that members of Congress from the most racially resentful districts were 60 percent more likely to support the government shutdown than those in the least racially resentful districts. More broadly, we also know that as racial conservatism has become more closely tied with the Republican Party, the most rapid pace of Congressional polarization in more than 30 years has also occurred (Bonica 2014). So, there is some preliminary evidence of a connection between racial attitudes and what goes on within Congress.

More specifically, however, racial attitudes should shape what members of Congress say for a few reasons. First, racial attitudes have not only become stronger determinants of

partisanship, but also of vote choice since Obama's election. As a result, members of Congress are being elected by growingly more cohesive blocs of racially liberal and conservative voters. Therefore, electorally-minded members of Congress will try to prime these racial attitudes as a way to maintain their electoral coalitions. Second, racialized rhetoric, through the use of subtle racial appeals, has proven to be a successful way for Republicans to prime racial attitudes during their campaigns. Since members of Congress, and in particular members of the House, are constantly running for reelection, there's little reason to believe that this racialized rhetoric would cease once they entered office.

One way legislators can reach their constituents is through the issuing of press releases. While these press releases serve as a venue for racial appeals, they also should not be mistakenly categorized as purely symbolic. Because politicians have a disproportionate say in which issues and events garner media attention (Bennett 1990), the quick issuing of press releases can play a large role in its framing. As Gillion (2016) shows, what members of Congress say can shape the institution, its actions, and what society deems important. Moreover, how an issue is framed and what it's associated with can have clear implications on its likelihood of policy passage (see Tesler 2016). Additionally, scholarship has shown that as discussion on the issue of racial inequality increases, so does governmental action to resolve the issue (Gillion 2016). Therefore, we have reason to believe that what gets said has implications on policy making as well.

Republicans and Racial Resentment in the Age of Obama

We expect that representatives will feel more pressure to make racially conservative statements in districts with high levels of racial resentment. However, we expect that this will be particularly true of Republicans in the current political context. A solid body of work has shown a link between racial attitudes and partisanship (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Key 1949; Kinder

and Sanders 1996; Edsall and Edsall 1992). Beginning in the 1960s with the advancement of civil rights legislation under Democratic presidential administrations, the GOP began positioning itself as the new home for white racial conservatives. By opposing civil rights and policies seen as benefiting African Americans (see Carmines and Stimson 1989; McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2006 on the racial divide between parties), as well as invoking racial stereotypes and subtle racial appeals through the use of code words and imagery in their campaigns (Mendelberg 2001), disaffected white voters shifted their support to the Republican Party. Because of the success of these implicit racial appeals at the national level, Republican candidates running for office at all levels of government began relying on these strategies to build electoral coalitions (Mayer 2002).

Additionally, recent evidence suggests that the role of race and racial attitudes has only grown more important for Republicans in recent years. Rather than ushering in an era of post-racial politics, the Obama presidency has brought with it a “most racial political era” (Tesler 2016). Despite Obama’s effort to deracialize his campaign and presidency (see Gillion 2016; Tesler and Sears 2010; Coe and Reitzes 2010; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Lopez 2014), racial attitudes proved consequential to both. During the 2008 and 2012 elections, racial resentment and anti-black stereotypes were strong predictors of vote choice and this was particularly true for Republicans (Tesler 2016; Tesler and Sears 2010; Piston 2010; Hutchings 2009). In fact, racial resentment played a larger role in these two elections than it had in all previous presidential elections from 1988 to 2004 (Tesler 2016). There’s also evidence Obama’s race primed racial attitudes towards policy issues, like health care, resulting in what Tesler (2016) deems a “spillover of racialization.” In these cases, because of Obama’s connection to health care, racial attitudes impacted support on an issue that seemingly has no racial component.

However, the effect of this increased racialization wasn't just focused on Obama's election and stance on health care. Rather, the "spillover of racialization" seems to have had a much broader impact. During this time, racial attitudes became a significantly stronger predictor of white partisanship (Tesler 2016). In particular, many racially resentful white voters began to switch their allegiance from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. Under Obama's presidency, the relationship between district-level racial conservatism and the Republican vote share in congressional elections was stronger than in previous elections (where it had been nearly nonexistent) (Tesler 2016). Even in the 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump, racial resentment proved to be a highly influential factor in vote choice. Given that the significance of racial resentment has risen in American politics and is playing a larger role for Republicans, it would not be surprising to find that Republican U.S. House Representatives are especially responsive to racial resentment in their district.

Data and Methods

Dependent Variable: Racially Resentful Press Releases

To test our hypotheses, we first used a web scraper to obtain the complete collection of press releases from almost the total universe of U.S. House Representatives in the 114th Congress. For each representative, we collected the universe of press releases from the start (January 3rd, 2015) to the conclusion (January 3rd, 2016) of the 114th Congress. In all, we collected about 58,000 press releases from about 380 U.S. House representatives from this time period. Our data set represents about 87% of the membership in the 114th U.S. House of Representatives. The only representatives we were unable to obtain data for were those whose websites could not be scraped, did not have a press release section, or who retired and websites could not be opened with the internet archive. Our own analysis suggests that representatives who we could not get

information from do not significantly differ from those whose websites we could access in their partisanship, gender, race, or the Cook's partisan voting index. Thus, we do not expect that the exclusion of these individuals will systematically bias our results.

Following our acquisition of the complete universe of our sampled representatives' press releases, we combined manual content coding with automated content coding for negative statements about Obama. Press releases were coded as negative toward Obama if they were critical about Obama specifically and *did not* simply criticize his policies. Thus, they were personal attack which could not be justified as being simply differences in policy preferences. For example, negative comments about Obama could come from critical statements about his actions. This is evident in Representative Virginia Foxx's (R-NC) comments: "President Obama's *stubborn* insistence on fulfilling an ill-advised campaign promise to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay distracts from ongoing threats to American national security and highlights the *failures* of his foreign policy agenda..." Representative Foxx's comments which mentioned that Obama was stubborn and broadly attacked his foreign policy agenda were coded as anti-Obama.

Anti-Obama comments can also come in the form of personal attacks "President Obama has *stooped to a new low* by choosing to advance his own domestic agenda over our national security interests" (Representative French Hill R-AR). Representative Hill was coded as making a negative Obama statement when mentioned that Obama stooped to a new. For the most part, anti-Obama press releases in the 114th Congress dealt with Obama's positions on Iran, gun control, and immigration. Anti-Obama press releases also often attribute Obama for disasters, high-profile crimes, or social unrest.

We coded each press release in a dichotomous manner. If the representative made at least one statement which attacked Obama specifically in the press release the entire press release was coded as making a negative statement about Obama. Given that we have about 60,000 (N=57,889) press releases manual coding would be a difficult, if not impossible task. Instead, we rely on automated content analysis through RTextTools and a handed coded subset of 4,000 press releases (Jurka et al 2012). While much has been written about the advantages and disadvantages of machine learning content analysis (see Grimmer and Stewart 2013, Barbera et al 2016), recent research demonstrates that it performs better than dictionary coding approaches and within the proper environment as well as manual coding (Gibbons et al 2016, Barbera et al 2016.). RTextTools combines multiple machine learning algorithms to assist in the content coding of different documents. In particular, we use RTextTools to content code our press releases using the following estimators support vector machine, maximum entropy, scaled linear discriminant analysis, bagging analysis, boosting analysis, naïve bayes, and long-pipe algorithms, and neural network analysis (see Jurka et al 2012).

All of these estimators rely on manually coded sample sets of press releases. Using our manually coded 4,000 press releases as guide, the estimators predict different cut-off points for categories based on the combination of words in each press release. For our purposes, the automated content coders simply estimate whether the press release had anti-Obama statement or not. To improve the accuracy of our estimates, we removed commonly used words in the English language such as “the” or “that”. We also stemmed the words so the all suffixes are removed. Both techniques have been shown to improve the accuracy of automated content coding (Loper and Bird 2002). Following the estimation, RTextTools compares the results of the 8 different

estimators and codes each press release as having or not having an anti-Obama statement based on what the majority of estimators agrees is correct.

One of the most important aspects of machine learning is to ensure that the algorithms worked correctly (see Grimmer and Stewart 2013). One of the main advantages of RTextTools is that the output provides researchers with information on how often the different content coding algorithms agreed (Collingwood and Wilkerson 2011). Using a sample of 500 of our 4,000 manually coded articles as both the basis for modeling the automated content coding algorithms and a smaller subsample of these manually coded articles as testers, we can identify how well the different algorithms by themselves and in concert predict the actual score for each article (Collingwood and Wilkerson 2011). Based on this approach, we found that that when at least five of the algorithms agreed, the ability of the automated content analysis to correctly predict whether the press release dealt with one of our statements was about 98%. Moreover, at least five of the algorithms agreed in over 95% of the cases. We manually coded a large percentage of articles where there was disagreement. Following this process, we created our dependent variable which is the percent of the press releases that each representative put out in the 114th Congress which contained anti-Obama statements. These were created by taking the total number of press releases with mentions of our topic of interest and dividing that by the total number of press releases posted in the 114th Congress.

Independent Variables

Our main independent variable of interest is the average levels of racial resentment in the representative's congressional district. Following the analysis of Tesler (2013), we calculated the racial resentment score in each district by combining the levels of racial resentment in the three Congresses prior to the 114th Congress using the 2014, 2012, and 2010 Cooperative

Congressional Election Studies. Given that these surveys were collected before the start of the 114th Congress, these levels of racial resentment precede and are not affected by U.S. House representatives' statements in this Congress. While the traditional racial resentment scale includes four questions, unfortunately, the CCES only includes two of these questions. The first asks respondents how much on a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale do they agree with the following statement: "The Irish, Italians, Jews and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors". These second asks the respondents on the same scale how much do they agree with the statement "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class". The variable was coded so that high scores indicate high levels of racial resentment and low scores represent the opposite. Following this coding, for all three years (2014, 2012, and 2010), we created a new variable which represents the mean level of racial resentment for all individuals that reside in that congressional district across the three congresses.

As mentioned above, we expect that racially biased pressures will have unique effects on Democratic and Republican representatives. In particular, we expect that Democrats will not yield to racially resentful pressures given the Democratic Party is generally more racially progressive than the GOP. Moreover, Democratic representatives may rely on black and Latino voters and thus may not have the same electoral incentive to speak out as Republicans. Finally, given that Obama is a Democrat there may be disincentives from leaders in the Party to speak poorly of Obama. In contrast, Republicans may feel freer to speak negatively about Obama and Latino immigrants. Moreover, they may feel like such actions will mobilize and incentivize their base to support them. Based on this, we interact the district's average racial resentment score by

political party with the expectation that Republicans will uniquely respond to racial resentment within their district.

To isolate the influence of this interactive relationship between district racial resentment, party, and anti-Obama press releases, we control for several variables. First, we control for the partisanship of the district using Cook's Partisan Voting Index scores. Higher scores on this index indicate that Democratic candidates perform well in these districts and lower score represent the opposite. We also control for the percent black and percent Latino in the congressional district using data from the U.S. Census. We expect that in more diverse districts, representatives will feel more pressure to appeal to different racial/ethnic groups and will not produce as many racially resentful press releases. Along these lines, we control for whether the Representative is female. We expect that women may feel less pressure to react to racial resentment in their district, given that they are often more liberal and more conscious of marginalized groups than their male counterparts.

We also control for whether the representative was black or Latino. All else being equal, we expect that these groups will be less likely to engage in racially resentful press releases than their white counterparts. Finally, we controlled for the region in which the representative resided. In particular, we control for whether the respondent resided in the south or not. Given the region's tumultuous racial history it is important to control for this variable.

Results

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

Figure 1 presents scatterplots and best fitting lines for the percent of anti-Obama press releases against each district's' average racial resentment score (X-axis). The results are disaggregated by the partisanship of the representative. The results show some evidence in

support of our hypothesis. In particular, there appears to be a positive relationship between racial resentment and higher levels of attacks on Obama. Moreover, the relationship between racial resentment and making negative statements about Obama to the Press only appears to be present for Republican representatives. For example, in Figure 1, Republican U.S. House Representatives (demarcated by black square) at the low levels of racial resentment appear to not make negative press releases about Obama. However, as the resentment scores increase, so does the percentage of press releases which attack Obama. In fact, the correlation between district racial resentment and the percent of press releases which include negative personal attacks on Obama for each representatives has a Pearson's R of .22 and is statistically significant. In contrast, for Democrats the same relationship has a Pearson's R of .02 and is statistically insignificant.

[Insert Table 1 and Figure 2 about Here]

Table 1 presents the results of two separate OLS regression analysis predicting anti-Obama press releases. Figure 2 presents corresponding marginal effects for the percent of anti-Obama press releases across levels of district racial resentment. Our main independent variable of interest in these models is the interaction between the district's racial resentment score and the Representative's party.

The results in both Table 1 and Figure 2 provide strong support for our hypothesis. District racial resentment is a strong predictor of U.S. House Representatives putting out negative press releases above and beyond the partisan and racial makeup of the district. In Figure 2, for example, Democrats and Republicans do not statistically differ in the percentage of press releases which speak negatively about Obama when racial resentment in their district is low. However, when racial resentment levels reach 7 out of 10 or higher, Republican U.S. House

Representatives put out significantly more negative press releases than their Democratic counterparts. For example, when the average racial resentment score in a district is 8 of 10, Republicans put out 2.4% more anti-Obama press releases than their Democratic counterparts holding all else equal. This difference is statistically significant at .05.

Outside of our independent variable of interest, few other variables predicted the likelihood that a representative would make an anti-Obama press release. Representatives in districts which are located in the south and were more conservative were statistically more likely to put out a negative Obama press release. For example, for every one unit increase in the district's Cook's Partisan Voting Index (which ranges from conservative to liberal) the percent of anti-Obama press releases declines by about a 10th of a percent (.01%). On average, representatives in the South put out about 1 percent more anti-Obama press releases than representatives in other areas.

Conclusion

While there has long been claims that Congress is a racially regressive institution, less has been written about why this may be the case. While institutional pressures may lead individuals to become more racially conservative, we find evidence that electoral pressures matter as well. Namely, Republican U.S. House Representatives are more likely to put out press release which attack Obama on a personal level as the levels of racial resentment in their district rise. Moreover, the relationship between the district's average level of racial resentment and Republican Representatives likelihood of speaking out about these issues is significant above and beyond the district's partisanship, region, and racial makeup of the district. Finally, Democratic House Representatives, however, do not respond to these same pressures. The combination of

these results, indicate that representatives mirror the levels of racial resentment in their district which leads them to be more hostile to minority interest in government.

There is a significant amount of research which demonstrates that representatives conform to the expectations of their district when making decisions in elected office (Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974; Achen 1978; Miller and Stokes 1963; Kingdon 1989), we find that this holds true for racial resentment as well. As the public increases in their levels of racial resentment over time, so do Republican members of Congress. Thus, at least part of the reason we have seen a rise in the number of racially conservative members in Congress is due to growing racial resentment in the electorate.

Given that we examined press releases after our racial resentment measure was collected, we can be in part sure that the levels of racial resentment in a district are influencing representative's likelihood of making racially conservative statements. However, this does not preclude a reciprocal relationship from occurring. Namely, Representatives respond to pressures from their constituents to display racially regressive behaviors (which is what we find in this paper), which then increases racial resentment in the district (see Levundusky 2010, Lenz 2009). This cycle may explain why the country has become more racially polarized in recent years and why conservative districts have displayed more racially biased behavior (Tesler 2012, Sides, Vavreck, and Tesler 2017). In combination, the relationship between racially conservative politicians and their electorate may lead to more racial polarization in the future.

While this study advances our understanding of how racial resentment within a congressional district influences the public outreach strategies of U.S. House Representatives, more research is necessary. First, we examine only one form of racially resentful outreach; anti-Obama press releases. While these press releases represent salient racialized topic of discussion

in the 114th Congress, more work needs to be done to explore whether other underrepresented groups such as Latinos, Asian Americans, Muslims, or women are the targets of negative press releases in racially resentful districts. Second, while we focused on anti-Obama press releases in this paper, future research should explore whether U.S. House Representatives from racially resentful districts are more likely to praise President Trump or denigrate other white Democratic president. For the former, given that President Trump has made many racially conservative remarks, it is possible that Representatives in racially resentful districts feel encouraged to speak out to appeal to the electorate in their district. For the latter, this is difficult to do because Clinton was president during a time where numerous representatives were not posting their press releases on a website in a systematic fashion. As a result, tracking down these press releases would be extremely difficult if not impossible. Third, future work should look at the effect that racial resentment has on other forms of legislative behavior, such as roll call votes, floor speeches, bill sponsorship and committee work. While more work is necessary, we hope that this study provides important information about the link between racial resentment in the public and the responsiveness of government.

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Table 1: OLS Regression Predicting the Number of Anti-Obama Press Releases by Representatives in the 114th Congress.

DV=% Anti Obama Press Releases	
Republican Rep*District Racial Resentment	0.01*** (0.01)
Republican Rep	-0.09** (0.04)
District Racial Resentment	-0.00 (0.00)
Female Rep	0.00 (0.00)
Black Rep	-0.00 (0.01)
Latino Rep	-0.00 (0.01)
Percent Black	0.01 (0.01)
Percent Latino	0.01 (0.01)
PVI	-0.00** (0.00)
Rep Age	0.00 (0.00)
South	0.01*** (0.00)
Constant	0.03 (0.02)
Observations	366
R-squared	0.34

Figure 1: % of Representative Press Releases Which are Anti-Obama by District Racial Resentment for Democratic and Republican Representatives

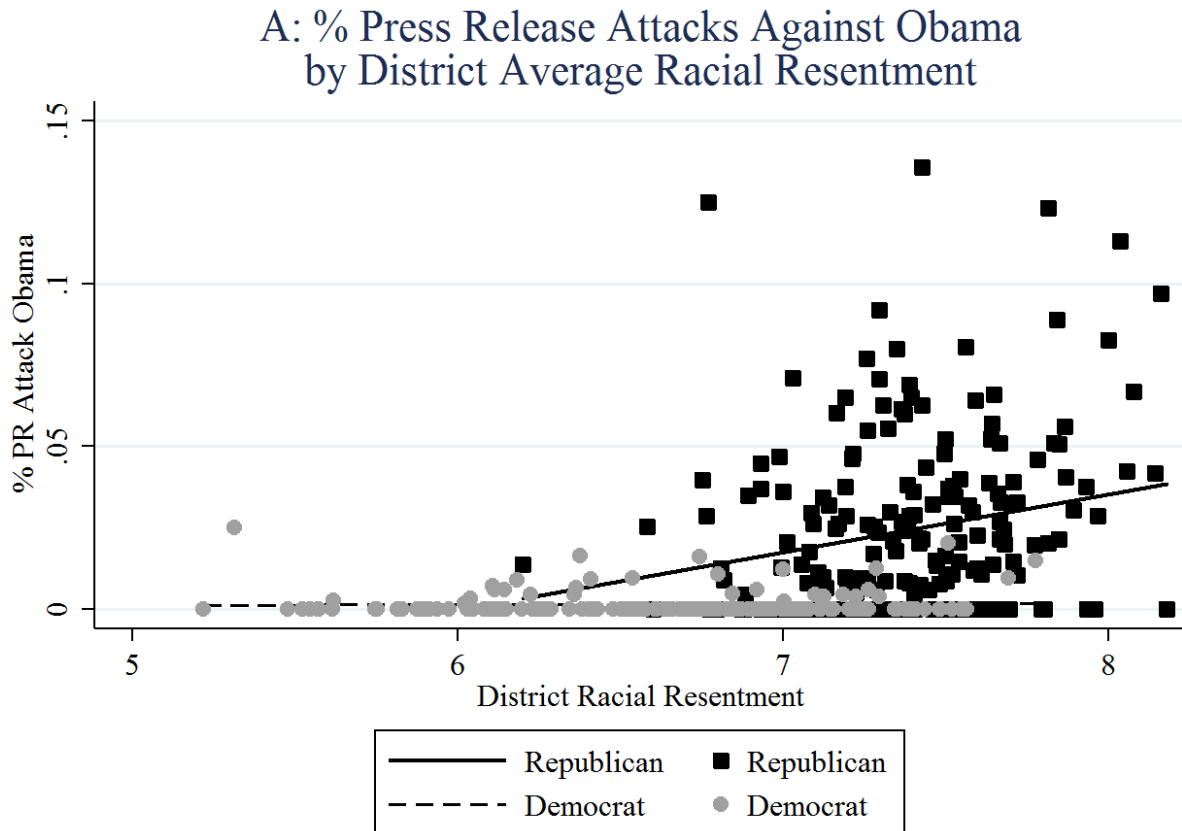


Figure 2: Marginal Effect of Republican on Press Releases Which are Anti-Obama by District Racial Resentment

