

Does Unemployment have a Larger Effect on Racial Voter Turnout?

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INTRO

- Current literature done on the topic shows that a depressive economy worries voters, and in turn increases voter turnout.
- Evidence presented implies that voters hold elected officials accountable for a weak performing economy.
- In order to see if unemployment affects racial voter turnout, I examined data from the 2016 CCES Content Dataset that includes a nationally representative sample of about 64,000 Americans.

METHODS

- Independent Variable: Voter Turnout
- Dependent Variable: Race and Unemployment status.
- This study includes a logistic regression looking at voter turnout from the Black and White communities. It also features interactions and coefficient plots for the Black-unemployed and White-unemployed voters.

HYPOTHESIS

- Unemployment does have a substantial effect on voter turnout in the Black community.

RESULTS

- **Table 1** measures the interaction between people of the Black-unemployed community and voter turnout. There is a negative relationship between the Black community and turnout to the polls (-0.77). However, for every unemployed-Black person, turnout increases by .16. This is a statistically significant relationship because the p-value is ≤ 0.05 .
- **Table 2** looks at the relationship between the White-unemployed community and their voting efforts. We see that it is actually a negative relationship, and they are .01 times less likely to vote.
- My final result is that even though it is a small effect, an unemployed, Black person is more likely to vote compared to the White-unemployed community.

The Black-Unemployed community is more likely to be mobilized.

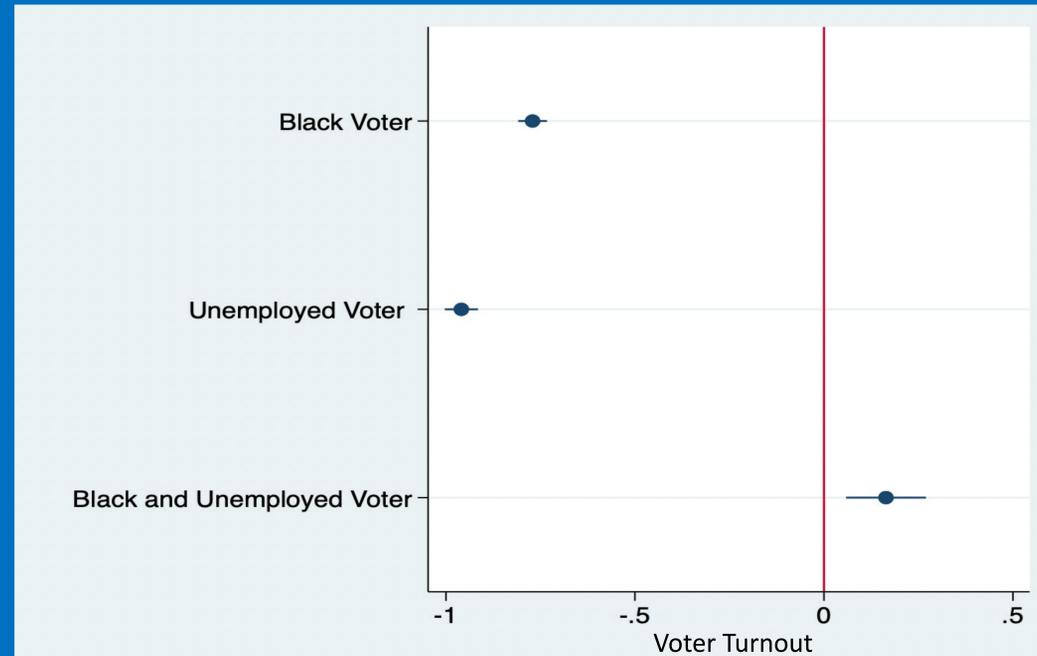


Figure 1. The Effect of the Black and Unemployed Community on Voter Turnout

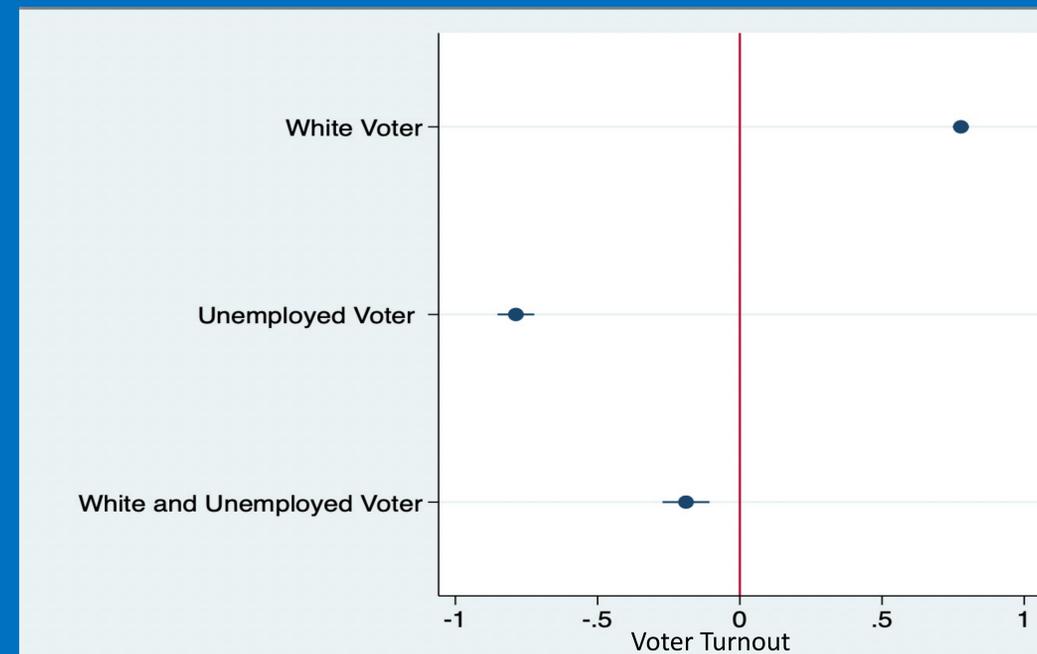


Figure 2. The Effect of the White and Unemployed Community on Voter Turnout

DISCUSSION

- I theorized that unemployed voters were more likely to vote because they wanted to hold the incumbent party accountable for a weak performing economy. The unemployed community show up to the polls as a way to voice their concerns with hopes that their efforts will improve future jobs prospects. This study addresses how different racial groups respond politically to unemployment, and I found that the Black-unemployed community is more likely to be mobilized. Regarding the 2020 presidential election turnout, I think the unemployed-Black vote was greatly influenced by the new mail-in ballot efforts and new representation of a Black woman running for Vice President.

	(1) voted
voted	
Black Voter	-0.77*** (0.02)
Unemployed Voter	-0.96*** (0.02)
Black and Unemploy~r	0.16*** (0.05)
Constant	1.16*** (0.01)
Observations	125600

Table 1. Black and Unemployed Regression Table

	(1) voted
White Voter	0.16*** (0.00)
Unemployed Voter	-0.19*** (0.01)
White and Unemploy~r	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.63*** (0.00)
Observations	125600

Table 2. White and Unemployed Regression Table

REFERENCES

- Burden and Wichowsky (2014): Economic discontent as a mobilizer: Unemployment and voter turnout.
- Cebula (2017): Unemployment and voter turnout revisited: A brief note.