

Opportunities for Inequality: Context and Disparities in Political Participation

Matthew B. Platt*

March 15, 2009

Abstract

Disparities in political participation along lines of race and class have been thoroughly studied in the literature. However, the previous research has tended toward cross-sectional studies, making it difficult to assess how these participation gaps change according to broader contextual factors. This paper offers an opportunity model of participation to explore and explain fluctuations in race and status gaps in participation. The analysis provides some evidence that individuals' differing perceptions of social, political, and economic realities mediate the effects of context on participation. I argue that these differences are the roots of participation gaps. Political activity is explained by neither individual characteristics nor context; a true understanding requires both.

*I would like to thank Fredrick Harris, Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, and Daniel Gillion for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this paper. Additionally, I would like to thank **the star lab** for use of its resources in the writing and analysis of this paper. The normal caveat applies.

Led by Verba and Nie (1972), research on political participation has primarily focused on developing general models based on individual-level characteristics, most notably socioeconomic status (SES), civic skills, political engagement, and personal recruitment (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). This approach establishes a foundation by answering the “why” of participation. Given this foundation, we can begin to turn our attention to questions of “when” and “how.” What explains the timing of participation decisions, and how do individuals choose among various types of activities. These questions are particularly relevant in two areas of study: future efforts to link non-voting participation with policymaking and the well-worn question of participation disparities along lines of race, class, and gender. I argue that since individuals’ participation decisions are made within a dynamic world, a more comprehensive theory of participation must take into account how changes in political, social, and economic environments impact the timing and form of civic activism. With that in mind, this paper asks, “how do political opportunities shape participation gaps?”

Ironically, the existence of racial gaps in the literature fluctuates almost as much as in the data itself. The initial puzzle of racial disparities in rates of participation was that, after controlling for socioeconomic status, black Americans participated at higher rates than their white counterparts (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981; Guterbock and London 1983; Welch and Secret 1981). Critics argued that this finding was not particularly puzzling because it was simply an anomaly of surveys at the height of the Black Power movement. Given that black politics had changed dramatically since that time, there should be a corresponding change in how people participate. Accordingly, most research after 1985 found that there were no differences between white and black participation rates once SES and/or resources were taken into account (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Verba et al. 1993; Lien 1998; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999). Unlike race, status gaps are objects of consensus rather than conflict. With that in mind, my interest is not in whether participation varies by SES. Instead, this paper focuses on how income and education differences among black people shape individuals’ responses to opportunities. Clearly, neither racial participation gaps nor black economic bifurcation are new avenues of research (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; Gay 2004; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2005, 2006). However, both literatures could benefit from a conception of participation

as an activity that takes place within a dynamic world.

I suggest an opportunity model of participation which appropriates the logic of social movements research to develop a story of how macro-level context is translated into individual-level activism (Platt 2008). The basic idea is that opportunities shift individuals' perceptions of the costs and benefits of taking a given action. However, the recognition of opportunities depends upon individuals' policy concerns and self-identifications. Fluctuations in participation gaps should therefore be reflective of differing groups' recognitions of favorable/unfavorable opportunity structures. Essentially, if some contextual factor results in a change in the participatory gap between two groups, then it cannot be the case that context has a uniform effect. I offer opportunities as the explanation for this lack of uniformity. What is most important to take away from this argument is that it is neither context nor individual characteristics which explain participation decisions; it is both.

The paper proceeds in five sections. Section 1 develops the Opportunity Model of participation that is rooted in policy, integrates micro and macro levels of analysis, and questions the differences between participation acts. Section 2 discusses the data and methods used to explore the dynamics of participation gaps. Section 3 presents the key findings: opportunities vary across groups and types of activity and white people consistently participate at higher rates than black people. Finally, Section 4 concludes by restating the central point: changes in participation gaps are the byproduct of distinct constituencies of interests who recognize and respond to changing opportunities.

1 An Opportunity-Based Model of Participation

This paper is about participation gaps; however, the opportunity model is intended as a framework for the study of political activity more generally. As a result, I aim to flesh out the full model in this section, linking it explicitly to racial and status disparities in participation rates where appropriate. The discussion has two objectives: 1) define opportunities and their connection to political activism; and 2) lay out the assumed role of policy concerns in participation decisions. Our central argument is that individuals' identification with given sets of policy concerns allows them to recognize those moments when social, political, and economic factors combine to make political action more efficient and/or effective; these moments are the opportunities which explain the timing

and tactics of participation. Participatory gaps between groups are explained by differences in how opportunities are recognized.

1.1 What is an Opportunity?

The concept of political opportunity structures is taken from the literature on social movements where it was most famously applied by McAdam (1999). Meyer (2004, 126) provides the following definition:

The key recognition in the political opportunity perspective is that activists' prospects for advancing particular claims, mobilizing supporters, and affecting influence are context-dependent . . . exogenous factors enhance or inhibit a social movement's prospects for (a) mobilizing, (b) advancing particular claims rather than others, (c) cultivating some alliances rather than others, (d) employing particular political strategies and tactics rather than others, and (e) affecting mainstream institutional politics and policies.

There are a few important points to take away from this definition. First, opportunities can both enhance and inhibit; the term is not restricted to its common use of describing only positive incentives. Second, in general, opportunities are specific to certain movements employing certain tactics. The implication is that the effects of political opportunities should vary across types of activity and demographic groups. Finally, this definition imbues political opportunities with a number of responsibilities without actually specifying how these "exogenous factors" actually exert influence on movement activity. As a result, the concept cannot just be applied wholesale to non-protest participation.

In this study, opportunities are defined as macro-contextual features that set the constraints within which participation decisions are made. "Constraints" refer primarily to the individual-level characteristics which have proven so vital to political activity – resources, political engagement, and recruitment. Context-induced changes in these three factors are sufficient for explaining changes in rates of participation. However, the Civic Voluntarism Model is silent on how particular types of resources or engagements are connected to some forms of activity rather than others (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). In order to fulfill the array of responsibilities assigned to political opportunities in the above definition by Meyer (2004), constraints must also include the more general costs and benefits of political activity. The inclusion of costs and benefits into the definition

allows opportunities to take into account the appropriateness of certain tactics, given the social, political, and economic environment. This small redefinition of the concept imbues opportunities with the flexibility to address how contextual effects vary across the forms of political activity. To gain a firmer handle on what opportunities are and how they work, I discuss more specific forms of opportunity: threats, conflict, access/allies, and networks.

An external threat serves as a rallying cry for renewed or more innovative movement efforts by tapping into an identity which gives people something worth fighting for (Dyke and Soule 2002; Dyke 2003; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). For example, Dyke and Soule (2002) argue that structural changes in the economy, emergence of newly powerful political groups, and demographic shifts led reactionary militias in the United States to mobilize as a means of preserving their position in society. In the participation literature, this idea is articulated most often through the linking role of blame attribution in studies of economic voting (Kinder and Kiewiet 1979; Feldman 1982; Arceneaux 2003). Welch and Foster (1992) make the case that group consciousness allows black Americans to treat economic conditions as this external threat, and their resulting vote choices reflect these sociotropic economic evaluations. Threats alter individuals' levels of political interest by framing social conditions in terms of some salient identity. This heightened political interest – and the attendant increase in the perceived benefits of participation – should be manifested through higher levels of activity.

Conflict is the competition over resources, authority, and government attention. This idea emerges in two different forms within the social movements literature. Originally, conflict was conceived as elite competition over control of government, and this conflict between existing powers allowed previously excluded and marginalized groups to enter the political process as a means of breaking the current stalemate (McAdam 1999; Jenkins, Jacobs and Agnone 2003). Alternatively, conflict has also been viewed in terms of movement-counter-movement dynamics. Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) argue that opposing movements alter one another's structures of opportunity by creating new threats and grievances for their opponents to respond to. As a result, new venues of contestation emerge and new issues around which to mobilize arise (Santoro 1999; Andrews 2002). Participation research has shown that battles over how local resources should be distributed

increase rates of participation, presumably as a result of the heightened interest in politics (Oliver 1999; Kelleher and Lowery 2004). Additionally, studies of voter turnout and campaign activity have offered persuasive evidence that enhanced competition between ideologically distinct political parties has a catalytic effect on political activity (Gershtenson 2002; Hill and Leighley 1993; Corder and Wolbrecht 2006; Hill and Leighley 1996; Leighley and Nagler 1992*a*). Conflict should spur increases in participation through enhanced recruitment activities and greater levels of political interest. Basically, conflict raises the stakes of activity, thus there are more substantial benefits for success.

Access refers to those moments when the government is particularly open or responsive to citizen input and new policy alternatives, or it can refer to comparisons of government structures themselves. Allies is the opportunity that arises when actual movement identifiers hold positions of power. In practice, these two concepts are often blurred together. Amenta, Olasky and Caren (2005) argue that open party systems and sympathetic bureaucrats work to lower the threshold for which participation becomes an effective policymaking tool. Cress and Snow (2000) show that movements around homelessness were able to secure policy responsiveness when they had identifiers on the city council. In the participation literature, the ideas of access and allies are best captured through empowerment research. These studies argue that descriptive representation sends a cue of responsiveness that increases the trust, efficacy, and knowledge of constituents (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gay 2001, 2002; Lawless 2004; Barreto, Segura and Woods 2004). Access, whether institutional or through allies, lowers the costs of participation in that less activity should be required to reach the same goal, and it raises the efficacy and trust of individuals. The combination of these two factors should make individuals more likely to participate.

Strong social networks provide more efficient mobilization and foster the sense of identity which is exploited through external threats. Social movement scholars have shown that social networks are essential for mobilization and the diffusion of tactics across organizations (Morris 1984; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Soule 1997; McAdam 1999). These concepts of networks and diffusion are also central to links between social context and political participation. The basic idea is that social and information networks affect individuals' levels of interest and knowledge, thus lowering the costs

of activity for those who are part of the network (Cho, Gimpel and Dyck 2006; Johnson, Stein and Wrinkle 2003; Bowers 2004; McClurg 2003). Cho (2003) found patterns of diffusion in Asian American campaign contributions, while Kenny (1992) shows that individuals are more likely to participate when they are part of an active social network. This is thought to be particularly true for black participation in which social interaction is essential for the development of linked fate and black consciousness (Dawson 1994; Walton 1985; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2006). Social networks enable mobilization, allow the diffusion of tactics, and increase interest and knowledge. When networks are stronger, individuals should be more likely to engage in civic activism.

I conceive of opportunities as the threats, social networks, conflicts, points of access, and allies that shape the costs, benefits, political orientations, and mobilization that are essential to political activity. When these opportunities expand, then individuals should be more likely to participate. When opportunities contract, people should be less likely to participate. Fluctuations in individual participation decisions across time periods should be explained by the opening and closing of these opportunities. However, not all opportunities are equal. An open opportunity for one group can present a closed opportunity for another. It is the specificity of opportunities which make this concept so helpful in explaining changes in participation gaps. The remaining theoretical questions concern how opportunities are recognized and how they impact policymaking.

1.2 Policy Concerns, Opportunity Recognition, and Participation Gaps

As any high school guidance counselor knows, opportunities are worthless if nobody takes advantage of them. Of course the first step in taking advantage of an opportunity is recognizing when it exists. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001, 44-47) make precisely this point in arguing that opportunities have to be recognized as such in order for mobilization to occur, and this recognition will vary according to how people identify themselves. I argue that these identities are rooted in individuals' policy concerns. Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1995) provide empirical evidence that people who participate do so largely in pursuit of some collective benefits. Social movement scholars have demonstrated that protest tactics diffuse across organizations as a result of their common

identification with a set of political objectives, rather than having any formal ties to one another (Soule 1997). In terms of theory, Susanne Lohmann has developed signalling models of protest in which individuals' common preferences allow them to rationally mobilize without the aid of some political entrepreneur (Lohmann 1993, 1994). The point is that individuals' policy concerns serve to bind them into informal constituencies of interests.

Opportunity recognition, and the subsequent effects on participation, should vary according to the collective goals the activism is meant to achieve. Individuals who identify with similar policy preferences comprise informal (and formal) constituencies of interests to influence the political process, and the size of these constituencies fluctuate according to the opportunities arising from the larger social, political, and economic environments. That is, there will always be some group of hardcore activists, but those on the periphery become involved only when there are favorable opportunities (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Meyer 2004). Gaps in political participation are reflections of groups' diverse policy concerns. As a result of this diversity of interests, for which race, gender, and status serve as proxies, there are disparities in how individuals react to the same objective realities. That is, they will recognize different opportunities, so there will not be uniform increases or decreases in political activity. Fluctuations in participation gaps are a byproduct of this lack of uniformity. The opportunity model of participation provides a fairly simple explanation: people have different policy concerns; these concerns allow for differences in opportunity recognition; so dynamic opportunities yield disparate changes in individual propensities to participate.

2 Data and Methods

I am interested primarily in two participation gaps: the race gap between black and white Americans and the effects of emerging status differences within the black community. Given the claims of the opportunity model of participation, I expect that these gaps will exist; that the differences between participation rates will not be constant over time; and the effects of opportunities will vary along lines of race and class. There are three challenges facing the search for this evidence: finding an appropriate measure of political activity, operationalizing opportunity structure, and reconciling individual and group effects methodologically. Each of these issues is dealt with below.

2.1 Dynamic Participation

An opportunity model places substantial demands on the measure of political participation. The analysis requires individual-level measures of a variety of forms of political participation over regular intervals of time. Thankfully, the Roper Social and Political Trends Data provides such measures (Brady, Putnam et al. 2001). This data set is composed of almost monthly surveys from 1980 to 1994¹ during which respondents were asked if they had engaged in any of the following twelve activities: written a congressman or senator, attended a political rally or speech, attended a public meeting on local affairs, held or ran for political office, served on a committee for a local organization, become an officer for a club or organization, written a letter to the paper, signed a petition, worked for a political party, made a speech, written an article for a magazine or newspaper, or been a member of a good government organization. The longitudinal nature of the data allows researchers to employ macro-level variables that tap into the changing political, economic, and social climates². In short, participation can now vary according to opportunities.

2.2 Measuring Opportunity

Since the focus of this paper is on participation gaps, I employed a limited array of opportunity measures. Rather than providing some measure for each form of opportunity – threats, conflict, access/allies, and networks – the aim was to find variables more specific to the sorts of questions driving the analysis. With that in mind, opportunities are operationalized as the black unemployment rate, income inequality, the wage gap between males and females, and presidential elections.

Researchers in both social movements and participation have asserted that unemployment is particularly detrimental for black Americans because the rates are usually almost double that of their white counterparts (Jenkins, Jacobs and Agnone 2003; Tate 1994; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2006). I measure this variable as the monthly, seasonally adjusted black unemployment rate reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The idea here is that the disparity between

¹The actual data set extends back to 1973. However, limitations in the independent variables restricted our sample to 1980.

²The Roper Survey asks respondents “Now here is a list of things some people do about government or politics. Have you happened to have done any of those things in the past year?” As a result of this wording, the political opportunity variables are lagged by one year.

black and white unemployment rates allows unemployment to be viewed as a racialized external threat to black people. As such, rising black unemployment should provide a boost to the participation of black Americans and have no impact on white participation. Racial gaps in participation should shrink as black unemployment increases.

I constructed our measure of income inequality by using monthly earnings data from the Merged Outgoing Rotations of the Current Population Survey to calculate a gini coefficient (Feenberg and Roth 2005).³ I conceive of economic bifurcation among black people as a closing network opportunity, and this variable is intended to capture those effects. There have been several studies on this topic with the general consensus being that economic bifurcation should depress black activism overall (Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2006), and that these negative effects should vary by socioeconomic status with the poor being hit the hardest (Cohen and Dawson 1993; Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh 2001; Gay 2004). More importantly, the theoretical justification for all of this research has been based on how growing intra-community status disparities may weaken networks and limit social interaction. Both racial and status gaps should increase as income inequality increases.

Similar to our inclusion of the black unemployment rate, the wage gap between men and women is meant to be an external threat to women. As with the gini index this measure was also constructed from the monthly earnings data provided by the Census Bureau (Feenberg and Roth 2005). Research on women's movements and attitudinal gender gaps stress that societal perceptions of women's roles and their overall status are important factors in female political behavior (Box-Steffensmeier, Boef and min Lin 2004; McCammon et al. 2001). However, unlike these studies, the emphasis is on the role of discriminatory practices as a wedge to separate the policy concerns of men and women. Therefore, an increase in the wage gap should be reflected by surges in female participation, thus closing the gender gap in activism. Male participation should be unaffected.

Presidential elections is just a dummy variable taking a value of 1 for every month of a presidential election year. This dummy serves as a generic access opportunity that should provide more of a uniform effect across groups. Work on voter turnout has clearly demonstrated that there is

³I should note that the Census Bureau uses additional income information to calculate its Gini index. As such, this homemade method does not yield identical results when aggregated to the yearly level.

a class bias (Hill and Leighley 1992; Leighley and Nagler 1992*b*; Hill and Leighley 1994, 1996), so I expect that presidential elections will enhance the effects of economic bifurcation among black people.

Finally, the individual level variables are chosen to approximate the insights offered by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) and Burns, Schlozman and Verba (2001). Essentially, this means that I include measures of age, education, job status, income, and whether or not the respondent has school-aged children. Although these are far from perfect proxies for civic skills or free time, they attempt to control for some of the major explanatory variables. Obviously, measures for race and gender are also included. The challenge to the data has been met to the best of our ability, only the methodological challenge remains to be confronted.

2.3 Methods

The methodological challenge is hardly unique to this study; it is the standard question of how to deal with both the group and individual effects in panel data. Specifically, I am interested in how opportunities widen and contract the racial and status gaps in participation. I analyze a random effects logit model using a two-step estimator developed by Borjas and Sueyoshi (1994). First, separate logit models are estimated for each month from 1980 to 1994. These models regress participation on age, education, income, job status, kids, race, and gender, yielding estimated coefficients for these variables and the intercept. Second, OLS is used to regress these coefficients on the political opportunity variables (unemployment, income inequality, wage gap, and presidential elections), and that is done for all of the variables from the first stage (the intercept, age, education, income, job status, kids, race, and gender). The basic idea is to estimate the macro- and micro-level effects in separate steps. That is, the first step of the estimation provides the average effects for each time unit, and the second step treats these average effects as linear functions of unit-varying factors.⁴ This creates a fully interactive model capable of teasing out variations in responses to opportunities. The coefficients presented in what follows should be viewed in terms of a given baseline: an unemployed, high-school-educated, black, male between the ages of 25 and 29 with a

⁴As with any multi-stage analysis, I make the requisite corrections to the covariance matrices highlighted by Huber, Kernell and Leoni (2005).

household income of \$21056.28 and who does not have school-aged children living at home.

3 Results

As has been stated throughout the paper thus far, our interest is in how participation gaps behave across time and the role of opportunities as determinants of this behavior. To reiterate the main argument and our expectations for the results: there will be racial and status gaps in participatory activity; racial gaps will shrink as income inequality decreases and black unemployment rises, and status gaps among black people will increase as income inequality grows. The explanation behind all of these expectations is that race and class are tied to sets of policy concerns which shape the differences in how members of these various groups recognize opportunities.

Before jumping headlong into the results, a word about interpretation is necessary. To ease the discussion of the findings, I consign the actual tables of coefficients to the appendix. Instead, I graphically present changes in predicted probabilities. Although the focus will be on individual types of activity, I do include three composite measures of participation. “Organizational Acts” deal with the probability that an individual will serve on a committee for an organization, serve as an officer for an organization, or be a member of a good government organization; “Political Acts” is the probability that a person will sign a petition, attend a political rally, work for a political party, or be a member of a good government organization; and “Overall Participation” is the probability that an individual will engage in at least one of the twelve types of activities.

I begin the discussion by looking at the gaps in participation that result from differences in SES. Figures 1 and 2 show the predicted probability of participating for a black man with median income and one standard deviation above the median respectively. As expected, those with higher incomes are more likely to engage in political activity. However, there are important differences across the forms of participation. Income has no effect on the probability of writing an article or a letter⁵ because black men seem to not engage in these particular forms of activism. Similarly, income has a limited impact on working for a political party (Figure 1(e)) and joining a good government organization because those activities are rare for black male respondents. Looking at Figure 1(b)

⁵The plot for writing a letter is identical to writing an article, and thus it is not shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Income Gap: These plots show the predicted probabilities for black men with median income and one standard deviation above the median. Each plot is shown on the same scale. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences in participation between income levels are statistically significant.

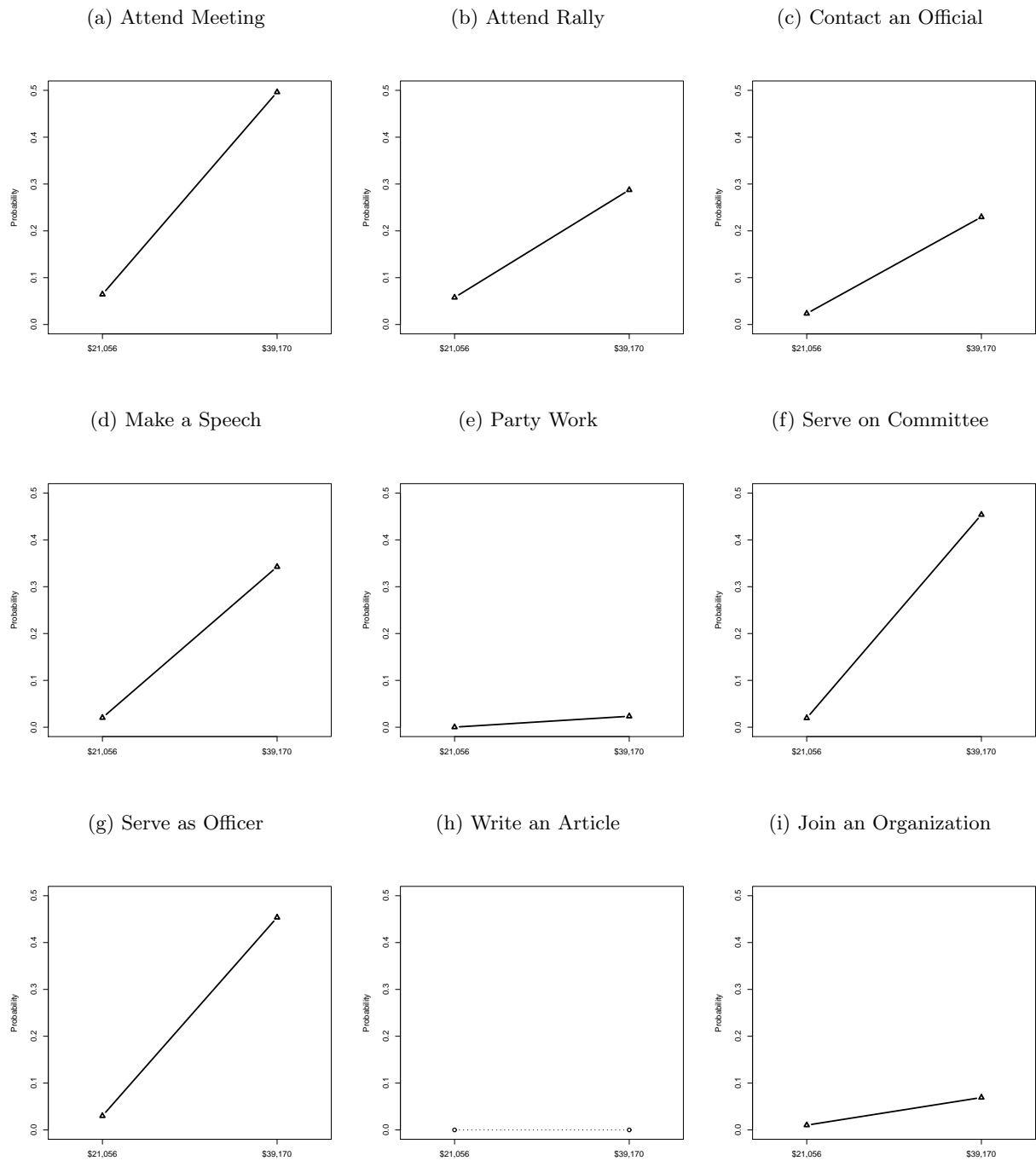
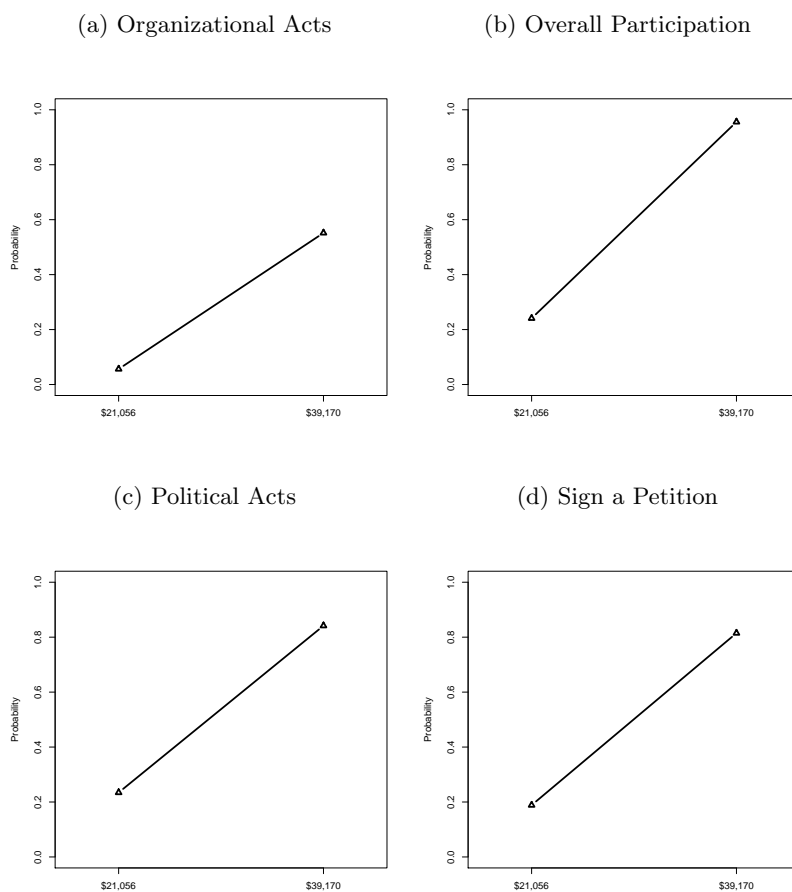


Figure 2: The Income Gap (Continued): These plots show the predicted probabilities for black men with median income and one standard deviation above the median. The scale for these plots is not the same as those in Figure 1. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences in participation between income levels are statistically significant.



we see a slightly different story for attending rallies. Unlike party work or joining organizations, attending rallies is not a particularly rare form of participation; however, the income gap is small relative to other types of activities. The plots in Figure 2 underline the relatively small effects of income on rally attendance. People with higher incomes are four times more likely to sign a petition, and that disparity carries over into political acts and overall participation. These plots make a straightforward and unoriginal point – there are substantial income gaps in civic activism.

Education is the second major component of SES models of participation. Figures 3 and 4 show the differences in the probability of participating for black men who have completed high school and college respectively. Drawing attention to the plots in Figure 4, it is clear that education does not have the same tremendous impact that we observed for income. There is no significant difference in the probability of engaging in at least one of these acts (Figure 4(b)), and college-educated black men are not even twice as likely to sign a petition than those with only a high school education. The individual acts presented in Figure 3 also tell a slightly different story about education gaps compared to income gaps. Writing an article and writing a letter (figure not shown) are still just straight lines at zero, but education also has no impact on working for a political party or serving on a committee. Again, contrary to what we observed for income, attending a rally displays one of the largest effects for education – college-educated black men are almost three times as likely to attend a rally. The purpose of Figures 1-4 was simply to establish the nature of status gaps in black participation. This paper is interested in how those gaps change according to opportunities. Before we can see those results, we first have to establish a slightly more controversial set of results – the existence of racial gaps.

3.1 The Race Gap

Figures 5 and 6 present the gaps in participation between black and white respondents. The message is clear, on average, white people participate at significantly higher rates than black people. This result is not in accordance with the literature on racial gaps which has been preoccupied with the question of whether or not black Americans – once socioeconomic status is controlled for – participate more than their white counterparts (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981; Guterbock

Figure 3: The Education Gap: These plots show the predicted probabilities for black men who completed high school and college respectively. Each plot is shown on the same scale. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences in participation between education levels are statistically significant.

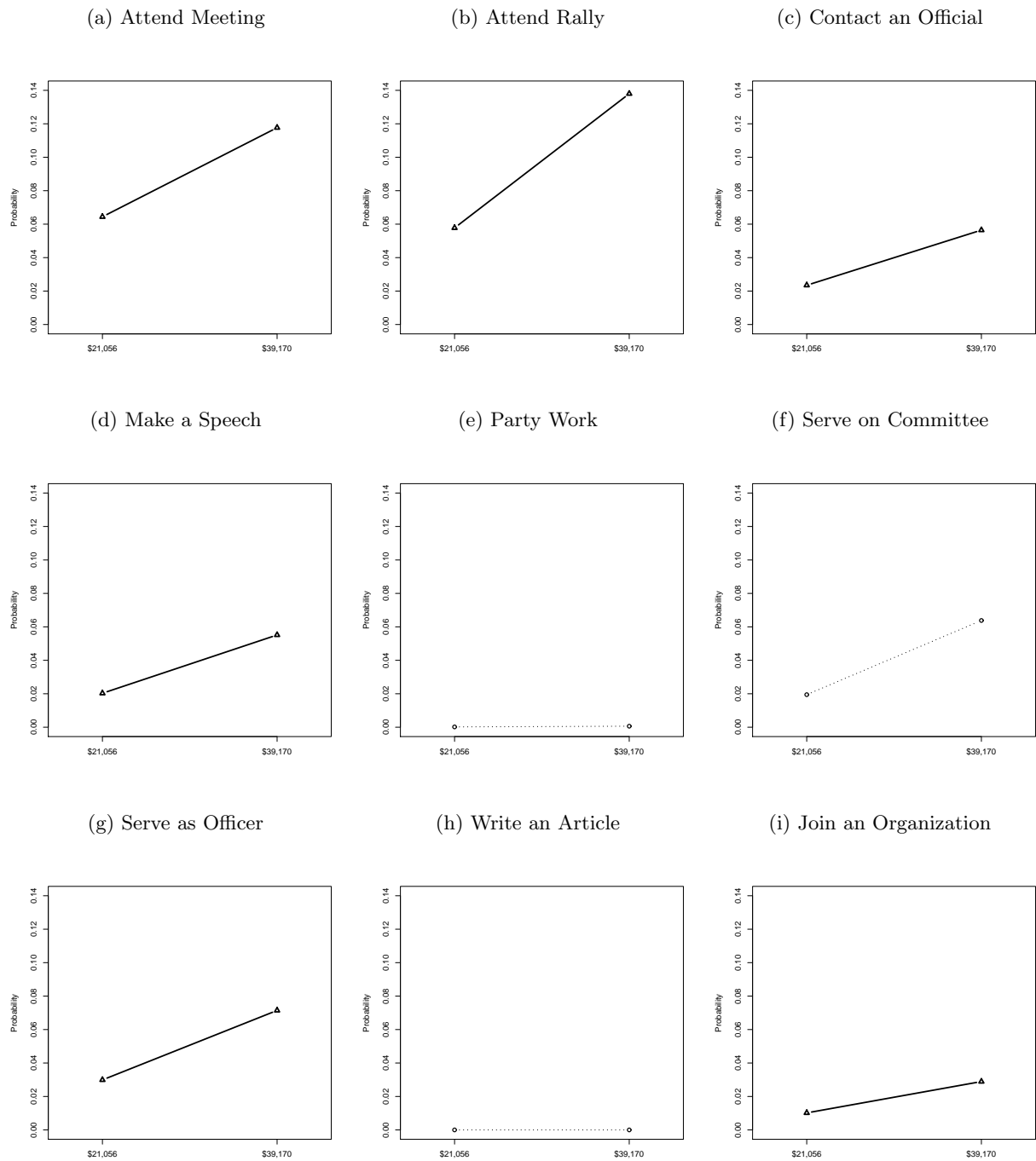


Figure 4: The Education Gap (Continued): These plots show the predicted probabilities for black men who completed high school and college respectively. The scale for these plots is not the same as those in Figure 3. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences in participation between education levels are statistically significant.

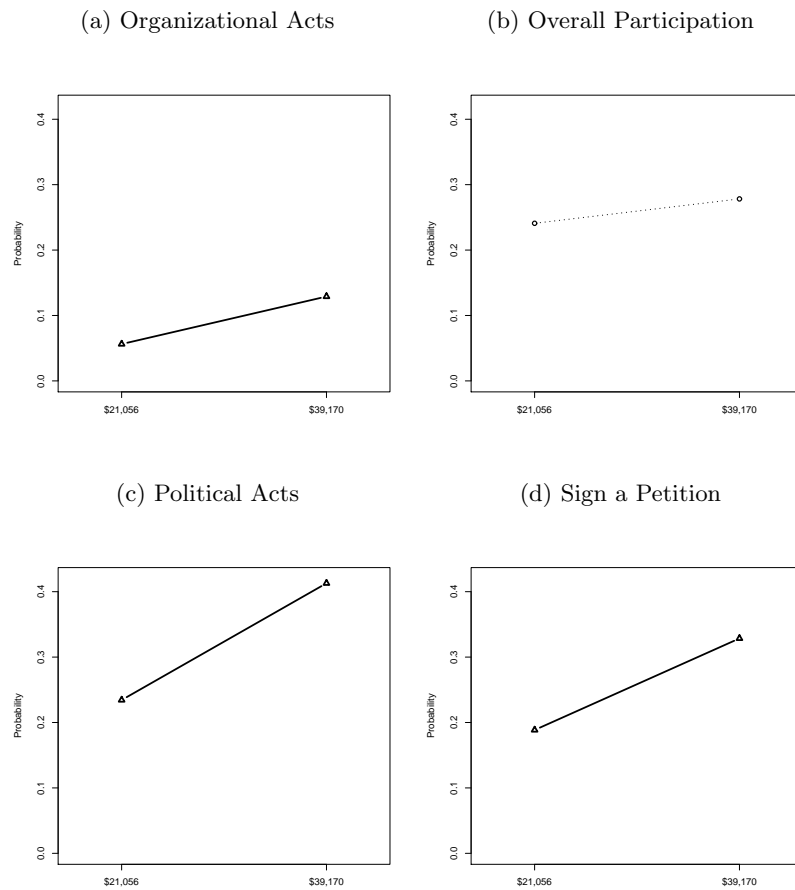


Figure 5: The Race Gap: These plots show the predicted probabilities for black and white men. Each plot is shown on the same scale. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences between black and white participation are statistically significant.

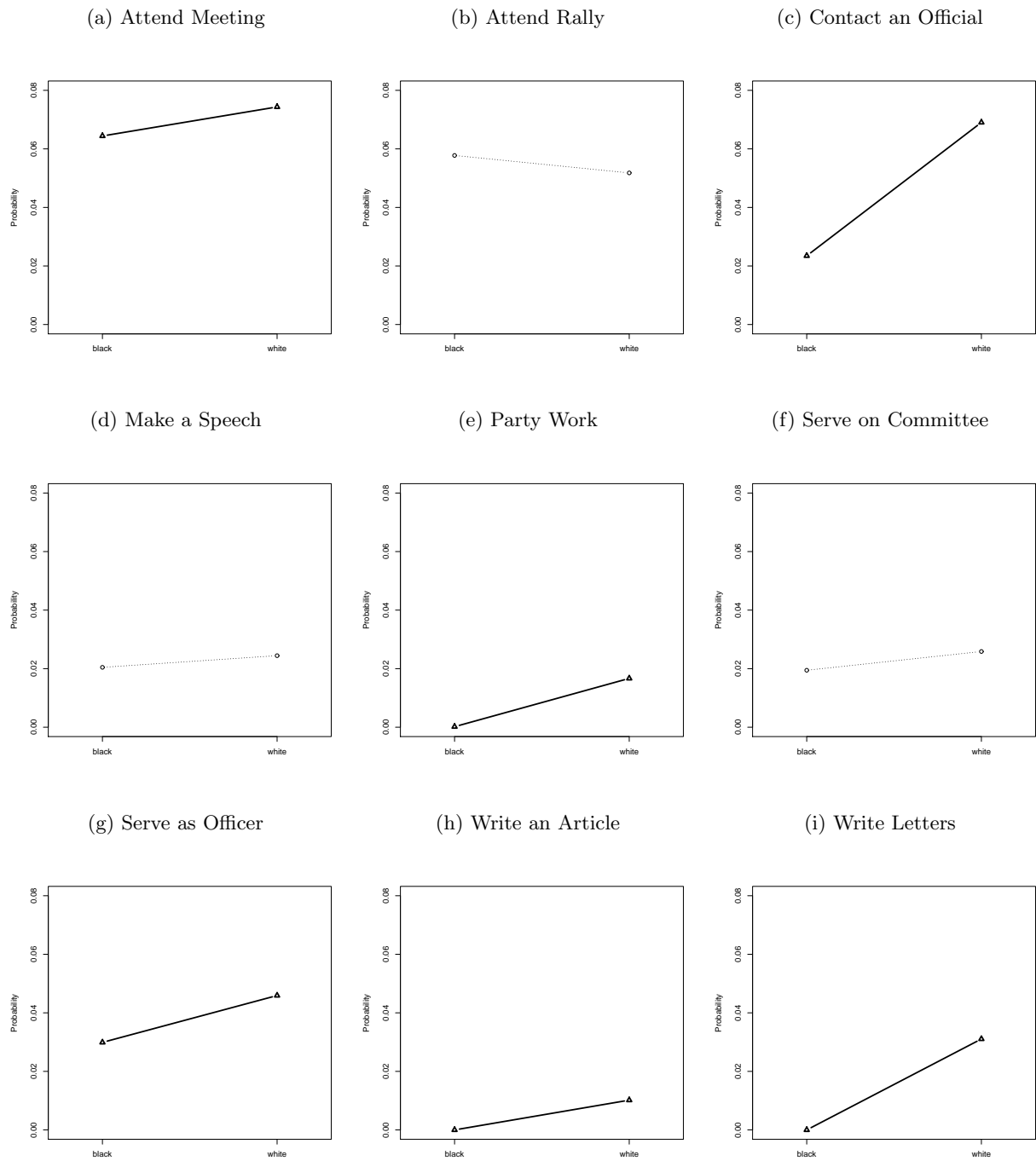
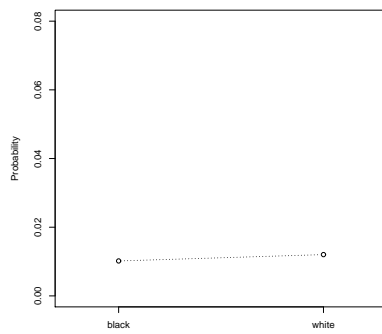
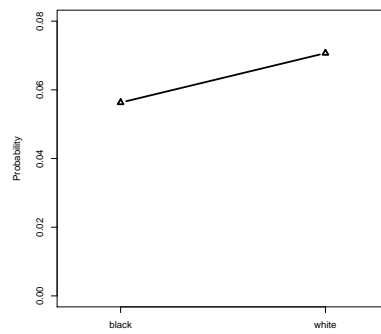


Figure 6: The Race Gap (Continued): These plots show the predicted probabilities for black and white men. The scale for these plots is not the same as those in Figure 5. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences between black and white participation are statistically significant.

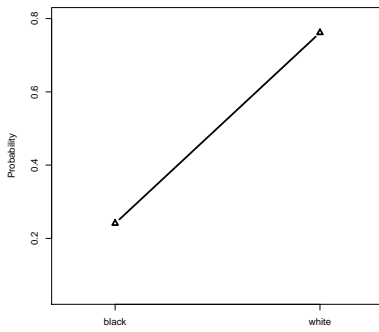
(a) Join an Organization



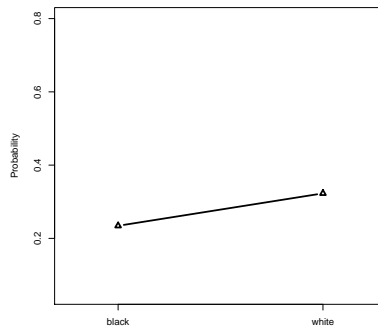
(b) Organizational Acts



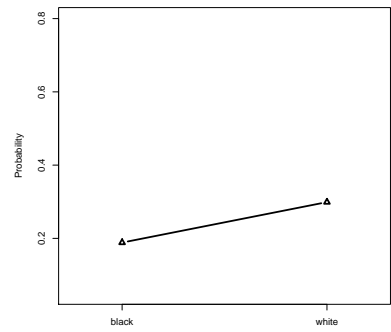
(c) Overall Participation



(d) Political Acts



(e) Sign a Petition



and London 1983; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Verba et al. 1993; Leighley and Vedlitz 1999). I find racial gaps in the opposite direction. Figure 6(c) shows that white respondents were four times more likely to participate than their black counterparts, and a focus on Figures 5(e), 5(h), and 5(i) reveal that black Americans tend not to engage in these types of activities at all. In terms of individual acts, the largest racial gap occurs for petition signing (see Figure 6(e)), and the largest ratio for white-black participation involves contacting elected officials (see Figure 5(c)).

These results suggest the ubiquity of racial gaps across very different types of activities. On one hand, the large differences in signing petitions and the almost total absence of black party workers suggests that black Americans are disproportionately excluded from mobilization efforts. On the other hand, the results for contacting, writing articles, and writing letters suggests that black people are also unable or unwilling to engage in forms of participation that might be considered highly individualized. The importance of social networks in black participation (Walton 1985; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2005, 2006) could be both a reaction to the lack of outside mobilization suggested by the findings for petitions and party work, but it could also be an explanation for the dearth of black activists who engage in more individualized forms of participation. Perhaps the catalyzing power of black networks is limited to more collective activities. With that in mind, rally attendance was the only activity for which black participation exceeded white participation (though not significantly), and the racial gaps for organizational activities were small relative to other types of activism. The broader point of Figures 5 and 6 is that – unlike the foundational studies of race, SES, and participation (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981) – black people are substantially less active than their white counterparts.

Figures 5 and 6 contrast the literature by showing that – controlling for SES – white people are more civically engaged than black people. One of the unstated and reasonable assumptions in these previous studies has been that SES operates identically across racial groups. Taking advantage of the interactive nature of the statistical model, Figures 7 and 8 tell a different story. These plots show the white-black difference in the expected probability of participation as the level of education increases.⁶ If the benefits of education are identical across racial groups, then we should observe

⁶Plots could similarly be shown that highlight the unequal benefits of rising incomes.

Figure 7: The Unequal Benefits of Education: These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of white and black men as the level of education increases. Each plot is shown on the same scale. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences between black and white participation are statistically significant.

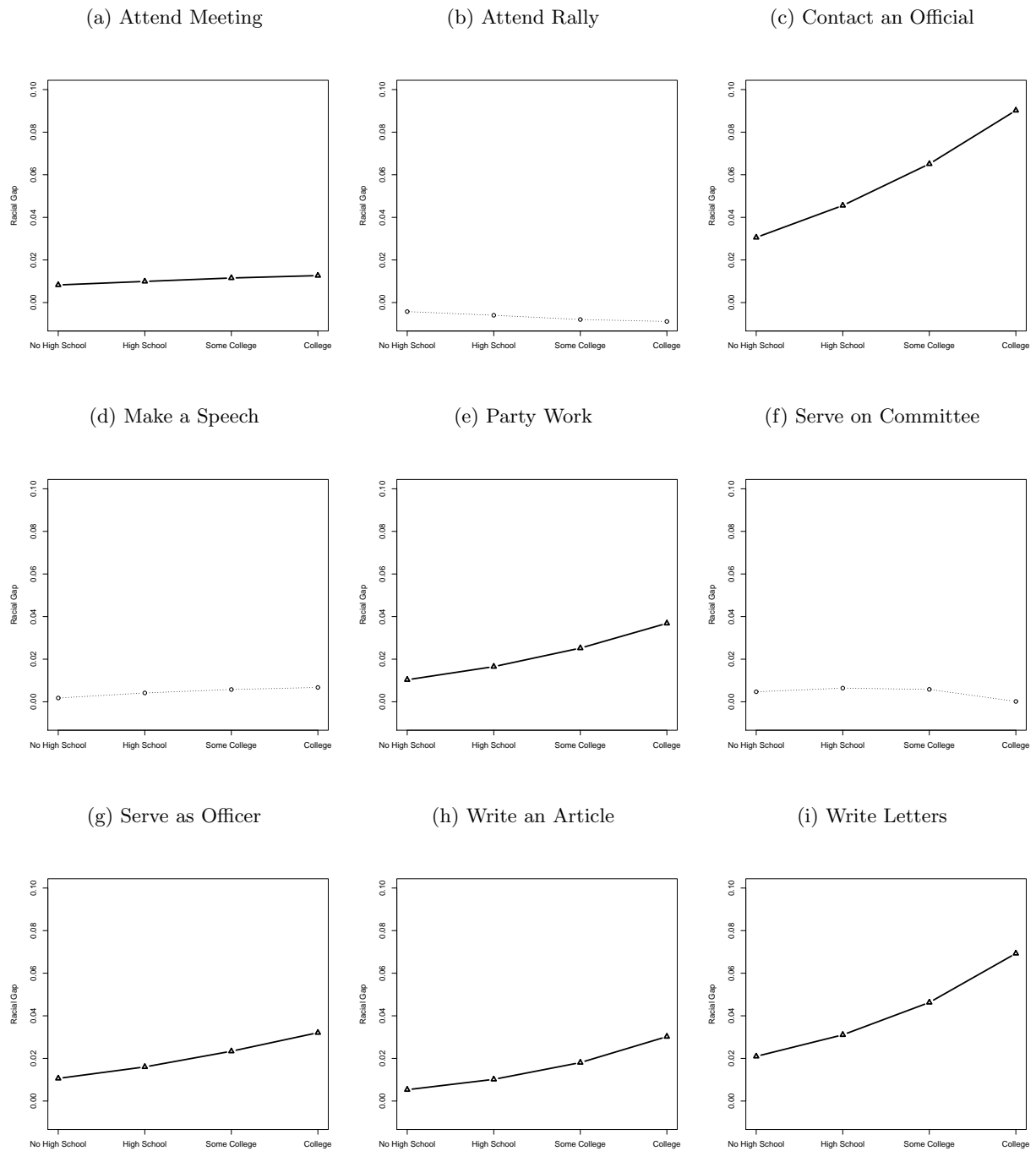
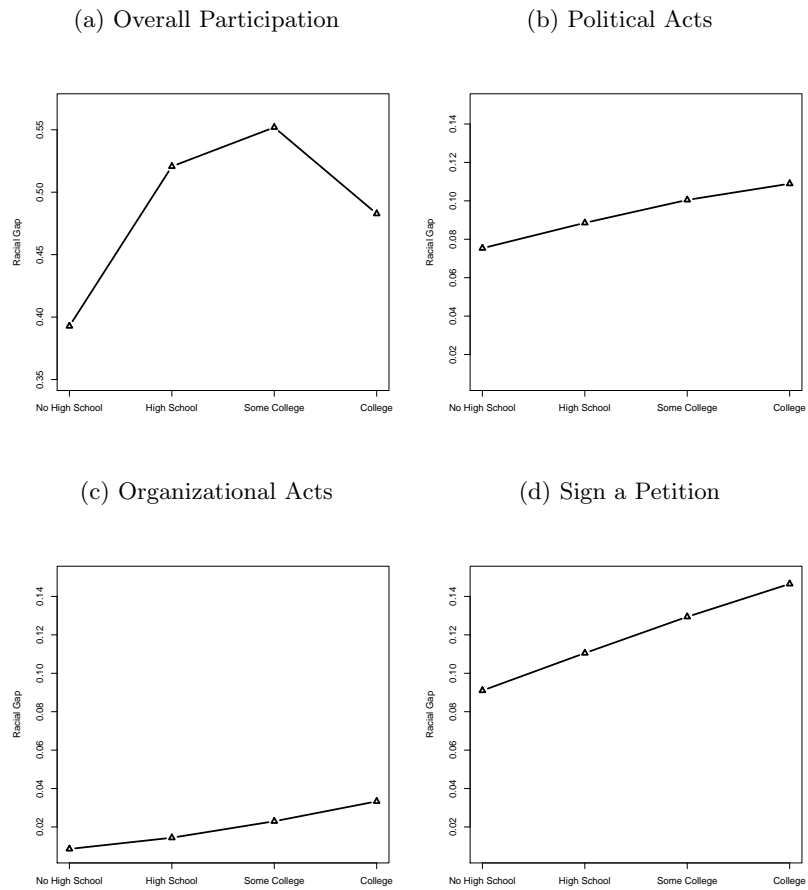


Figure 8: The Unequal Benefits of Education (Continued): These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of white and black men as the level of education increases. The scale for these plots is not the same as those in Figure 7. Solid lines with triangles indicate that the differences between black and white participation are statistically significant.



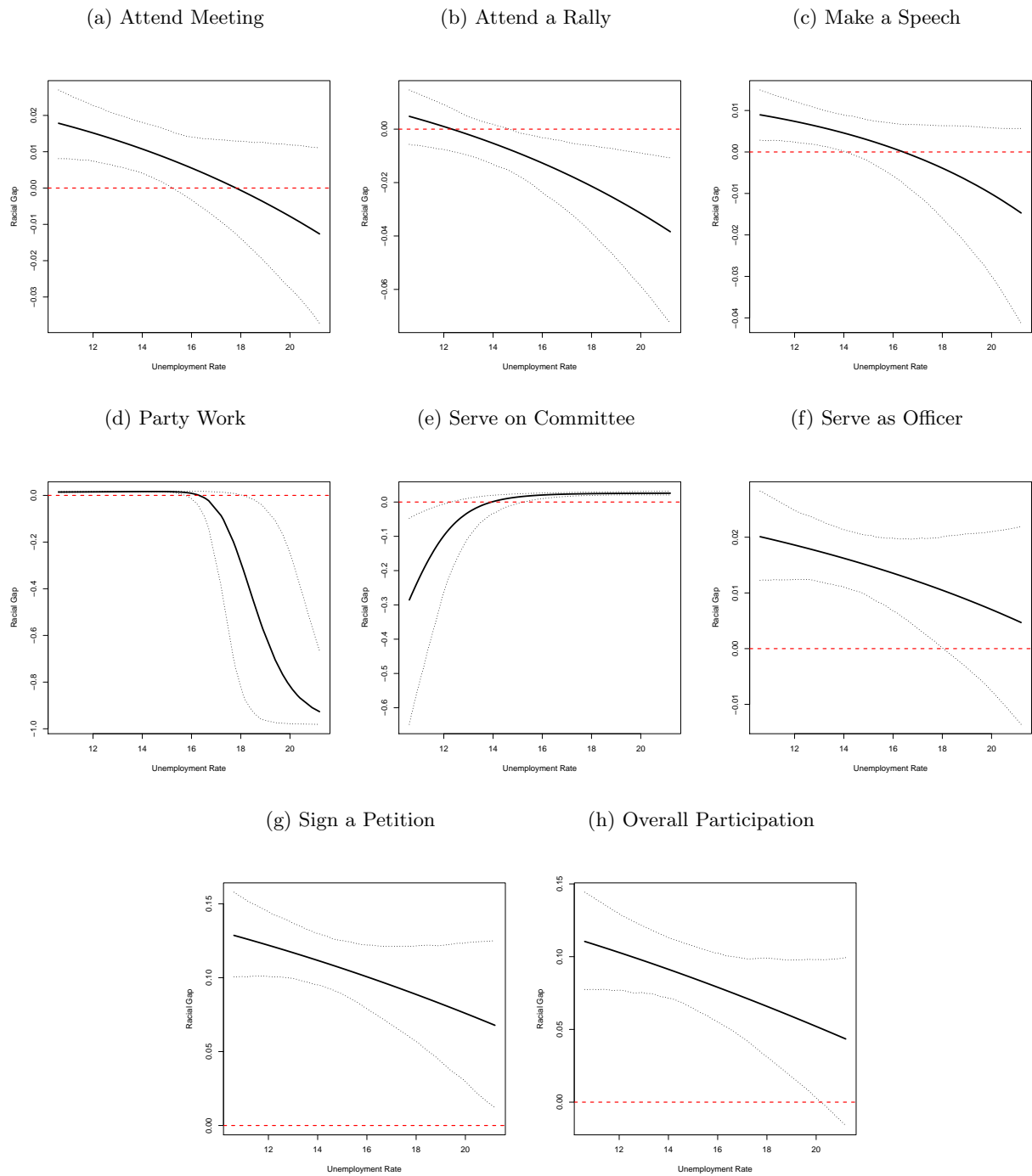
flat lines. With the noted exceptions of attending a rally, making a speech, and serving on a committee, the plots in Figures 5 and 6 are not flat. Indeed, Figure 8(a) shows a non-monotonic relationship as college-educated black people finally begin to close the gap with their white peers. It is important to note that there are hidden differences among the patterns. Education essentially has no substantive effect on the probability that a black man will write an article or write a letter – black Americans are simply very unlikely to engage in these forms of participation, so Figures 7(h) and 7(i) illustrate the impact of education on white participation. Conversely, Figure 8(d) represents that – although there is a relationship between education and black petition signing – higher levels of education make white people far more likely to sign petitions than similarly situated black people. These results imply that the participatory boost provided by education is not uniform across racial groups, so providing black and white people with equal resources will not necessarily close the gaps in civic activism.

Finding racial differences in the relationship between participation and education was unexpected. However, those results highlight the central idea that participation gaps can illustrate disproportionate effects across groups. I argue that understanding these disproportionate effects can help to illuminate how opportunities shape policy-motivated activism. If we assume that race and SES can serve as crude – but reasonable – proxies for broad sets of policy interests, then the compounding effects of SES on racial gaps could reflect differences in the strategies that are used to place pressure on policymakers. A full exploration of that possibility is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I turn to a discussion of how racial and status gaps vary according to the opening and closing of opportunities.

3.2 Not So Equal Opportunities

Recall that the argument was that rising black unemployment served as a threat opportunity for black Americans, so they should increase their levels of participation relative to white Americans. Figure 9 displays the relationships between unemployment and forms of political participation. With the exception of serving on a committee for a local organization, rising unemployment is associated with a decline in the racial gap. Indeed, there are not statistically significant racial

Figure 9: Black Unemployment and Racial Gaps: These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of white and black men as the black unemployment rate increases. The solid lines depict the first difference, the dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals, and the dashed line is zero.



differences for attending a meeting, making a speech, or serving as an officer for an organization when the black unemployment rate approaches 20%. Figures 9(b) and 9(d) tell an even more interesting story. When there is high black unemployment the racial gap actually changes direction – black people are more likely to attend rallies or work for a political party than white people. Basically, this is strong evidence in favor of the hypothesis. Black unemployment rates serve as a threat opportunity specific to the policy concerns of black people. As a result, black participation rates increase disproportionately, so the participation gap shrinks.

Recent research on how threats stimulate political activity has shown that education is an important mediating factor in the recognition of these opportunities (Cho, Gimpel and Wu 2006; Platt 2008). With that in mind, Figure 10 shows how the education gap among black men responds to rising rates of black unemployment. Building on the results in Platt (2008), education enhances the participatory boost from rising unemployment. It seems that college-educated black men are more likely to recognize unemployment as a threat opportunity than those with high school degrees, so the education gap increases across various types of activities. These findings could reflect differences in political sophistication – and thus the ability to recognize opportunities, or unemployment may activate distinct policy concerns for educated black Americans.

For the purposes of this study, the role of education has proven to be more complicated than the literature generally suggests. We saw in Figures 7 and 8 that education is itself a contributor to racial gaps in participation, and Figure 10 shows that unemployment widens the education gap. The next step is to see how rising black unemployment impacts the role of education on racial gaps. Figure 11 presents the relationship between education and the race gap for varying rates of unemployment. The overall message is that the threat opportunity of rising black unemployment counteracts the unequal benefits of education for white Americans. During periods of high unemployment, the racial gap becomes insignificant for attending public meetings, working for a party, and taking part in organizational acts. More importantly, rising education has no effect on these racial disparities during periods of high black unemployment. There are two notable exceptions. As we saw in Figure 9(e), rising black unemployment actually increases the racial gap and enhances the unequal benefits of education. It may be that black people shift their focus away from this

Figure 10: Unemployment and the Education Gap: These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of black men with high school and college educations as the unemployment rate increases. The solid lines depict the first difference, the dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals, and the dashed line is zero.

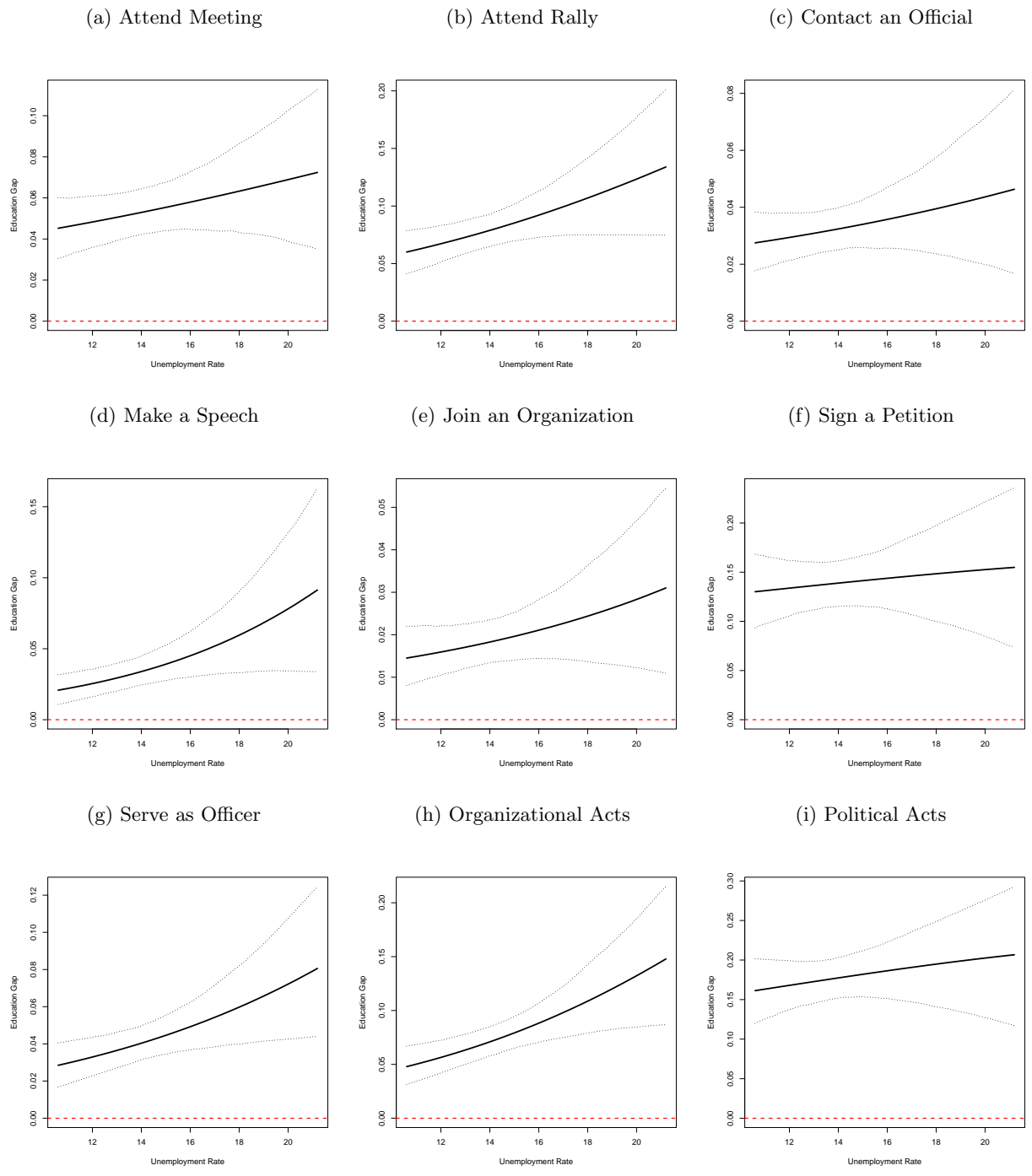
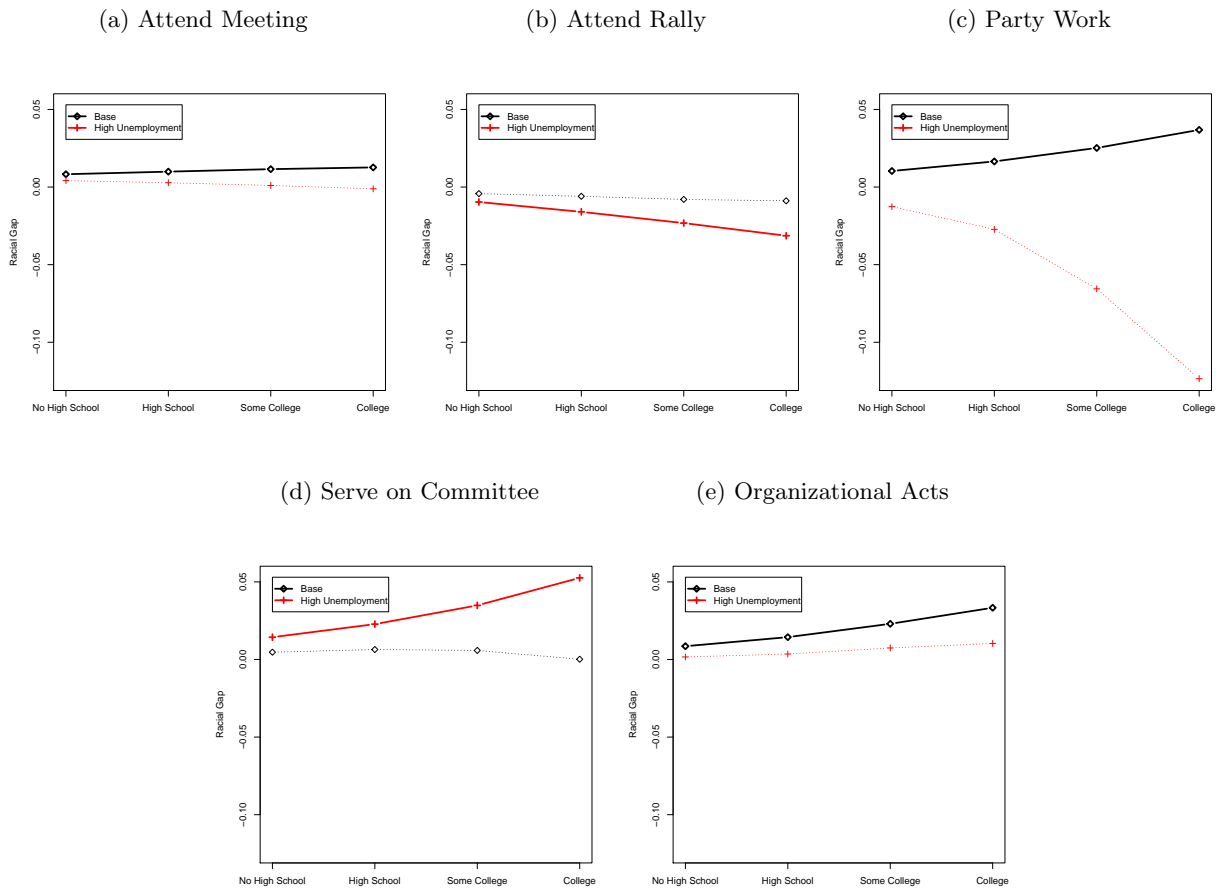
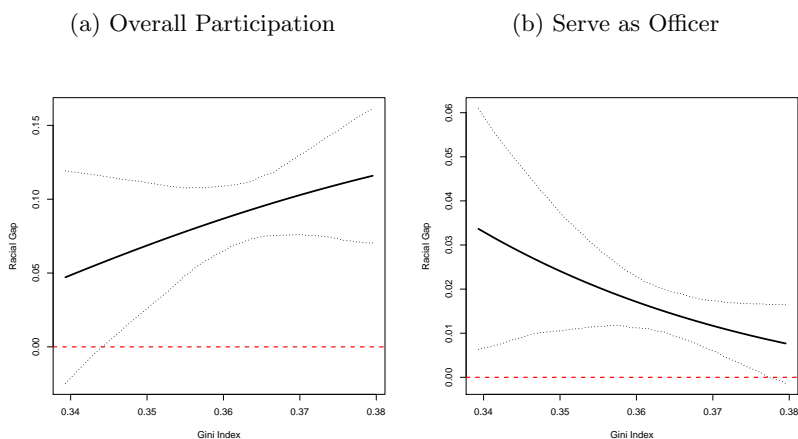


Figure 11: The Educational Benefits of Unemployment: These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of white and black men as the level of education increases when unemployment is held at its mean and one standard deviation above the mean respectively. Each plot is shown on the same scale. Solid lines indicate that the differences between black and white participation are statistically significant.



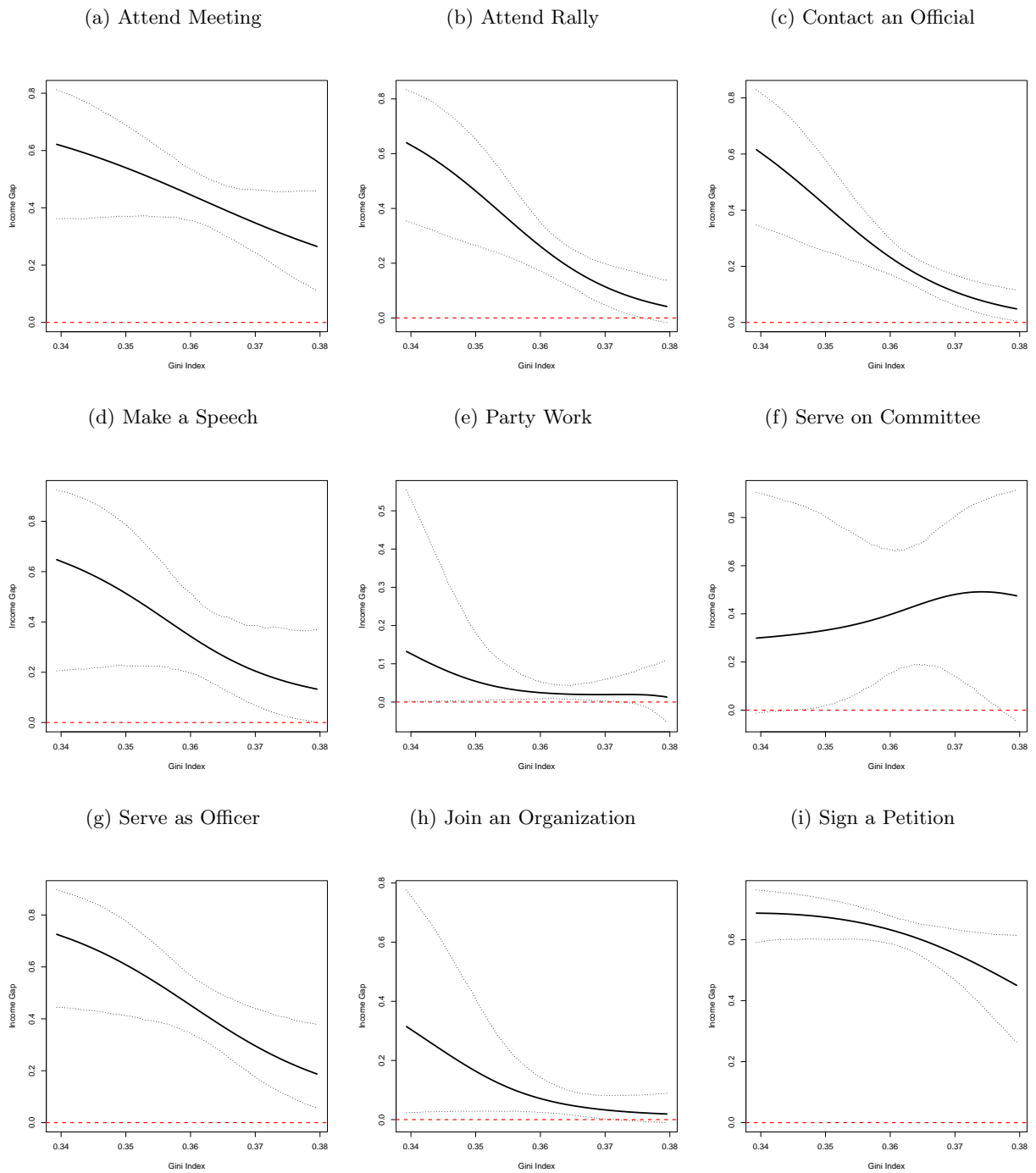
form of participation in response to threat opportunities, but I do not have evidence to support this claim. Conversely, Figure 11(b) stands out because the unequal benefits of education are reversed during periods of high unemployment. Black people are more likely to attend rallies than their white counterparts, and that gap widens as people become more educated. These results on education and black unemployment strengthen and provide nuance for the opportunity model of participation. Rising black unemployment provides an opportunity for black political participation, but well-educated black people are the most likely to recognize these opportunities. As a result, periods of high black unemployment are characterized by a narrowing gap between the races and an expanding gap among black people themselves.

Figure 12: Inequality and Racial Gaps: These plots show the predicted probabilities for white and black men income inequality among black people increases. The solid lines depict the first difference, the dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals, and the dashed line is zero.



While black unemployment has the interesting effect of decreasing between group differences and widening differences within the group, I argued for an opposite relationship regarding income inequality. The idea was that greater income inequality among black Americans served as a closing network opportunity, so racial gaps in participation should increase as inequality rises. Figure 12 presents how racial gaps in participation respond to rising black income inequality. In terms of overall participation, there is some support for the hypothesis. The racial gap in overall participation widens as the gini index increases. However, the results for most of the individual forms of participation displayed a null relationship; inequality had no impact on the race gap. Serving as an

Figure 13: Inequality and the Income Gap: These plots show the differences between the predicted probabilities of black men with median and above-average income as inequality increases. The solid lines depict the first difference, the dotted lines are the 95% confidence intervals, and the dashed line is zero.

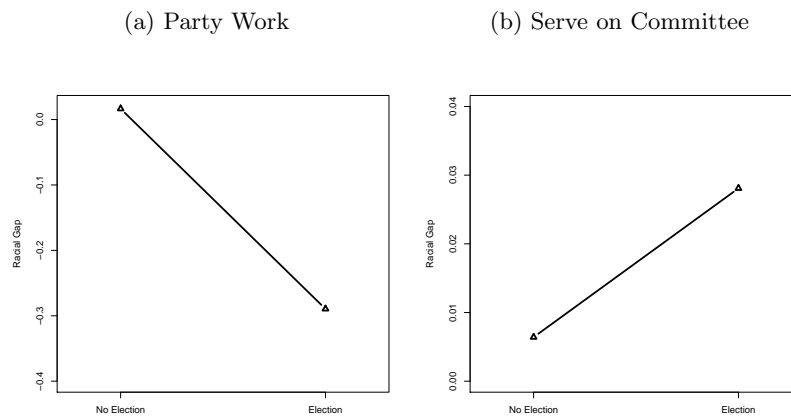


officer in an organization was a noted exception, but as Figure 12(b) illustrates, the relationship is in the opposite direction.

Although inequality did not quite meet the expectations for expanding racial gaps in participation, the logic of the argument gains some support from an examination of income gaps in participation. Figure 13 shows how the income gap in participation responds to rising income inequality among black people. For the most part, the differences in participation across income levels declines as inequality rises. As a closing network opportunity, inequality dampens black participation across the board; however, the participation of high-income black people are disproportionately depressed by these trends. These results are in line with findings for aggregate participation (Harris, Sinclair-Chapman and McKenzie 2005, 2006). More importantly, they fit the argument for why inequality should expand racial participation gaps. Economic bifurcation disrupts social networks as higher income black Americans leave established communities. The disruption of these networks decreases black participation across the board, but the impact is lessened for lower-income black people because they still have regular access to these diminished networks. Black people with higher incomes may have moved away from these networks entirely, so their participation drops more precipitously. That is the pattern underlying Figure 13: income gaps in participation decrease as inequality increases because the rate of participation for high income black Americans falls faster than their lower income counterparts.

The last variable of interest is the access opportunity provided by presidential elections. I argued that presidential elections should act as a tide that lifts all participatory boats, and they should have no effect on racial gaps. Figure 14 shows the relationship between presidential elections and racial gaps in participation. It is most important to note the plots that are not seen. Presidential elections have no significant impact racial gaps in participation. The only exceptions in the results are working for a political party and serving on a committee. Recall that Figures 1(e), 3(e), and 5(e) all suggested that black men were generally not active workers for political parties. However, the baseline for those findings was a year in which there was not a presidential election. Figure 14(a) shows that – during presidential elections – black men are far more likely to work for a political party than their white counterparts. This is in line with the results by Wielhouwer (2000)

Figure 14: Presidential Elections and Racial Gaps: These plots show the predicted probabilities for white and black men in years with and without presidential elections. Insignificant results are not shown.



showing that black people are heavily mobilized by Democrats during elections because they are an easily identifiable and reliable voting bloc. In that sense, presidential elections provide an access opportunity for black people that is not fully realized for white Americans.

3.3 Discussion

The opportunity model of participation asserts that participation gaps emerge and change according to events in the social, political, and economic environments. I present the above findings as supporting evidence for this assertion. Rising black unemployment is a threat opportunity recognized primarily by educated black people. The implication is that those with more education will have the requisite political knowledge to be aware of changes in unemployment, and – more importantly – higher education enhances black people’s ability to view these changes through racial frames (Gay 2004). It is precisely this process that is described by scholars who use blame attribution to link the economic context to political behavior (Kinder and Kiewiet 1979; Feldman 1982; Arceneaux 2003). Threat opportunities operate in a similar manner.

I included income inequality as a closing network opportunity. The expectation was that rising income inequality would depress participation severely among the lower income black people, so both the racial and status gaps would widen as inequality became more prevalent. Rising income

inequality does expand the racial gap for the composite measures of participation, but the results are largely inconclusive when the individual acts are examined. Contrary to expectations, we saw that the income gap actually narrows as black earnings become more unequal. Previous research has emphasized that black economic bifurcation depresses the participation of those in the lower income strata (Cohen and Dawson 1993; Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh 2001). Figure 13 shows that there is a disproportionate negative impact of inequality on higher income black people, and the loss of these generally active participants serves to increase the race gap in terms of overall participation.

4 Conclusion

As articulated in this paper, an opportunity model of participation make three major theoretical claims:

1. Individual choices of how and when to participate are functions of policy concern and opportunity. That is, individuals form constituencies of interests – groups defined only by political activity aimed at some shared policy objective – in accordance with the levels of access, conflict, allies, networks, and threats present in the broader sociopolitical environment.
2. Given this set up, disparities along lines of race or gender should be explained by differences in how these groups recognize opportunities. These differences themselves stem from distinctive policy concerns and, perhaps most fundamentally, with the components of group identity.
3. Mobilization is held to operate both explicitly and implicitly in all participation decisions. The critical point here is that even if political entrepreneurs do not actively engage in mobilization, individuals recognize opportunities based on their subscription to particular identifications, so individual efforts are merely pieces of larger collective efforts towards collective goals.

This study of participation gaps seeks to provide supporting evidence for these theoretical claims. I build on previous research by introducing the language of opportunities at the individual level of participation and illustrating that the effects of dynamic opportunities vary across individuals. The analysis in this paper does not entirely explain racial differences in the probability of taking political action. However, by illustrating the role of opportunities in shaping the behavior of participation gaps over time, there is firmer footing to begin a more comprehensive search for the root causes

of these disparities. Future research should employ a wider array of opportunity measures, and classify individuals according to clear policy motivations in a manner similar to Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995). This would provide the strongest test of how opportunities interact with policy concerns to determine how and when individuals participate.

Aside from these benefits as a launching pad for future work, this study of participation gaps also makes some contributions in its own right. I show that white Americans have participated at higher rates than their black counterparts – even after controlling for SES. Status differences within the black community are also crucial for the manner in which opportunities are recognized and translated into political activity. Studying participation gaps has allowed us to paint a picture of political activity as dynamic and heterogenous in terms of the forms of activity and individuals who participate. For example, higher education does not simply boost participation through the increase in resources, it also tends towards a heightened racial awareness to recognize threat opportunities. I began this paper by trying to build upon participation research that is focused on individual characteristics. The opportunity model of participation shows that participation gaps must be understood through the integration of both individual level attributes and macro-context. It will take a similar combination to achieve our ultimate goal, a theory of policy-relevant participation. The opportunity model of participation is a step in that direction.

Appendices

A Tables of Coefficients for Each Type of Participation

Table A-1: Second Stage Results – Participate

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	3.627 (1.681)	2.505 (0.495)	0.416 (0.355)	-0.100 (0.113)	0.705 (0.725)	0.560 (0.222)	2.017 (1.289)	-0.404 (0.583)
Unemployment	0.046 (0.017)	-0.010 (0.005)	0.009 (0.004)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.008 (0.008)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.024 (0.013)	0.003 (0.007)
Gini	-15.679 (6.251)	-4.429 (1.864)	-1.198 (1.255)	0.200 (0.421)	-0.706 (2.630)	-1.656 (0.814)	-1.671 (4.633)	1.645 (2.157)
Wage Gap	0.648 (1.683)	-0.766 (0.497)	0.516 (0.366)	0.078 (0.114)	-0.123 (0.688)	0.118 (0.212)	-0.999 (1.226)	-0.265 (0.598)
Election	-0.171 (0.081)	-0.002 (0.026)	-0.002 (0.020)	0.006 (0.005)	0.034 (0.036)	0.000 (0.011)	0.016 (0.065)	-0.036 (0.030)

Table A-2: Second Stage Results – Contact

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-1.789 (2.978)	2.273 (0.701)	-0.082 (0.350)	0.258 (0.199)	0.734 (0.889)	0.241 (0.263)	-6.138 (2.709)	-1.340 (0.935)
Unemployment	0.065 (0.032)	0.002 (0.007)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.007 (0.010)	0.000 (0.003)	-0.058 (0.030)	0.020 (0.010)
Gini	-7.873 (11.662)	-6.295 (2.653)	-0.244 (1.226)	-0.314 (0.742)	-1.973 (3.161)	-0.638 (1.017)	29.460 (10.688)	0.069 (3.509)
Wage Gap	-0.023 (3.282)	0.357 (0.661)	0.923 (0.341)	-0.005 (0.203)	0.325 (0.862)	0.042 (0.277)	-4.119 (3.043)	1.683 (0.945)
Election	0.286 (0.168)	-0.021 (0.026)	0.015 (0.018)	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.016 (0.048)	0.006 (0.014)	-0.289 (0.149)	0.042 (0.046)

Table A-3: Second Stage Results – Public Meeting

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-1.706 (2.115)	2.970 (0.719)	-0.461 (0.367)	-0.245 (0.171)	1.033 (0.890)	0.409 (0.275)	3.764 (1.853)	-0.526 (0.797)
Unemployment	0.065 (0.020)	-0.022 (0.007)	0.009 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.015 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.050 (0.018)	0.024 (0.008)
Gini	-4.188 (7.960)	-3.520 (2.710)	1.071 (1.335)	0.933 (0.599)	2.708 (3.305)	-1.238 (1.006)	-9.595 (6.915)	0.361 (3.084)
Wage Gap	-0.633 (2.195)	-1.841 (0.723)	0.455 (0.349)	-0.023 (0.165)	-1.590 (0.864)	0.224 (0.259)	1.066 (1.898)	0.333 (0.793)
Election	0.124 (0.113)	-0.038 (0.036)	0.028 (0.020)	-0.002 (0.008)	-0.034 (0.046)	-0.004 (0.014)	-0.112 (0.104)	0.042 (0.040)

Table A-4: Second Stage Results – Rally Attendance

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	3.722 (2.379)	3.018 (0.863)	-0.016 (0.447)	-0.130 (0.175)	0.131 (1.386)	-0.222 (0.325)	0.650 (2.282)	0.255 (1.025)
Unemployment	0.074 (0.027)	-0.016 (0.009)	0.013 (0.005)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.008 (0.014)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.066 (0.025)	-0.003 (0.012)
Gini	-19.073 (9.176)	-8.308 (3.215)	0.061 (1.636)	0.713 (0.643)	-0.473 (4.957)	0.596 (1.141)	3.252 (8.773)	-0.176 (3.908)
Wage Gap	-1.103 (2.445)	0.672 (0.834)	0.467 (0.434)	-0.185 (0.172)	-0.018 (1.272)	0.194 (0.289)	-1.355 (2.287)	-0.420 (1.053)
Election	-0.022 (0.120)	-0.026 (0.026)	0.036 (0.022)	0.006 (0.008)	0.102 (0.070)	-0.014 (0.017)	-0.078 (0.119)	-0.081 (0.054)

Table A-5: Second Stage Results – Committee Service

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	65.917 (22.686)	2.956 (1.019)	0.676 (0.453)	0.402 (0.220)	0.916 (1.220)	0.073 (0.360)	-42.290 (25.100)	0.582 (1.056)
Unemployment	-0.858 (0.251)	-0.000 (0.009)	0.011 (0.005)	0.000 (0.003)	-0.010 (0.013)	-0.007 (0.004)	0.679 (0.265)	0.006 (0.011)
Gini	78.782 (87.352)	-6.665 (3.790)	-3.455 (1.718)	-1.465 (0.814)	1.226 (4.531)	-0.027 (1.323)	-140.577 (93.457)	-2.604 (3.909)
Wage Gap	-143.040 (19.487)	-0.274 (0.963)	1.514 (0.482)	0.376 (0.204)	-1.237 (1.196)	0.187 (0.332)	138.618 (20.287)	0.718 (1.084)
Election	-6.458 (1.053)	-0.050 (0.051)	-0.017 (0.026)	-0.008 (0.011)	0.025 (0.060)	-0.014 (0.017)	7.262 (1.072)	-0.007 (0.056)

Table A-6: Second Stage Results – Organization Officer

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	3.134 (2.910)	3.675 (0.888)	-0.576 (0.469)	-0.360 (0.207)	0.281 (1.203)	0.058 (0.325)	-0.453 (2.263)	1.606 (0.971)
Unemployment	0.055 (0.027)	-0.006 (0.009)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.010 (0.013)	-0.010 (0.003)	-0.013 (0.021)	-0.004 (0.011)
Gini	-17.407 (10.853)	-7.229 (3.242)	2.777 (1.663)	1.180 (0.738)	0.420 (4.522)	0.882 (1.154)	7.965 (8.586)	-4.601 (3.542)
Wage Gap	-1.814 (2.866)	-1.065 (0.888)	-0.067 (0.429)	0.052 (0.185)	0.002 (1.180)	-0.307 (0.295)	-3.048 (2.339)	0.157 (0.967)
Election	0.105 (0.150)	-0.028 (0.046)	0.051 (0.025)	-0.011 (0.010)	0.007 (0.055)	0.001 (0.016)	-0.002 (0.121)	0.032 (0.050)

Table A-7: Second Stage Results – Letter

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-74.833 (12.052)	2.010 (1.066)	0.029 (0.585)	0.215 (256)	-0.424 (1.329)	-0.595 (0.405)	62.531 (11.532)	2.338 (1.273)
Unemployment	0.533 (0.373)	-0.004 (0.012)	0.007 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.003 (0.014)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.765 (0.357)	-0.029 (0.014)
Gini	301.974 (28.801)	-4.255 (4.146)	-0.119 (2.134)	-1.049 (0.958)	-2.991 (5.015)	0.349 (1.475)	-218.894 (27.506)	-6.337 (5.069)
Wage Gap	-99.353 (4.368)	-0.420 (1.173)	0.540 (0.550)	0.346 (0.247)	2.496 (1.230)	0.977 (0.373)	68.109 (4.127)	0.509 (1.412)
Election	-5.747 (2.233)	-0.049 (0.060)	0.029 (0.029)	-0.001 (0.013)	0.021 (0.066)	-0.003 (0.020)	6.749 (2.137)	-0.153 (0.064)

Table A-8: Second Stage Results – Party Work

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-22.743 (31.121)	2.398 (1.225)	-0.283 (0.907)	0.379 (0.282)	0.193 (1.648)	-0.688 (0.508)	-4.211 (32.003)	2.462 (1.488)
Unemployment	2.029 (0.318)	0.011 (0.013)	0.013 (0.008)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.028 (0.018)	-0.006 (0.005)	-1.999 (0.320)	-0.031 (0.017)
Gini	165.878 (113.868)	-8.542 (4.624)	-1.772 (3.267)	-1.803 (1.002)	4.888 (5.935)	0.299 (1.857)	-42.474 (113.310)	-4.320 (5.558)
Wage Gap	-124.528 (28.591)	1.477 (1.220)	1.977 (0.800)	0.569 (0.259)	-2.697 (1.486)	87.951 (0.501)	-3.048 (27.538)	-0.774 (1.531)
Election	7.741 (1.544)	-0.072 (0.062)	-0.021 (0.041)	-0.019 (0.014)	0.014 (0.077)	-0.030 (0.026)	-7.298 (1.582)	-0.064 (0.077)

Table A-9: Second Stage Results – Petition

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	1.601 (1.825)	3.139 (0.577)	0.346 (0.376)	-0.459 (0.126)	0.195 (0.773)	0.464 (0.232)	3.058 (1.440)	-0.436 (0.628)
Unemployment	0.045 (0.020)	-0.016 (0.006)	0.005 (0.004)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.008)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.030 (0.015)	-0.006 (0.007)
Gini	-14.016 (7.167)	-5.021 (2.303)	-0.987 (1.339)	0.929 (0.472)	-1.066 (2.856)	-1.393 (0.872)	-3.738 (5.484)	1.147 (2.407)
Wage Gap	2.270 (1.962)	-1.300 (0.618)	0.522 (0.376)	0.179 (0.128)	0.532 (0.706)	0.089 (0.239)	-1.050 (1.480)	0.290 (0.690)
Election	-0.346 (0.091)	-0.012 (0.033)	-0.041 (0.021)	0.016 (0.006)	0.049 (0.038)	0.025 (0.012)	0.123 (0.075)	-0.036 (0.034)

Table A-10: Second Stage Results – Speech

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-2.267 (3.739)	3.636 (1.350)	-0.431 (0.733)	0.105 (0.267)	0.450 (1.441)	-0.009 (0.441)	5.887 (2.944)	-0.035 (1.292)
Unemployment	0.107 (0.040)	-0.011 (0.015)	-0.003 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.020 (0.015)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.069 (0.029)	0.004 (0.014)
Gini	-11.062 (14.581)	-6.369 (5.264)	2.831 (2.881)	-0.135 (0.987)	0.161 (5.170)	0.903 (1.640)	-11.649 (11.540)	-2.123 (4.822)
Wage Gap	1.430 (3.698)	-1.374 (1.448)	-0.007 (0.815)	-0.018 (0.267)	-0.226 (1.362)	-0.200 (0.442)	-0.835 (2.941)	0.696 (1.291)
Election	-0.115 (0.186)	-0.131 (0.046)	0.067 (0.038)	0.004 (0.012)	-0.010 (0.072)	0.039 (0.023)	0.025 (0.153)	-0.033 (0.063)

Table A-11: Second Stage Results – Article

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	65.136 (12.103)	1.023 (1.867)	-0.862 (1.093)	0.018 (0.343)	-2.575 (1.992)	-1.108 (0.616)	-75.150 (12.489)	0.264 (2.556)
Unemployment	-0.137 (0.198)	-0.007 (0.019)	0.027 (0.011)	0.000 (0.004)	0.035 (0.018)	0.005 (0.006)	0.323 (0.204)	-0.072 (0.026)
Gini	-203.759 (48.096)	-5.218 (6.808)	0.319 (4.162)	-1.373 (1.230)	4.495 (7.175)	2.448 (2.249)	232.092 (49.630)	19.527 (9.673)
Wage Gap	-13.644 (11.667)	1.838 (1.826)	1.595 (1.087)	0.777 (0.329)	0.740 (1.852)	0.468 (0.597)	1.522 (2.941)	-10.756 (2.322)
Election	0.673 (0.558)	-0.173 (0.100)	0.018 (0.056)	0.042 (0.017)	0.186 (0.096)	0.010 (0.031)	-1.114 (0.576)	0.161 (0.133)

Table A-12: Second Stage Results – Organizational Membership

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	-5.241 (3.840)	3.870 (1.556)	0.066 (0.700)	0.217 (0.297)	-1.350 (1.669)	-0.049 (0.453)	4.107 (2.710)	5.015 (1.785)
Unemployment	0.038 (0.039)	-0.030 (0.016)	0.017 (0.008)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.018)	0.002 (0.005)	-0.011 (0.026)	0.026 (0.019)
Gini	10.363 (14.632)	-5.907 (5.691)	0.578 (2.453)	-0.122 (1.110)	4.706 (6.022)	-1.457 (1.620)	-0.821 (10.159)	-21.642 (6.327)
Wage Gap	-6.018 (3.773)	-1.857 (1.546)	0.032 (0.654)	-0.058 (0.290)	-0.705 (1.528)	1.010 (0.432)	-0.199 (2.788)	4.685 (1.659)
Election	0.442 (0.191)	0.062 (0.083)	-0.018 (0.036)	0.001 (0.014)	0.070 (0.080)	-0.020 (0.022)	-0.393 (0.150)	-0.170 (0.091)

Table A-13: Second Stage Results – Politics

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	3.287 (1.688)	2.623 (0.551)	0.161 (0.373)	-0.499 (0.131)	0.277 (0.752)	0.730 (0.242)	1.582 (1.357)	-0.535 (0.614)
Unemployment	0.047 (0.019)	-0.007 (0.006)	0.005 (0.004)	0.002 (0.001)	-0.006 (0.008)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.027 (0.014)	-0.003 (0.007)
Gini	-15.221 (6.401)	-4.632 (2.135)	-0.236 (1.341)	1.194 (0.483)	-1.071 (2.769)	-2.483 (0.911)	-0.433 (4.829)	1.576 (2.283)
Wage Gap	0.600 (1.781)	-0.902 (0.588)	0.411 (0.381)	0.096 (0.130)	0.523 (0.718)	0.303 (0.254)	-0.982 (1.309)	0.099 (0.651)
Election	-0.266 (0.084)	0.011 (0.031)	-0.037 (0.021)	0.022 (0.006)	0.067 (0.037)	0.022 (0.012)	0.067 (0.070)	-0.047 (0.032)

Table A-14: Second Stage Results – Organizations

	Intercept	Income	Education	Age	Kids	Jobs	White	Female
Intercept	6.086 (2.371)	3.557 (0.722)	0.384 (0.366)	-0.202 (0.168)	-0.960 (0.942)	-0.114 (0.254)	2.167 (1.715)	-0.298 (0.818)
Unemployment	0.076 (0.023)	-0.011 (0.007)	0.010 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.011)	-0.006 (0.003)	-0.062 (0.017)	0.000 (0.009)
Gini	-27.991 (8.548)	-7.266 (2.633)	-1.428 (1.281)	0.491 (0.608)	2.659 (3.470)	0.819 (0.892)	1.824 (6.335)	1.285 (3.075)
Wage Gap	0.224 (2.247)	-0.767 (0.715)	0.747 (0.349)	0.163 (0.157)	0.449 (0.923)	-0.076 (0.230)	-2.785 (1.707)	-0.170 (0.834)
Election	0.006 (0.111)	-0.055 (0.037)	-0.002 (0.019)	0.015 (0.008)	0.095 (0.046)	0.003 (0.013)	-0.033 (0.087)	0.046 (0.041)

References

- Alex-Assensoh, Yvette and A.B. Assensoh. 2001. "Inner-City Contexts, Church Attendance, and African-American Political Participation." *Journal of Politics* 63:886–901.
- Amenta, Edvin, Sheera Olasky and Neal Caren. 2005. "Age for Leisure? Political Mediation and the Impact of the Pension Movement on U.S. Old-Age Policy." *American Sociological Review* 70:516–538.
- Andrews, Kenneth T. 2002. "Movement-Countermovement Dynamics and the Emergence of New Institutions: The Case of "White Flight" Schools in Mississippi." *Social Forces* 80:911–936.
- Arceneaux, Kevin. 2003. "The Conditional Impact of Blame Attribution on the Relationship Between Economic Adversity and Turnout." *Political Research Quarterly* 56:67–75.
- Barreto, Matt A., Gary M. Segura and Nathan D. Woods. 2004. "The Mobilizing Effect of Majority-Minority Districts on Latino Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 98:65–75.
- Bobo, Lawrence and Franklin Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Political Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84:377–397.
- Borjas, George J. and Glenn T. Sueyoshi. 1994. "A Two-Stage Estimator for Probit Models with Structural Group Effects." *Journal of Econometrics* 64:165–182.
- Bowers, Jake. 2004. "Does Moving Disrupt Campaign Activity?" *Political Psychology* 25:525–543.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Suzanna De Boef and Tse min Lin. 2004. "The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap." *American Political Science Review* 98:515–528.
- Brady, Henry E., Robert Putnam et al. 2001. Roper Social and Political Trends Data, 1973-1994. Data set from Roper Starch Worldwide.
- Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cho, Wendy K. Tam. 2003. "Contagion Effects and Ethnic Contribution Networks." *American Journal of Political Science* 47:368–387.
- Cho, Wendy K. Tam, James G. Gimpel and Joshua J. Dyck. 2006. "Residential Concentration, Political Socialization, and Voter Turnout." *Journal of Politics* 68:156–167.
- Cho, Wendy K. Tam, James G. Gimpel and Tony Wu. 2006. "Clarifying the Role of SES in Political Participation: Policy Threat and Arab American Mobilization." *Journal of Politics* 68:977–991.
- Cohen, Cathy J. and Michael Dawson. 1993. "Neighborhood Poverty and African-American Politics." *American Political Science Review* 87:286–302.
- Corder, J. Kevin and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "Political Context and the Turnout of New Women Voters after Suffrage." *Journal of Politics* 68:38–49.

- Cress, Daniel M. and David A. Snow. 2000. "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation, and Framing." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:1063–1104.
- Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dyke, Nella Van. 2003. "Crossing Movement Boundaries: Factors that Facilitate Coalition Protest by American College Students, 1930-1990." *Social Problems* 50:226–250.
- Dyke, Nella Van and Sarah A. Soule. 2002. "Structural Social Change and the Mobilizing Effect of Threat: Explaining Levels of Patriot and Militia Organizing in the United States." *Social Problems* 49:497–520.
- Feenberg, Daniel and Jean Roth. 2005. Current Population Survey Labor Extracts, 1979-2004. Data set from National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Feldman, Stanley. 1982. "Economic Self-Interest and Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 26:446–466.
- Gay, Claudine. 2001. "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review* 95:589–617.
- Gay, Claudine. 2002. "Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 46:717–732.
- Gay, Claudine. 2004. "Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 98:547–562.
- Gershtenson, Joseph. 2002. "Partisanship and Participation in Political Campaign Activities, 1952-1996." *Political Research Quarterly* 55:687–714.
- Guterbock, Thomas M. and Bruce London. 1983. "Race, Political Orientation, and Participation: An Empirical Test of Four Competing Theories." *American Sociological Review* 48:439–453.
- Harris, Fredrick C., Valeria Sinclair-Chapman and Brian D. McKenzie. 2005. "Macrodynamics of Black Political Participation in the Post-Civil Rights Era." *Journal of Politics* 67:1143–1163.
- Harris, Fredrick C., Valeria Sinclair-Chapman and Brian McKenzie. 2006. *Countervailing Forces in African-American Civic Activism, 1973 - 1994*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, Kim Quaile and Jan E. Leighley. 1992. "The Policy Consequences of Class Bias in State Electorates." *American Journal of Political Science* 36:351–365.
- Hill, Kim Quaile and Jan E. Leighley. 1993. "Party Ideology, Organization, and Competitiveness as Mobilizing Forces in Gubernatorial Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 37:1158–1178.
- Hill, Kim Quaile and Jan E. Leighley. 1994. "Mobilizing Institutions and Class Representation in U.S. State Electorates." *Political Research Quarterly* 47:137–150.

- Hill, Kim Quaile and Jan E. Leighley. 1996. "Political Parties and Class Mobilization in Contemporary United States Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 40:787–804.
- Huber, John D., Georgia Kernell and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2005. "Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources and Party Attachments Across Democracies." *Political Analysis* 13:365–386.
- Jenkins, J. Craig, David Jacobs and Jon Agnone. 2003. "Political Opportunities and African-American Protest, 1948-1997." *American Journal of Sociology* 109:277–303.
- Johnson, Martin, Robert M. Stein and Robert Wrinkle. 2003. "Language Choice, Residential Stability, and Voting Among Latino Americans." *Social Science Quarterly* 84:412–424.
- Kelleher, Christine and David Lowery. 2004. "Political Participation and Metropolitan Institutional Contexts." *Urban Affairs Review* 39:720–757.
- Kenny, Christopher B. 1992. "Political Participation and Effects from the Social Environment." *American Journal of Political Science* 36:259–267.
- Kinder, Donald R. and D. Roderick Kiewiet. 1979. "Economic Discontent and Political Behavior: The Role of Personal Grievances and Collective Economic Judgments in Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 23:495–527.
- Lawless, Jennifer L. 2004. "Politics of Presence? Congresswomen and Symbolic Representation." *Political Research Quarterly* 57:81–99.
- Leighley, Jan E. and Arnold Vedlitz. 1999. "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Participation: Competing Models and Contrasting Explanations." *Journal of Politics* 61:1092–1114.
- Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler. 1992a. "Individual and Systemic Influences on Turnout: Who Votes? 1984." *Journal of Politics* 54:718–740.
- Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler. 1992b. "Socioeconomic Class Bias in Turnout, 1964-1988: The Voters Remain the Same." *American Political Science Review* 86:725–736.
- Lien, Pei-Te. 1998. "Does the Gender Gap in Political Attitudes and Behavior Vary across Racial Groups." *Political Research Quarterly* 51:869–894.
- Lohmann, Susanne. 1993. "A Signalling Model of Informative and Manipulative Political Action." *American Political Science Review* 87:319–333.
- Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989-1991." *World Politics* 47:42–101.
- McAdam, Doug. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Second ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McAdam, Doug and Ronnelle Paulsen. 1993. "Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:640–667.
- McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- McCammon, Holly J., Karen E. Campbell, Ellen M. Granberg and Christine Mowery. 2001. "How Movements Win: Gendered Opportunity Structures and U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866 to 1919." *American Sociological Review* 66:49–70.
- McClurg, Scott D. 2003. "Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly* 56:449–464.
- Meyer, David S. 2004. "Protest and Political Opportunities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:125–145.
- Meyer, David S. and Suzanne Staggenborg. 1996. "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity." *American Journal of Sociology* 101:1628–1660.
- Morris, Aldon. 1984. *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press.
- Oliver, J. Eric. 1999. "The Effects of Metropolitan Economic Segregation on Local Civic Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 43:186–212.
- Platt, Matthew B. 2008. "Participation for What? A Policy-motivated Approach to Political Activism." *Political Behavior* 30:391–413.
- Rosenstone, Steven and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy*. New York: Macmillan.
- Santoro, Wayne A. 1999. "Conventional Politics Takes Center Stage: The Latino Struggle against English-Only Laws." *Social Forces* 77:887–909.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba and Henry E. Brady. 1995. "Participation's Not a Paradox: The View from American Activists." *British Journal of Political Science* 25:1–36.
- Shingles, Richard D. 1981. "Black Consciousness and Political Participation: The Missing Link." *The American Political Science Review* 75:76–91.
- Soule, Sarah A. 1997. "The Student Divestment Movement in the United States and Tactical Diffusion: The Shantytown Protest." *Social Forces* 75:855–882.
- Tate, Katherine. 1994. *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*. Enlarged ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady and Norman H. Nie. 1993. "Race, Ethnicity and Political Resources: Participation in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science* 23:453–497.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Verba, Sidney and Norman Nie. 1972. *Participation in America*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Walton, Hanes, Jr. 1985. *Invisible Politics: Black Political Behavior*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Welch, Susan and Lorn S. Foster. 1992. "The Impact of Economic Conditions on the Voting Behavior of Blacks." *Western Political Quarterly* 45:221.
- Welch, Susan and Philip Secret. 1981. "Sex, Race and Political Participation." *Western Political Quarterly* 34:5-16.
- Wielhouwer, Peter W. 2000. "Releasing the Fetters: Parties and the Mobilization of the African-American Electorate." *Journal of Politics* 62:206-222.