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Chapter 8: Gob smacked

At 7:22 pm on the night of the election, a member of Donald Trump's campaign team told CNN's Jim Acosta "It will take a miracle for us to win." Meanwhile, the Clinton campaign was wearing "the biggest smiles" when a *Boston Globe* reporter arrived at the scene of their anticipated victory party at 5 pm.

As the night went on, all of this would change. The votes began to come in, and things were "off," as CNN's Dana Bash would later put it. The early returns in Florida—where Clinton had a narrow lead in the polls and where her campaign believed a surge in Latino turnout would propel her to victory—did not favor Clinton. Then the same thing happened in North Carolina and a host of other key battleground states, including Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. By late that evening, the outcome was clear: Donald Trump was the next President of the United States. Sopan Deb of CBS News described the reaction at the Trump campaign's election night party: "It was a room full of gob smacked people. Not just reporters. Campaign staffers. Trump supporters. A lot of people." Clinton conceded around 2:30 am.[1]

Trump won a solid 304-227 majority in the Electoral College, even though Clinton led in the popular vote, which she ultimately won by 2.1 percentage points—larger than the margin for Richard Nixon in 1968 or John F. Kennedy in 1960. The divergence between Clinton's popular vote victory and Electoral College defeat was extraordinary. The previous such divergence, in 2000, saw Al Gore narrowly winning the popular vote by about half a point but losing the Electoral College by 5 votes. All of this was certainly an ironic turn of events for Trump, who had tweeted after the 2012 election that the Electoral College was a "disaster for a democracy." But after it delivered him to the White House, he called it "actually genius."[2]

Trump's victory flew in the face of a durable, but always dubious, trope of political commentary: that Democrats had a preexisting advantage in the Electoral College, thanks to a phalanx of states known as the "blue wall," which included states that Trump ultimately won, such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In reality, academic research suggested that the Democrats had a modest advantage, at most, which made it far less surprising that the "blue wall" crumbled on Election Night.[3]

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[1] These quotes and timeline are from Stelter, Brian. 2017. "In their own words: The story of Election Night 2016. CNN, January 5. http://money.cnn.com/2017/01/05/media/election-night-news-coverage-oral-history/index.html. Elements of the argument in this chapter were initially published in Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2017. "How Trump Lost and Won." *Journal of Democracy* 28(2): 34-44.

[2] Trump's tweets are here: https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/798521053551140864 and https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/798521053551140864. The same pattern was visible in public opinion, too. See Bialik, Carol. 2016. "The Electoral College Has Become Another Partisan Issue." *FiveThirtyEight*, December 19. http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-electoral-college-has-become-another-partisan-issue/.

[3] On "blue wall" punditry, see Silver, Nate. 2017. "It Wasn't Clinton's Election to Lose." *FiveThirtyEight*, January 23. http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/it-wasnt-clintons-election-to-lose/. The academic research is Holbrook, Thomas M. 2016. *Altered States: Changing Populations,*

The extraordinary divergence between the popular vote and Electoral College vote means that there is no simple way to explain or interpret the election outcome. Of course, Trump was the clear victor given the rules of American presidential elections. At the same time, he also received many fewer votes than Clinton. Any explanation must be able to account for both facts. Any explanation must also improve on the notion that "anything" or "everything" could have mattered in such a close race. This was a popular refrain after the election, given that a shift of just over 77,000 votes in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin would have delivered Clinton victories in those states and thus in the Electoral College. In fact, it is possible to evaluate the relative contribution of various factors and assign different levels of certainty to what mattered and what did not. "Everything" did not "matter" equally.

The explanation of the election begins with the underlying political and economic fundamentals. Two of these fundamentals—the state of the economy and evaluations of Barack Obama—forecasted Clinton's popular vote victory. Indeed, her victory in the popular vote called into question the trope that 2016 was about a generalized voter "anger" or desire for "change." Calling 2016 a "change election" is hard to square with the fact that the same party won more votes for the third election in a row. A third fundamental—voters' party identification—also had a predictable impact, inducing considerable loyalty among both Democrats and Republicans and helping Trump avoid the blowout that seemed imminent only a few weeks before Election Day.

But other aspects of the election were less predictable—and these helped provide Trump a path to victory in the Electoral College. Clinton may have won more votes, they were not in the right places or among the right groups. Clinton's strength among white voters with more formal education helped her in some states, like California and Texas, but these were not swing states in 2016. More important was Trump's strength among white voters with less formal education. This helped him in key battleground states—including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—where those voters constitute a larger part of the population. Trump's strength among white voters without college degrees also helped explain why a small but important fraction of Obama voters ended up voting for him. Ultimately, this "diploma divide" gave Trump votes exactly where he needed them.

The motivations of white voters were hotly debated during and after the election. The debate centered on whether white voters were motivated more by attitudes related to race and ethnicity or by their concerns about their economic circumstances. The evidence suggests that racial attitudes were more important—so much so that other factors were filtered through their lens. Those attitudes were not only strongly related to whether Americans voted for Clinton or Trump, they were *more* strongly related to how people voted in 2016 than in other recent presidential elections. Economic concerns—such as fears of not being able to make a mortgage payment or pay a doctor's bill—were not strongly related to how people voted or more strongly related to voting in 2016 than 2012. Indeed, economic concerns were arguably influenced by racial attitudes in the first place. This "racialized economics" was a potent feature of public opinion.

Thus, no other factor was as distinctively powerful in 2016 as were attitudes about racial issue and immigration, and no other factor explains as fully the diploma divide among whites. The growing salience of racial issues helped Trump more than Clinton. Even in 2012, a substantial fraction of Obama voters expressed less favorable views of African-Americans and were concerned about immigration. Once those issues came to the fore in the campaign, they helped move these voters into Trump's camp.

Changing Parties, and the Transformation of the American Political Landscape. New York: Oxford University Press.

Meanwhile, Clinton's supposed advantages—turnout among African-Americans and other racial minorities, a surge in support among Latinos and women, the advantages of a well-funded and professionalized campaign—could not compensate. African-American turnout dropped. The Latino surge was modest at best. Clinton's support among women was only ordinary, while her losses among men were extraordinary. And although Clinton benefited from her advantages in televised advertising and field organization, their apparent impact was not large enough to tip the election in her favor.

Trump's victory thus reflected a blend of the usual and unusual. But what stands out as crucial to his victory was the unusually large impact of racially inflected anxieties.

The Predictable Impact of the Fundamentals

The size of Clinton's popular vote victory margin was surprisingly large for a candidate who lost the Electoral College, but it was entirely consistent with political and economic fundamentals in 2016. The election's outcome was well-predicted by economic growth in the first part of 2016 (Figure 8.1, which updates Figure 2.7). The data point for 2016 is almost exactly on the diagonal line that summarizes the relationship for the elections from 1948-2012. In other words, knowing only the growth rate in gross domestic product would have given you an accurate estimate of where the election would turn out. Similarly, the election's outcome was very close to a prediction based on both economic growth and presidential approval. As of June 2016, a statistical model including these two factors predicted that Clinton would win 51.8% of the major-party vote (Chapter 2). She won 51.1%.

Figure 8.1. Economic Growth and Presidential Election Outcomes, 1948-2016
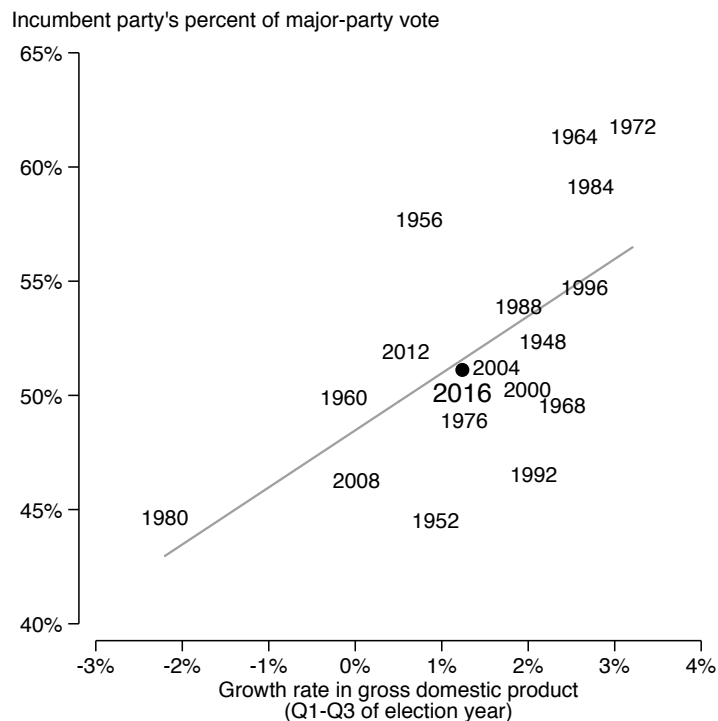
Note: The relationship between change in GDP and the vote—the diagonal line—is a least squares regression line and is estimated without the 2016 election included.

Although the election's outcome was quite in line with those two forecasts, Clinton's popular vote margin actually *exceeded* some other forecasts. For example, the Democratic candidate was

expected to lose in forecasting models that accounted for the lack of incumbent on the ballot or the Democrats' having held the White House for two terms. In fact, the most comprehensive average of forecasting models—by the website Pollyvote—suggested a popular vote split very close to 50-50. By that standard, Clinton beat these models by 2 points.

One reason that some early forecasts proved accurate is that there were no major economic shocks or political crises in the election year. Instead, the economy continued to grow at a modest pace. People's incomes, which had been increasing among every income group between 2012-2015 (Figure 2.3), increased again in 2016. The average income in every quintile was higher in 2016 than it had been in 2007 before the Great Recession. Unsurprisingly, then, consumer sentiment remained at its relatively high level throughout 2016. And Obama's approval rating, which had been largely stagnant despite improving consumer sentiment (Figure 2.6), increased throughout 2016.[4]

These trends once again belie the idea that Americans were feeling increasing economic anxiety or that 2016 is best understood as a "change election." At a minimum, it certainly seems strange that throughout 2016 anxious Americans demanding change remained quite positive about the economy, became *more* supportive of the incumbent president, and then on Election Day gave his successor a 3-million-vote margin. Clinton's popular vote victory was not in line with casual punditry about voter anxiety or anger but it was in line with the state of the economy and approval of Barack Obama.

Another fundamental factor also powerfully, and predictably, shaped the election's outcome: partisanship. During the general election campaign, both Democrats and Republicans ultimately gravitated toward their party's nominee. Then, on November 8, these partisan intentions became a partisan reality. In the election-day exit poll, 89% of Democrats voted for Clinton, only slightly lower than the 92% who had voted for Obama in 2012. Similarly, 88% of Republicans voted for Trump, only a bit less than the 93% who had voted for Romney.

Another way to show the power of partisanship is to compare how the same group of Americans voted in 2012 and 2016 (Panel A of Table 8.1). The 2012 election presented Americans with a pair of candidates—Barack Obama and Mitt Romney—that were quite different than Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. But most voters picked the candidate from the same party in both years. All told, 86% of Obama voters reported voting for Hillary Clinton in 2016, and 88% of Romney voters reported voting for Trump. About 83% of voters were "consistent" partisans— that is, they voted for the same major party's candidate in both years.

The extent of partisan loyalty was almost identical from 2008 to 2012: in those two presidential elections, 80% were consistent partisans, as 87% of McCain supporters voted for Romney, and 89% of Obama supporters in 2008 voted for him in 2012. Earlier surveys by the American National Election Study, which also interviewed the same respondents four years apart, found that the percentage of voters who were consistent partisans was 85% from 2000 to 2004, 77% from 1992 to1996 (including the independent candidate Ross Perot as a choice in both years), 72% from 1972 to 1976, and 76% from 1956 to 1960. In short, the stability from 2012-2016 matched that in recent elections and was higher than in elections from the 1990s and before.[5]

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[4] Long, Heather. 2017. "U.S. middle class incomes reached highest-ever level in 2016, Census Bureau says." *Washington Post*, September 12. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/us-middle-class-incomes-reached-highest-ever-level-in-2016-census-bureau-says/2017/09/12/7226905e-97de-11e7-b569-3360011663b4_story.html?utm_term=.a371c722bc20. The consumer sentiment data are here: http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/files/tbmics.pdf.

[5] The 2008-2012 party loyalty estimates were based on 2,046 respondents in the Study of Citizens and Politics and were provided by Dan Hopkins. On partisan stability, see also Erikson and

The power of partisanship was also visible in the willingness of primary voters to support their party's nominee—regardless of whether they had supported that person in the primary (Panel B of Table 8.1). Among Democratic primary voters who were interviewed about their primary preference in July 2016 and interviewed again after the general election, nearly 8-in-10 (79%) of Sanders supporters reported voting for Clinton.[6] This level of partisan loyalty was higher than in 2008, which also featured a long and hard-fought Democratic primary. In that election, about 70% of Clinton primary voters reported voting for Barack Obama. Indeed, even the Sanders supporters that Clinton did not win over—notably the estimated 12% of Sanders voters who supported Trump in the general election—were probably not going to support her no matter what. When these Sanders-Trump voters had been interviewed four years prior, after the 2012 election, only 35% reported voting for Obama. Most of these voters were not really Democrats to begin with.[7]

Table 8.1. Trends in Candidate Preferences

Panel A. 2012 to 2016

2012 vote	2016 vote					
	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Gary Johnson	Jill Stein	Other Candidate	No vote for President
Obama	86%	9	2	2	1	0.1
Romney	5%	88	3	0.1	3	1
Other candidate	26%	39	22	8	6	0.1

Panel B. 2016 primary to 2016 general

2016 primary vote	2016 vote					
	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Gary Johnson	Jill Stein	Other Candidate	No vote for President

Wlezien, ibid, Chapter 7. Validating turnout by matching respondents to voter files for both the 2012 and 2016 general elections does not change the basic pattern of results. Approximately 8% of Obama voters and 7% of Romney voters did not vote in 2016. Including these non-voters in the calculation, 80% of Obama voters voted for Clinton, and 83% of Romney voters voted for Trump. Obama-Trump voters out-numbered Romney-Clinton voters by a similar amount. The vast majority of non-voters in 2012 (81%) did not vote in 2016 either, while 9.5% voted for Clinton and 7.4% voted for Trump. This does not suggest, as some commentators speculated, that Trump benefited particularly from mobilizing "new" voters—although we should be cautious drawing strong conclusions from just this one panel study.

[6] Similar results obtain if we limit the sample to voters who could be successfully matched to state voter files for both a presidential primary and the general election. (Most self-reported voters who cannot be matched to the voter file likely did not vote.)

[7] On the 2008 primary, see Henderson, Michael, D. Sunshine Hillygus, and Trevor Thompson. 2010. "'Sour Grapes' or Rational Voting? Voter Decision Making Among Thwarted Primary Voters in 2008." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74(3): 499-529. On Sanders-Trump voters, see Sides, John. 2017. "Did enough Bernie Sanders supporters vote for Trump to cost Clinton the election." *The Monkey Cage*, August 24. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/24/did-enough-bernie-sanders-supporters-vote-for-trump-to-cost-clinton-the-election/?utm_term=.eba362ede956. That piece reports on two other surveys that estimated the fraction of Sanders supporters who voted for Trump at 12% and 6%, respective.

Democratic primary

Clinton	96%	3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1
Sanders	79%	12	2	4	2.1	0.2

Republican primary

Trump	1%	98	0.4	0.1	0.1	0
Not Trump	14%	69	7	1	7	2
Rubio	10%	67	10	0.2	9	4
Cruz	3%	77	9	1	6	3
Kasich	32%	57	4	0	5	1
Someone else	17%	70	3	0.2	10	0

Panel C. December 2015 to November 2016

	2016 vote				
December 2015 vote intention	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump	Gary Johnson	Other Candidate	No vote for President
Clinton	88%	6	3	3	1
Trump	5%	89	3	2	1
Other or not sure	20%	41	20	16	2

Notes: Percentages do not add to 100% because of rounding. Panel A data are 7,180 self-reported voters interviewed in the November wave of the 2012 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project and again between November 29 and December 29, 2016, as part of the VOTER Survey. Panel B data are 2,912 self-reported Democratic primary voters and 2,849 Republican primary voters from the December 2016 VOTER Survey. Primary vote choice was measured in an earlier July 2016 interview. Panel C data are 2,398 self-reported voters from the RAND Presidential Election Panel Survey interviewed December 14, 2015-January 6, 2016 and then November 9-December 21, 2016.

Among Republicans who did not support Trump in the primary, nearly 7-in-10 (69%) voted for him in the general election. This was somewhat lower than in the 2008 Republican primary, when 87% of those who did not vote for McCain supported him in the general—although of course the 2008 primary was not as long or divisive. Similarly, this 69% figure was lower than in 2012, when 79% of Republican primary voters who did not vote for Romney supported him in the general.[8] This shows that the divisions evident in the primary were more difficult for Republicans than Democrats to overcome—a telling indicator of the problems that preceded the primary (and would extend beyond Trump's election). Nevertheless, after Republican support for Trump surged late in the campaign, he still managed to win over most of the Republicans who did not vote for him in the primary.

Partisanship also helped to create stability across the campaign itself (Panel C of Table 8.1). In December 2015, survey respondents were asked whether they supported or leaned toward Clinton or Trump in a hypothetical match-up. In November 2016, when these respondents were asked whom they have voted for, most gave the same answer: 88% of initial Clinton supporters ended up voting for her and 89% of initial Trump supporters voted with him. Of course, in the months between these two interviews, there was instability—particularly as some Republicans wavered on Trump. But the campaign's ability to activate partisans helped ensure that people

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[8] The 2008 figure is from Henderson et al., ibid. The 2012 figure is from the YouGov survey data analyzed in Sides and Vareck, ibid.

ended up with the same preference that they had indicated almost a year prior. This level of stability was only slightly lower than between December 2011 and November 2012.[9]

A further manifestation of partisanship involved the unusually large number of voters who had unfavorable views of both Clinton and Trump—whom we might call "double negative" voters. In the exit poll, 18% of voters fit this pattern and more of them voted for Trump (47%) than Clinton (30%). Why would Trump do better than Clinton among this group? It was not because they secretly liked Trump more. Other survey data showed that double negative voters had equally unfavorable views of both candidates when they rated them on 100-point scales.[10] But double negative voters were nevertheless disproportionately Republican. In Gallup's polling in the two weeks before Election Day, 45% of double negative voters were Republicans and 35% were Democrats. Among voters who did not have negative views of both candidates, 45% were Republicans and 50% were Democrats. It is no surprise, then, that Trump did better among those with unfavorable views of both candidates. They appeared to be holding their nose and voting their partisanship.

These patterns all show how 2016 was an ordinary election in certain respects. Partisan identities remained as potent as they had been in recent elections, despite lengthy and divisive primaries in both parties that many believed would create extraordinary disloyalty in the general election.

Surprising Shifts

But if a surprising election was still predictable in some ways, in other ways it was not. And these less predictable shifts pointed to the sources of Donald Trump's victory in the Electoral College.

First, there were the shifts in individual states (Figure 8.2). An increasingly typical pattern in U.S. presidential elections is for most every state to shift, or "swing," in the same direction from one election to the next, depending on how much the fundamentals favor one party or the other. This tendency toward a "uniform swing" has become more pronounced. For example, from 2008 to 2012, almost every state shifted in the direction of the Republican candidate, as national conditions were less favorable for Democrats in 2012 than in 2008, when the Republicans were hamstrung by an unpopular incumbent and a worsening recession. One of the most accurate forecasts of the 2012 election simply added a uniform swing to the 2008 margins in the states.[11]

But between 2012 and 2016, the swing was less uniform. Based on the statistical forecasts, Clinton should have done a little worse than Obama did in 2012. But the state-level shifts were variable. In several states, Clinton did better than Obama, including in Arizona, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Texas. In some states, she essentially equaled his vote margin, including in battleground states like North Carolina, Florida, and Colorado. But in other states, she did substantially worse. The shifts in some states, like West Virginia, reflected a secular decline in Democratic fortunes. The shifts in other states, however, were more surprising and costly for Clinton in the Electoral College. In 2012, Obama won Ohio by 1.5 points of the two-

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[9] Sides and Vavreck, ibid, p.181.

[10] In the pre-election 2016 American National Election Study, about 8% of respondents placed both Clinton and Trump between 0-49 on a 0-100 scale, indicating a less favorable view. Among these respondents, average assessments of Clinton and Trump were nearly identical (26.4 and 25.5, respectively). However, among this group, 51% identified as Republican, showing again that double negative voters leaned Republican.

[11] Gelman, Andrew, and John Sides. 2016. "Can Trump re-draw the electoral map? There's one big problem." *The Monkey Cage*, May 10. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/10/can-trump-re-draw-the-electoral-map-theres-one-big-problem/?utm_term=.a94dc5098300. Jackman, Simon. 2014. "The Predictive Power of Uniform Swing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(2): 317.321.

party vote; Clinton lost it by more than 4 points. Obama won Iowa by 3 points; Clinton lost it by 5 points. Obama won Michigan by almost 5 points, Pennsylvania by almost 3 points, and Wisconsin by 3.5 points. Clinton lost each of these states by a slender margin. In fact, Clinton did better in the traditionally uncompetitive red states of Georgia (where she lost by 2.7 points) and Texas (where she lost by 4.7 points) than she did in the traditional competitive state of Iowa. She lost Texas by only slightly more than she lost Ohio.

Figure 8.2. Shifts in Presidential Vote Margin in the States, 2008-2016
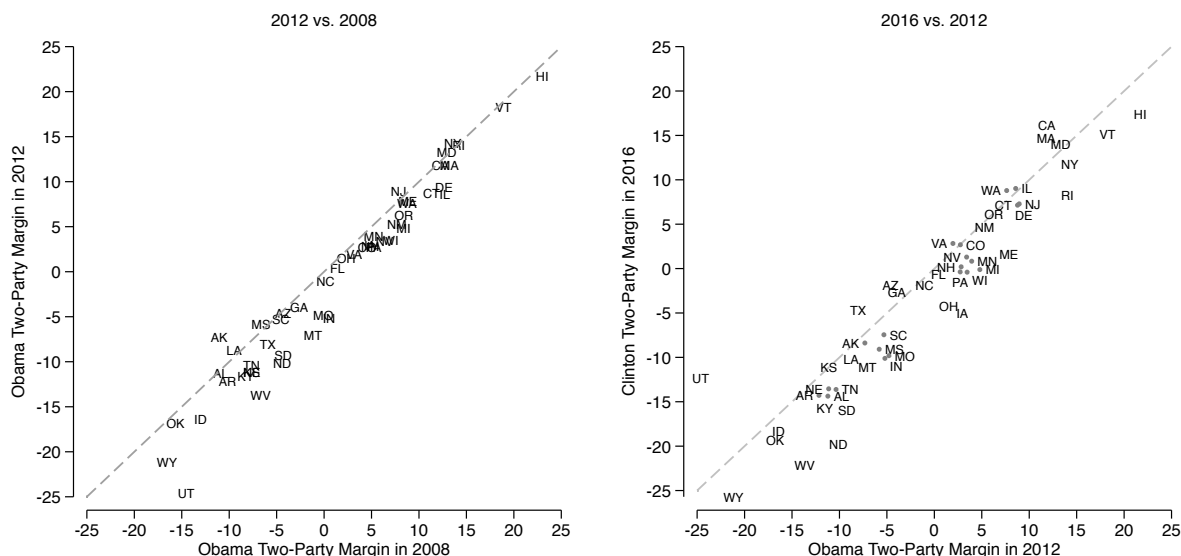
Source: U.S. Election Atlas

The contrasting shifts in the states between 2008-12 and 2012-16 were mirrored in prominent demographic groups in the electorate. In 2012, Obama's margin in almost every demographic narrowed somewhat, which was another manifestation of nearly uniform swing. But in 2016, different demographics moved in different directions (Figure 8.3). The most dramatic polarization was among whites with different levels of formal education. Before 2016, whites with and without college degrees had shifted in the same fashion from election to election—again, a pattern of uniform swing.[12] But in 2016, Clinton's margin among whites with a college degree was 10 points better than Obama's, while her margin among whites without a college degree was 14 points worse.

This polarization among whites advantaged Trump more than Clinton. For one, white voters without a college degree are more prevalent among eligible voters: 47% of eligible voters are whites with no college degree, while 22% are whites with a college degree. (The remainder are non-white.) And among those who reported voting in 2016, the comparable percentages were 42% and 31%, according to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.[13] Trump's success

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[12] Tyson, Alec, and Shiva Maniam. 2016. "Behind Trump's victory: Divisions by race, gender, and education." *Pew Research Center*, November 9. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/. Schaffner, Brian F., Matthew MacWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta. "Understanding White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism." *Political Science Quarterly*, forthcoming.

[13] This is based on analysis of the Current Population Survey's (CPS) November Voter Supplement, reweighted to account for non-response and the over-reporting of turnout. (See

among the whites without a college degree is a key reason that voters who voted for Obama in 2012 but Trump in 2016 were more numerous than voters who went in the opposite direction, from Romney to Clinton (Table 8.1). Among white Obama voters with at least some college education, almost 90 percent voted for Clinton. Among those with a high school degree or less, only 74 percent voted for Clinton and 22 percent voted for Trump.

**Figure 8.3. Shifts in Presidential Vote Margin in Demographic Groups, 2008-2016**
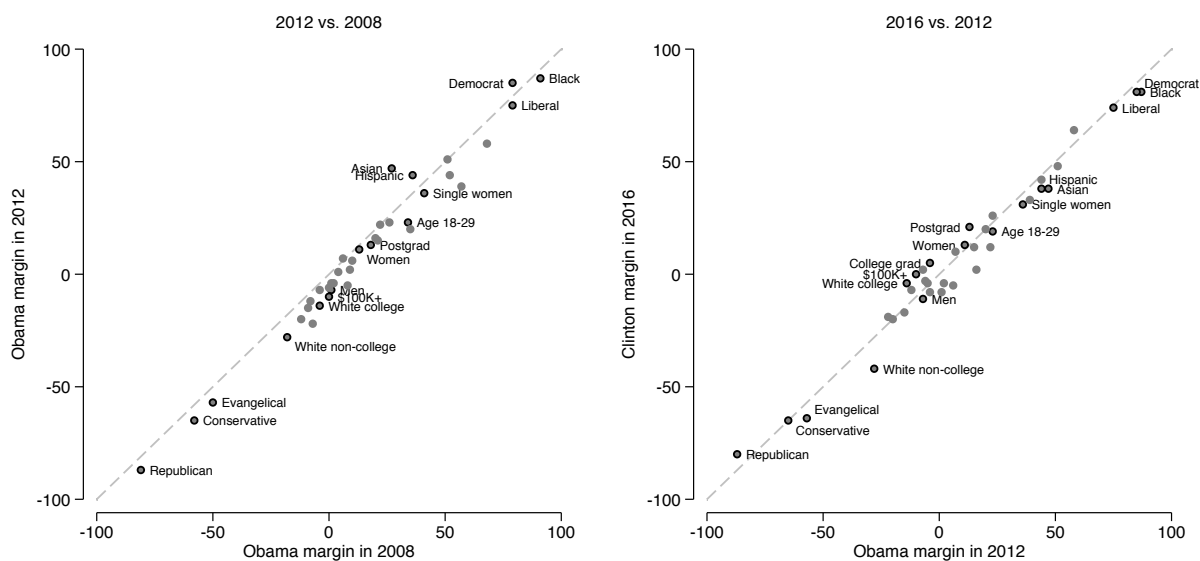
Source: 2012 and 2016 national exit polls.

The consequences for the Electoral College were dramatic. Although Clinton gained votes relative to Obama in large states with a smaller fraction of voters who were white and had no college degree—thereby expanding her margin of victory in the popular vote—she lost electoral votes in key battleground states with a larger fraction of these voters, especially Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Figure 8.4). The presence of many white non-college voters also helps explain why she did surprisingly poorly in a state like Minnesota, which Obama won by almost 8 points and Clinton by only 1.5. Excluding the two states where the shifts were due more to the absence of Obama and Romney—they had personal ties to Hawaii and Utah, respectively—a 10-point shift in the percent of a state's population that is white with no college degree was associated with a 2.3-point decrease in Clinton's vote margin, relative to Obama's in 2012. In these 48 states, the percent of a state's population that is a white with no college degree explains 58 percent of the variation in 2012-2016 shifts.[14]

Michael McDonald's discussion and statistical code: http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/cps-methodology). Other analysis, which relied instead on statistical modeling of turnout and presidential vote choice, suggested that 45% of the electorate were non-college whites and 29% was whites with a college degree. See Griffin, Rob, Ruy Teixeira, and John Halpin. 2017. "Voter Trends in 2016." Washington DC: Center for American Progress. Regardless, both these estimates and those based on the CPS suggest that the exit poll, which estimated that 34% of voters were whites with no college degree and 37% were whites with a college degree, was wrong. Some research has questioned exit poll estimates of the composition of the electorate. See McDonald, Michael P. 2007. "The True Electorate: A Cross-Validation of Voter Registration Files and Election Survey Demographics." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71(4): 588-602.

[14] The state estimates of the white non-college population are from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey. See:

Figure 8.4. The Relationship between 2012-2016 Vote Shifts and the Size of the White Non-College Population

Difference between Clinton's and Obama's vote margin
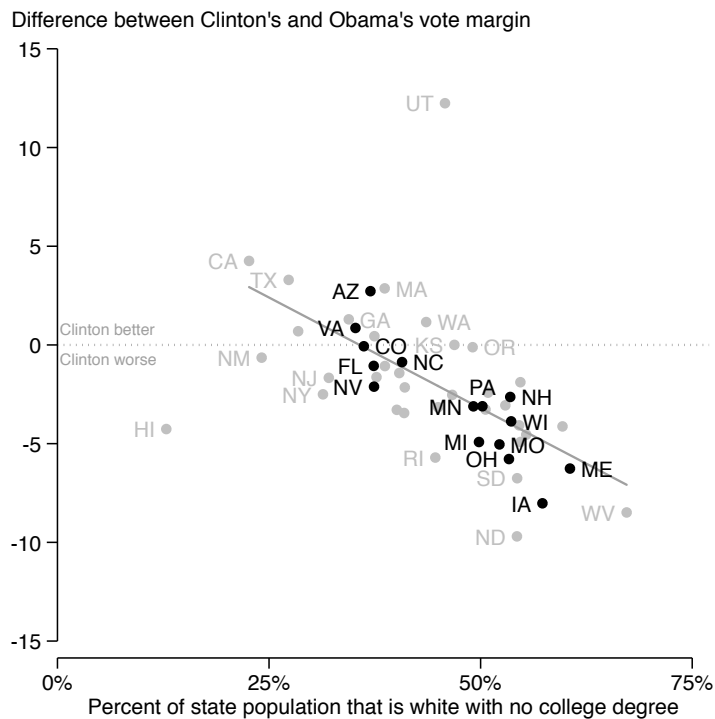
Sources: U.S. Election Atlas; American Community Survey. Battleground and other key states are highlighted in black. The diagonal line is a least squares regression line estimated for all states except Hawaii and Utah.

This polarization of whites along educational lines had been underway since Obama's election, with college-educated whites moving toward the Democratic Party and whites without a college degree moving to the Republican Party. The 2016 election continued—and perhaps exacerbated—this trend.

The Activation of Racial Attitudes among White Voters

Why did whites become more polarized based on education, and why did this help Donald Trump win the White House? There were four key parts of the story, all of which centered on identities and attitudes that had to do with race, ethnicity, and religion.

1. There were a substantial number of white Obama voters whose attitudes on racial issues were out-of-step with the general trajectory of the Democratic Party.

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https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_S1501. The regression coefficient described is -0.23 with a standard error of 0.03; the r-squared is 0.58. With Hawaii and Utah included, the coefficient is -0.17 (s.e.=0.04) and the r-squared is 0.28. The same pattern was visible within states at the county level. See Guo, Jeff. 2016. "Yes, working class whites really did make Trump win. No, it wasn't simply economic anxiety." *Washington Post*, November 11. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/11/yes-working-class-whites-really-did-make-trump-win-no-it-wasnt-simply-economic-anxiety/?utm_term=.eb4e50689912.

2. The campaign's focus on racially inflected issues—and Clinton's and Trump's sharply divergent positions—led voters to perceive Clinton and Trump as further apart on racial issues than any major-party presidential candidates in over 40 years.
3. In turn, voters' attitudes on these issues became more strongly related to how they voted in 2016 than in recent presidential elections. Other types of attitudes—including economic anxiety—did not show this pattern.
4. Racial attitudes shape the way voters understand economic outcomes. Rather than thinking of the electorate in terms of "economic anxiety," a better term may be "racialized economics."
5. Voters' attitudes on racial issues accounted for the "diploma divide" between less and better educated whites. Economic anxiety did not.

Racially conservative Obama voters
The growing alignment of racial attitudes and partisanship was not so complete that racially conservative Obama voters were an impossibility. Polling from 2011-2012 showed that substantial numbers of Obama voters were not sympathetic to the idea that blacks face systematic discrimination (Table 8.1). Almost half (49%) did not think that "blacks have gotten less than they deserve," 39% did not believe that slavery and discrimination hindered the economic advancement of blacks, and 28% essentially blamed the economic disadvantages of blacks on their own lack of effort ("if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites"). This reflects a common stereotype that blacks are lazy.

Table 8.1. Political Beliefs among White Obama Voters (December 2011)

Survey question	Percentage with stated view
Disagreed that "over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve"	49%
Agreed that blacks should "work their way up" without "any special favors"	46%
Favored death penalty	45%
Disagreed that "generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class"	39%
Believed abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in other cases	35%
Rated Muslims on the less favorable side of a 0-100 scale	35%
Favored making it harder to immigrate to the U.S.	34%
Believed illegal immigrants are mostly a drain on society	32%
Agreed that: "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites."	28%
Opposed path to citizenship for illegal immigrants	22%
Opposed increasing trade with other nations	19%
Opposed government providing universal health care	13%
Opposed gay marriage	12%

Believed there was too much government regulation on business	10%
Favored repealing the Affordable Care Act	9%
Identified exclusively as pro-life	8%
Doubted existence of global warming	8%
Believed abortion should be illegal in all cases	4%
Opposed increasing taxes on wealthy	3%

Source: VOTER Survey (N=2,717 white Obama voters). All opinions were measured in December 2011 and 2012 vote choice was measured in November 2012. "Don't know" was included as a valid response in all tabulations.

Many white Obama voters also expressed conservative positions on racially or ethnically inflected issues. Almost half (45%) favored the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Roughly a third wanted to make it slightly or much harder for foreigners to immigrate to the United States. Roughly a third believed that "illegal immigrants are mostly a drain on society" (as opposed to "making a contribution"). One-in-five (22%) opposed a path to citizenship. And regarding Muslims, a group frequently targeted by Trump, 35% rated them unfavorably (between 0-49 on a 0-100 scale). These voters were "cross-pressured"—with their partisanship and views on racial issues increasingly in tension—and prior scholarship has shown that these are exactly the voters that a campaign can push into the opposite party's camp.[15]

Indeed, racially inflected issues stand out for the sheer number of white Obama voters who seemed at odds with Obama's own positions and those of the Democratic Party. Excepting the 35% who had an ambivalent view of abortion—thinking it should be legal in some cases and illegal in others—there were fewer white Obama voters who opposed increasing trade or took conservative positions on health care, government regulation, gay marriage, and taxing the wealthy.

Many observers dismissed the role of race in 2016 by arguing that Obama voters could not have had unfavorable views of racial minorities. The liberal filmmaker, Michael Moore, said this about voters who had supported Obama and then Trump: "They're not racist … They twice voted for a man whose middle name is Hussein." But this is just as inaccurate as saying everyone who voted against Obama was racially prejudiced. In fact, Obama garnered support from whites with even more explicitly prejudiced views than are visible in Table 8.1. About one quarter of whites who opposed interracial dating—this is around 15-20% of whites—still voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. In fact, until Obama's presidency, as many white Democrats as white Republicans had racially prejudiced views. So many racially prejudiced Democrats wound up supporting Obama because of partisanship or some other factor.[16]

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[15] Hillygus, D. Sunshine, and Todd D. Shields. 2009. *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[16] Chasmer, Jessica. 2016. "Michael Moore says Trump voters not racist: 'They twice voted for a man' named Hussein." *Washington Times*, November 11. https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/nov/11/michael-moore-says-trump-voters-not-racist-they-tw/. Popkin, Samuel, and Douglas Rivers. 2008. "The Unmaking of President McCain." *Pollster,* November 4. http://www.pollster.com/blogs/Popkin%20Rivers%20Campaign%20Analysis%2011-04%20w%20graphs.pdf. Tesler, Michael. 2016. "Obama Won Lots of Votes from Racially Prejudiced Whites (and Some of Them Supported Trump)." *The Monkey Cage*, December 7.

Many of those voters then fled the Democratic Party during Obama's presidency (see Chapter 2). If the 2016 election was going to center on racially inflected issues, then there were plenty of white Obama voters who might defect to Trump. And even more problematic for Clinton: there were many fewer Republicans who held views akin to hers. For example, only 6 percent of white Romney voters thought that illegal immigrants contributed to American society; nearly 80 percent thought that these immigrants were a drain. Thus, in a racialized campaign, the Republican Party stood to pick up more white voters than Democrats could.

Changing voters' perceptions
The campaign's focus on racially inflected issues—and the contrasting positions of Trump and Clinton—clearly registered with voters: there was a record gap in where voters perceived Trump and Clinton on racial issues. On its face this may seem impossible, given that an African-American himself had just been the Democratic nominee in the two elections. But Obama actually talked about race less than recent Democratic presidents and when he did often emphasized black personal responsibility.[17] He was criticized by black leaders and intellectuals for refusing to push policies targeted at helping blacks. Obama's candidacy and presidency helped activate racial attitudes more because of who he was than what he said or did.

There was reason, then, to expect voters to shift when Clinton shifted to Obama's left in both her rhetoric and policies on race-related issues—for example, by speaking early and often about the pernicious consequences of racism, meeting with Black Lives Matter activists, standing up for undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, and generally contrasting her "Stronger Together" vision with Donald Trump's more restrictive conception of American identity. This reflected the Clinton campaign's focus on mobilizing the "Obama coalition" while largely ignoring white working-class voters and Republican-leaning states. Meanwhile, it was clear to voters whose side Trump was on, given his opposition to immigration and appeals to racial resentment and white grievances.[18]

One long-standing survey has asked Americans to estimate where the presidential candidates stand on a seven-point scale ranging from "the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks" to "the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves." Unsurprisingly, Americans have rated the Democratic presidential candidate as the more supportive of federal aid to blacks in every single survey since the question's inception in 1972 (Figure 8.5). In 2008 and 2012, despite Barack Obama's relatively race-neutral rhetoric, whites saw a much greater disparity between Obama and both John McCain and Romney.

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/12/07/obama-won-lots-of-votes-from-racially-prejudiced-whites-and-some-of-them-supported-trump/?utm_term=.c4f716582568. Tesler, *Post-Racial or Most Racial?*, ibid.

[17] Coe, Kevin, and Michael Reitzes. 2010. "Obama on the Stump: Features and Determinants of a Rhetorical Approach." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40(3): 391-413; Coe, Kevin, and Anthony Schmidt. 2012. "America in Black and White: Locating Race in the Modern Presidency, 1933–2011." *Journal of Communication* 62.4: 609-627; Gillion, Daniel Q. 2016. *Governing with Words: The Political Dialogue on Race, Public Policy, and Inequality in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Harris, Fredrick. 2012. *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and Rise and Decline of Black Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press; McIlwain, Charlton, and Stephen M. Caliendo. 2011. *Race Appeal: How Candidates Invoke Race in US Political Campaigns*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[18] Jonathan Martin and Maggie Haberman. 2015. "Hillary Clinton Traces Friendly Path, Troubling Party." *New York Times*, June 6. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/us/politics/hillary-clinton-traces-friendly-path-troubling-party.html?nlid=3131863.

Then in 2016, this disparity increased to record levels: voters rated Clinton about 2.5 points more supportive of aid to blacks than they did Trump. Voters saw Clinton as more liberal on this issue than Obama in 2012 (a 0.13 shift on the scale). Voters saw Trump as significantly more conservative than Romney (a 0.37 shift). A key reason for these shifts was that more Americans were coming to have opinions about where the candidates stood on this issue. Between 2012 and 2016, the percent who could not place the Democratic candidate dropped from 13% to 7%, while the percentage who could not place the Republican dropped from 22% in 2012 to 7% in 2016. Because respondents who could not place the parties arguably saw little difference between them, this learning process helped create more racially polarized perceptions of the candidates.[19]

Figure 8.5. Difference in Whites' Perceptions of the Presidential Candidates' Positions
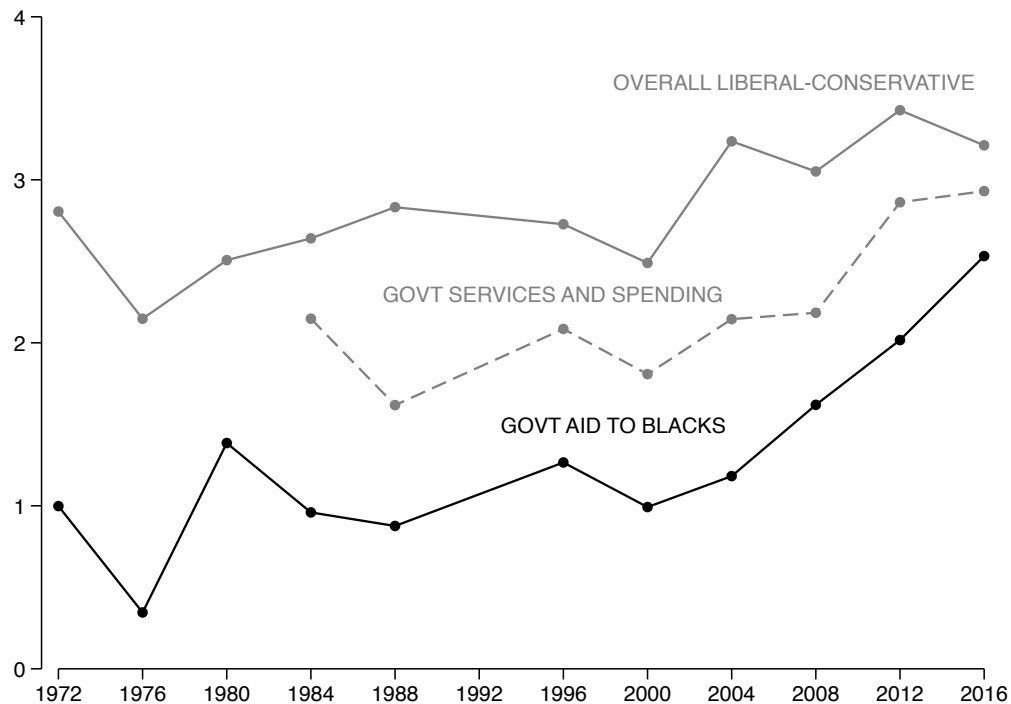
Source: American National Election Studies.

The same was true for immigration, according to research by the political scientist Daniel Hopkins. Based on a survey that interviewed the same respondents in 2012 and 2016, he found that respondents saw the Republican Party as much more conservative on illegal immigration in 2016 than was Romney in 2012—specifically, closer to the policy option of returning illegal immigrants to their native countries. Similarly, they saw the Democratic Party as slightly more liberal than they did Obama in 2012—in this case, closer to the option of a path to citizenship. Although this comparison is complicated by the shift from asking about candidates in 2012 to

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[19] For respondents who did not place a candidate—either because they did not know or because (in surveys prior to 1996) they could not place themselves on this scale and were therefore not asked about the candidates—we place them at the midpoint of the scale. This has the effect of narrowing the average gap in perceptions of the candidates, as respondents who cannot place the candidates arguably do not see a clear difference between them. Nevertheless, even if we exclude these respondents altogether, there is still a similar trend in perceptions on the aid to black scale between 2008 and 2016, as well as an increase in the perceived distance between 2012 and 2016.

parties in 2016, the results suggest the same pattern: polarizing perceptions of key electoral actors on a racially inflected issue.[20]

Notably, the shifts between 2012 and 2016 on the questions of aid to blacks and immigration were not mirrored in other issues. There was only a small increase in where Americans perceived Trump and Clinton on the question of how much spending and services that government should provide. There was a *decrease* in the perceived distance between Trump and Clinton on an overall spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. This was because Americans rated Trump as more liberal than Romney, which could have reflected Trump's somewhat muddled ideological message (see Chapter 5).

In short, a campaign that emphasized racial issues produced a distinctive polarization in perceptions of the candidates' positions on racial issues. Because people saw such large differences between Clinton and Trump, this set the stage for these issues to matter more at the ballot box.

Racial attitudes and vote choice
In multiple surveys, attitudes about race and ethnicity were more strongly related to vote choice in 2016 than they were in 2008 and 2012—even after accounting for people's partisanship and their overall political ideology on the left-right scale, which themselves have become increasingly intertwined with racial attitudes. One type of attitude that manifested this pattern of "activation" was measured with the battery of questions that captured whether whites attributed racial inequality to structural factors like discrimination or to the lack of effort by African-Americans (top panels of Figure 8.6). Two different surveys, the American National Election Study and the VOTER Survey, showed the same pattern. And in the VOTER Survey, views of African-Americans were measured almost five years prior to the 2016 election, thereby guarding against the possibility that people changed their racial attitudes to "match" those that they perceived in Trump or Clinton. Even though racial attitudes had already become more strongly related to how people voted in presidential elections because of Barack Obama's candidacy, that relationship strengthened further in 2016, even without an African-American candidate on the ballot. (The year-to-year differences in the slopes of the lines in Figure 8.6 are statistically meaningful. See the appendix to this chapter for details.)

Voters' attitudes about immigration showed the same pattern of activation in both surveys. This was true regardless of whether immigration attitudes were measured with a single measure of people's feelings toward illegal immigrants (middle left panel of Figure 8.6) or with a scale combining whether they believed illegal immigrant contributed to the U.S., supported a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, and believed immigration to the U.S. should be easier (middle right panel). For example, whites who rated undocumented immigrants most unfavorably were about 25 points more likely to support John McCain than Barack Obama in 2008, compared to those who rated illegal immigrants most favorably. That difference was 65 points in 2016.

Voters' feelings about Muslims and their perception of discrimination against whites—a measure of a more politicized white identity—also became more strongly related to voter choices in 2016. The logic is the same: after campaign that frequently centered on Muslims and how much of a threat they allegedly posed to Americans' security, it became easier for Americans to "use" their own feelings toward Muslims (here, measured five years prior) to determine whether to support Trump or Clinton. Those with less favorable feelings were more likely to support Trump, and those with more favorable feelings to support Clinton. The strength of this relationship was stronger than in 2012. Similarly, after a campaign in which "white identity" was headline news

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[20] Hopkins, Dan. 2017. "Trump's Election Doesn't Mean Americans Are More Opposed to Immigration." *FiveThirtyEight*, January 26. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/while-trump-is-closing-the-borders-americans-are-warming-to-immigration/
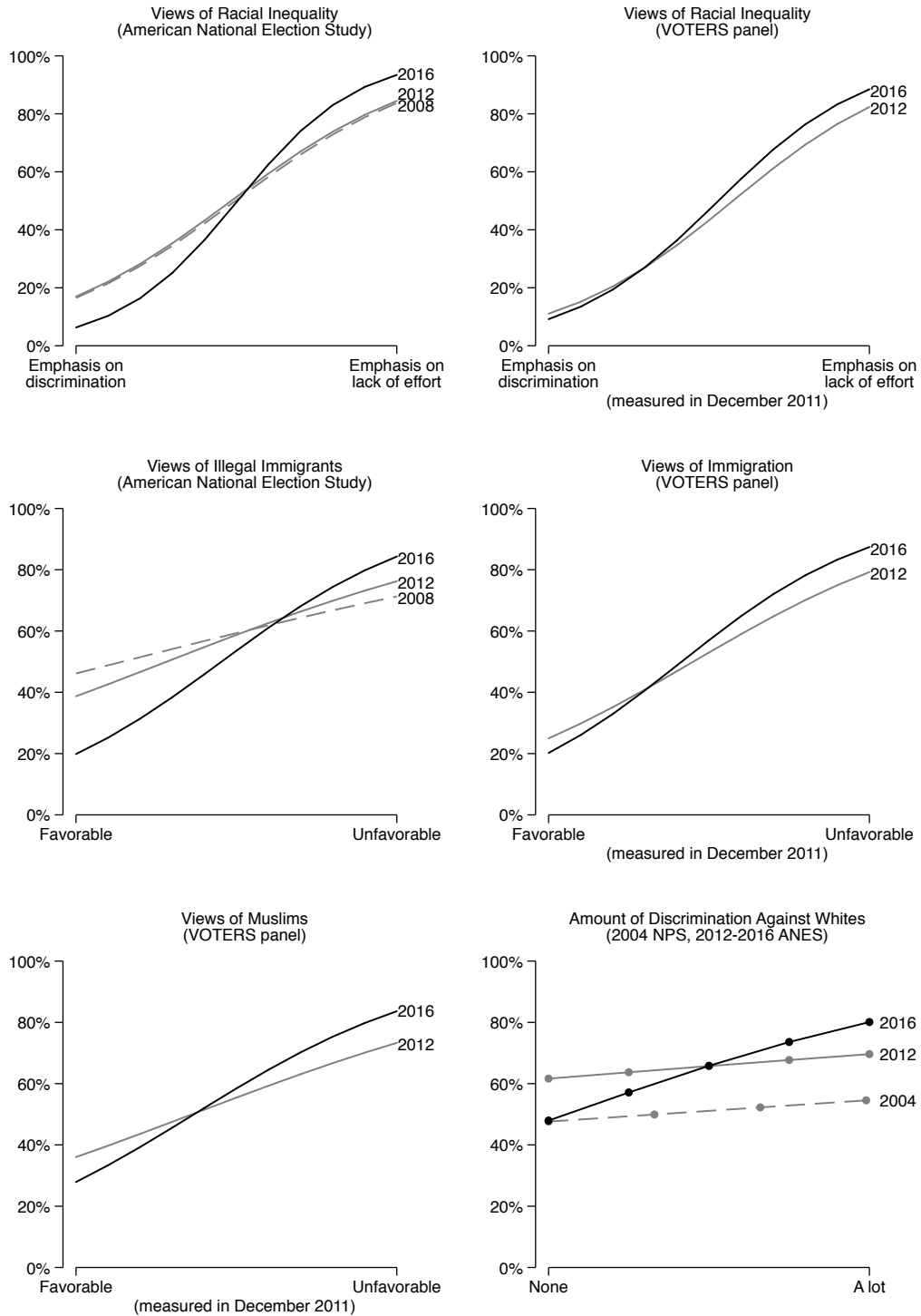
time and time again, the connection between whites' perceptions of how much discrimination they faced and how they voted became tighter, compared both to 2004 and 2012.

Other surveys showed the same pattern. Views of African-Americans were more strongly linked to vote choice in 2016 than 2012 in surveys conducted by YouGov and the Public Religion Research Institute. The same was true among whites who were interviewed in both 2012 and 2016 as part of the RAND Corporation's Presidential Election Panel Survey. In this survey, racial attitudes were also more strongly related to whites' preferences for Trump over Clinton than they were in hypothetical matchups between Clinton and Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio. This suggests that Trump's rhetoric made views about race more potent than they would have been had Clinton faced a different Republican opponent. Finally, Daniel Hopkins, drawing on a survey that interviewed the same people in both 2008 and 2016, found that stereotypes of blacks that were measured in 2008 were more strongly related to vote choice in 2016 than in 2008, when Obama first ran for president.[21]

There is no easy way to determine whether attitudes toward blacks, immigrants, or Muslims, or a more politicized white identity was the "most important" factor. These factors are themselves strongly correlated with each other, making it difficult to disentangle their separate impacts. But the overall pattern is clear: whites' attitudes about race, ethnicity, and religion came to play a larger role in 2016 than other recent elections.

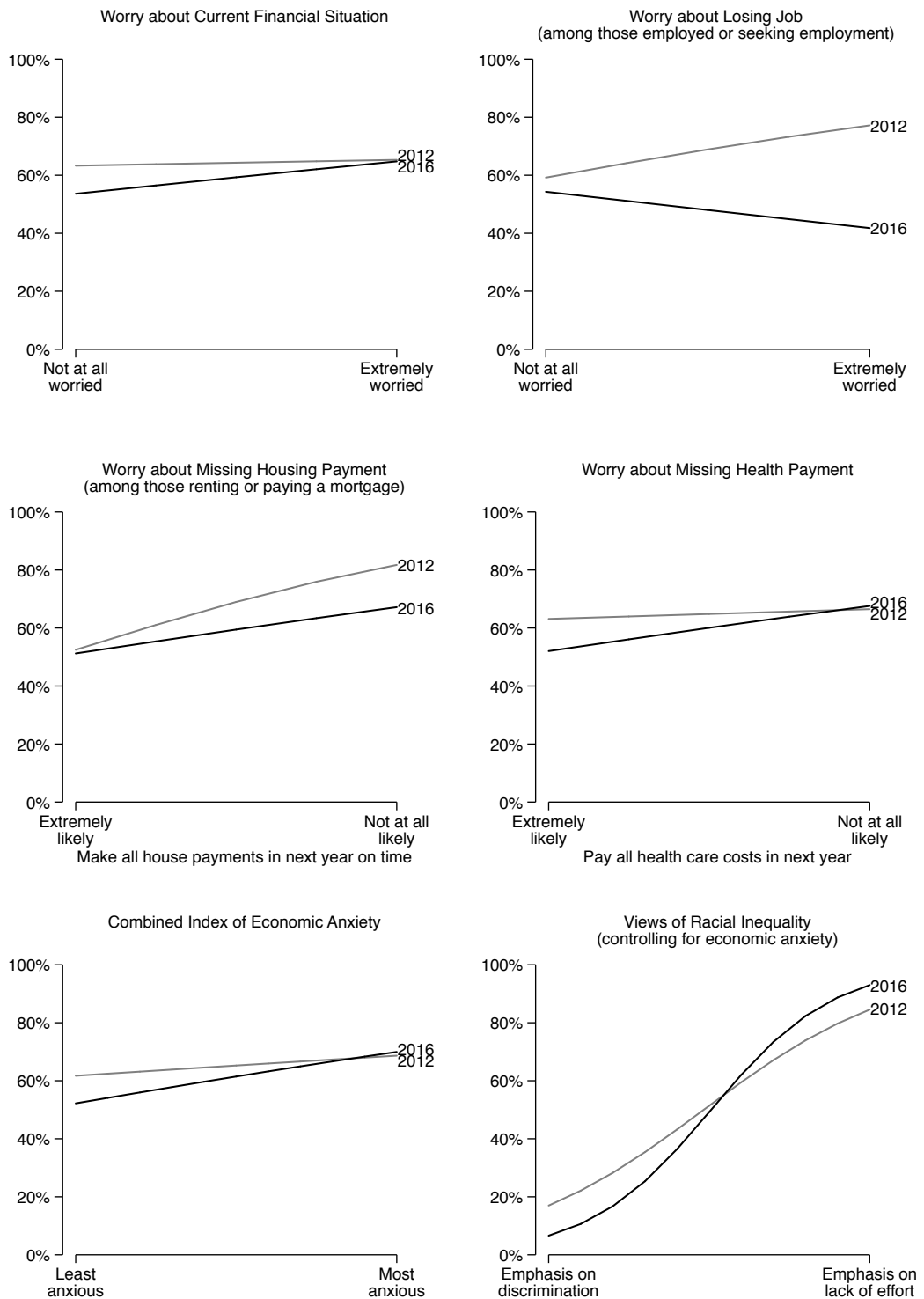[21] Tesler, Michael. 2016. "Views About Race Mattered More in Electing Trump Than in Electing Obama." *The Monkey Cage*, November 22. Tesler, Michael. 2016. "In a Clinton-Trump Matchup Racial Prejudice Makes a Striking Difference." *The Monkey Cage*, May 25. Schaffner et al., ibid. Hopkins, Daniel J. 2017. "Prejudice, Priming, and Presidential Voting: Panel Evidence from the 2016 U.S. Election." Working Paper.

Figure 8.6. Whites' Racial Attitudes and Likelihood of Voting for the Republican Presidential Candidate

Views of Racial Inequality
(American National Election Study)

Views of Racial Inequality
(VOTERS panel)

Views of Illegal Immigrants
(American National Election Study)

Views of Immigration
(VOTERS panel)

Views of Muslims
(VOTERS panel)

Amount of Discrimination Against Whites
(2004 NPS, 2012-2016 ANES)

Findings based on statistical models that also account for party identification and self-reported ideology. Sources: the 2008-2016 American National Election Survey; the December 2016 VOTER Survey (with racial attitudes measured in December 2011), and the 2004 National Politics Survey.

Figure 8.7. Whites' Economic Anxiety and Likelihood of Voting for the Republican Presidential Candidate

Worry about Current Financial Situation

Worry about Losing Job
(among those employed or seeking employment)

Worry about Missing Housing Payment
(among those renting or paying a mortgage)

Make all house payments in next year on time

Worry about Missing Health Payment

Pay all health care costs in next year

Combined Index of Economic Anxiety

Views of Racial Inequality
(controlling for economic anxiety)

Findings based on statistical models that also account for party identification, self-reported ideology, and attitudes toward African-Americans. Source: 2012-2016 American National Election Study.
Economic anxiety and vote choice

The stronger relationships involving racial attitudes in 2016 would be less if other kinds of attitudes show the same pattern. In particular, commentators frequently argued that the key to understanding white voters' motivations—especially why some had voted for Obama but then Trump—was their economic anxieties. According to this account, economically anxious whites flocked to Trump because he promised to help "the forgotten men and women" who were struggling to make ends meet.

After the election, many analysts and political leaders, including prominent Democrats like Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, argued that Trump's appeal originated in the economic plight of white working-class Americans and the social conditions that were tied to their economic plight. One analysis of election returns found that counties where Trump out-performed George W. Bush in the 2000 presidential election had lost more jobs to competition from Chinese imports. Another analysis found that counties where Trump had out-performed Mitt Romney had experienced slower gains in life expectancy. Another analysis found that these same counties had more "deaths of despair" from drug overdoses, alcohol abuse and suicides. But at the same time, other analyses suggested that Trump did better in counties where there was a larger *drop* in unemployment and *more* social mobility. And a large study of county-level support for Trump by the Gallup organization concluded, "Trump's popularity cannot be neatly linked to economic hardship." The relationship between economic outcomes in counties and voting in 2016 was murky.[22]

But there is a bigger problem with these analyses: counties do not vote. People do. A rigorous test of the "economic anxiety" theory would need to show that white voters' economic anxieties became "activated" in 2016 compared to earlier elections—just as racial attitudes did. For example, whether white voters were concerned about their finances, about losing their job, about not making their rent or mortgage payment, or not being able to pay for health care should have more strongly influenced their choice between Trump and Clinton, compared to the choice between, say, Obama and Romney. If so, then economic anxiety would clearly be a key ingredient alongside attitudes related to race and ethnicity.

This is not what the evidence suggests, however. In both 2012 and 2016, respondents to the American National Election Study were asked this exact series of questions about their financial worries, losing their job, and not making a housing or healthcare payment. In these two surveys, about 6-9% of respondents thought losing their job or not being able to make a housing payment was "very likely" or "extremely likely," 23-26% thought it was likely they would not be able to pay their health care costs, and about 23% were very or extremely worried about their financial situation (about 30-31% was "moderately" worried).[23]

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[22] Autor, David, et al. 2017. "A Note on the Effect of Rising Trade Exposure on the 2016 Presidential Election." https://economics.mit.edu/files/12418. Bor, Jacob. 2017. "Diverging Life Expectancies and Voting Patterns in the 2016 US Presidential Election." *American Journal of Public Health* 107 (10): 1560-1562. Monnat, Shannon. 2016. "Deaths of Despair and Support for Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election." http://aese.psu.edu/directory/smm67/Election16.pdf. Guo, ibid. Campante, Filipe, and David Yanagizawa-Drott. 2016. "Did declining social mobility cause Trump's rise? In a word, no." *Vox*, December 9. https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2016/12/9/13895184/social-mobility-economic-anxiety-trump-chetty. Rothwell, Jonathan, and Pablo Diego-Rosell. 2017. "Explaining Nationalist Political Views: The Case of Donald Trump." https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2822059.

[23] For a similar analysis that produces similar findings, see McElwee, Sean, and Jason McDaniel. 2017. "Economic Anxiety Didn't Make People Vote Trump, Racism Did." *The Nation*, May 8.

But after accounting for partisanship, self-reported ideology, and attitudes toward African-Americans, there were generally weak relationships between these measures of economic anxiety and how people voted in 2012 or 2016 (Figure 8.7). Moreover, these relationships were not consistently any stronger in 2016 than 2012. Even an omnibus measure of economic anxiety that included responses to all four questions was not much more strongly related to how people voted in 2016 vs. 2012 (bottom left panel of Figure 8.7). Any change in this relationship from 2012 to 2016 was not statistically significant. Meanwhile, even after accounting for economic anxiety, the relationship between racial attitudes and vote choice was large and clearly larger in 2016 than 2012 (bottom right panel). Other analyses produced similar findings. For example, increases and decreases in household income had little relationship to shifts in people's votes between 2012 and 2016, but racial attitudes did.[24]

The same was true of other factors connected to economics. For example, if jobs lost to trade were a factor in county election returns, you might expect that people's feelings about whether to increase trade would be consequential to how they voted. But in the VOTER Survey, there was no relationship between views of trade, measured in December 2011, and how people voted in either 2012 and 2016, once other factors were accounted for. Indeed, the evidence in 2016 suggested trade attitudes were a consequence and not a cause: Republicans became more opposed to free trade agreements during the campaign, suggesting that they changed their views of trade to match Trump's, not that they drew on their views on trade to choose a presidential candidate.[25]

Similarly, if Trump's success was a reaction to "deaths of despair," then Trump voters should have been more likely to know someone who abused alcohol or was addicted to illegal drugs or especially prescription painkillers, like opioids, which had become such a scourge. But in the VOTER Survey, this simply was not true. Almost equal numbers of Clinton and Trump voters—55% and 56%, respectively—said they knew someone who had been addicted to alcohol. Similarly, 40% of Clinton voters and 39% of Trump voters said they knew someone who had been addicted to illegal drugs, and 29% of Clinton voters and 31% of Trump voters said they knew someone who had been addicted to painkillers. Among only whites, it was Clinton voters, not Trump voters, who were more likely to report knowing people in any of these circumstances.

The evidence for economic anxiety's influence in 2016 is thus much weaker than the evidence for the influence of attitudes related to race and ethnicity. Indeed, the influence of racial attitudes appears distinctive relative many other attitudes as well. For example, support for government regulation of business, government involvement in health care, abortion, and same-sex marriage were not more strongly related to voters' choices in 2016 compared to 2012.[26] Of course, this does not mean that attitudes having to do with race, ethnicity, and religion were the only things

https://www.thenation.com/article/economic-anxiety-didnt-make-people-vote-trump-racism-did/. The questions about health care payments and general financial situation were asked of all respondents. The question about housing payments was asked of those who pay a mortgage or rent or some money for their housing. (Note: In the 2012 ANES, the question was asked only of respondents interviewed face-to-face, not on-line.) The question about losing one's job in the future was asked of respondents who were employed, temporarily laid off, or, if they were students, homemakers, retired, or disabled, but were also doing some work for money.

[24] Schaffner et al., ibid.

[25] Sides, John. 2017. "Race, Religion, and Immigration in 2016." Democracy Fund Voter Study Group. https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publications/2016-elections/race-religion-immigration-2016. On growing Republican opposition to free trade agreements, see these Pew Research Center findings: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/25/support-for-free-trade-agreements-rebounds-modestly-but-wide-partisan-differences-remain/.

[26] Sides, "Race, Religion, and Immigration in 2016."

related to people's choice in 2016. But they were what was *distinctively* related to people's choices, compared to recent elections. They were, unsurprisingly, the factor most strongly activated by a racialized campaign.

Racialized economics
To downplay the role of economic anxiety is not to deny its existence. Many people face clear economic challenges, and their concerns and anxieties are real. But when economic concerns are politically potent, the prism of race is often present. Racial anxieties may not necessarily be about rank prejudice but about simple resentment: the belief that other racial groups are getting something they do not deserve—but that you do. This is "racialized economics." And throughout American history, the targets have often been racial and ethnic minorities, such as African Americans and Mexican immigrants.[27]

Racialized economics was visible even before the election. Whites with racial resentments were most likely to think that the economy was in poor shape under Obama's stewardship (Chapter 2). And in the Republican primary, the importance of economic insecurity was most apparent when it was refracted through group identities: white voters' preference for Donald Trump as the Republican nominee was weakly related to their own job security, but strongly related to concerns that minorities were taking jobs away from whites.

Donald Trump repeatedly made arguments that came down to questions of deservingness. He regularly and misleadingly said that "illegal immigrants are treated better in American than many of our vets" and accused Clinton and Obama of caring more about illegal immigrants than veterans. Trump also accused immigrants of draining public resources, saying (again falsely) that "illegal immigrant households receive far more in welfare benefits." He asserted that immigrants are "taking our jobs. They're taking our manufacturing jobs. They're taking our money. They're killing us." The scapegoating of "undeserving minorities" was so prominent in the campaign that Barack Obama explicitly warned about it in his farewell address: "If every economic issue is framed as a struggle between [the] hard-working white middle class and undeserving minorities, then workers of all shades will be left fighting for scraps while the wealthy withdraw further into their private enclaves."[28]

These racialized perceptions of economic deservingness were strongly related to support for Donald Trump. In December 2016, we embedded a simple one-question experiment in a nationally representative survey. Half of the respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a racially loaded statement: "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve." The other half was give the same statement, except that instead of "blacks" it said

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[27] Katz, Michael B. 2013. *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press. Fox, Cybelle. 2012 *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
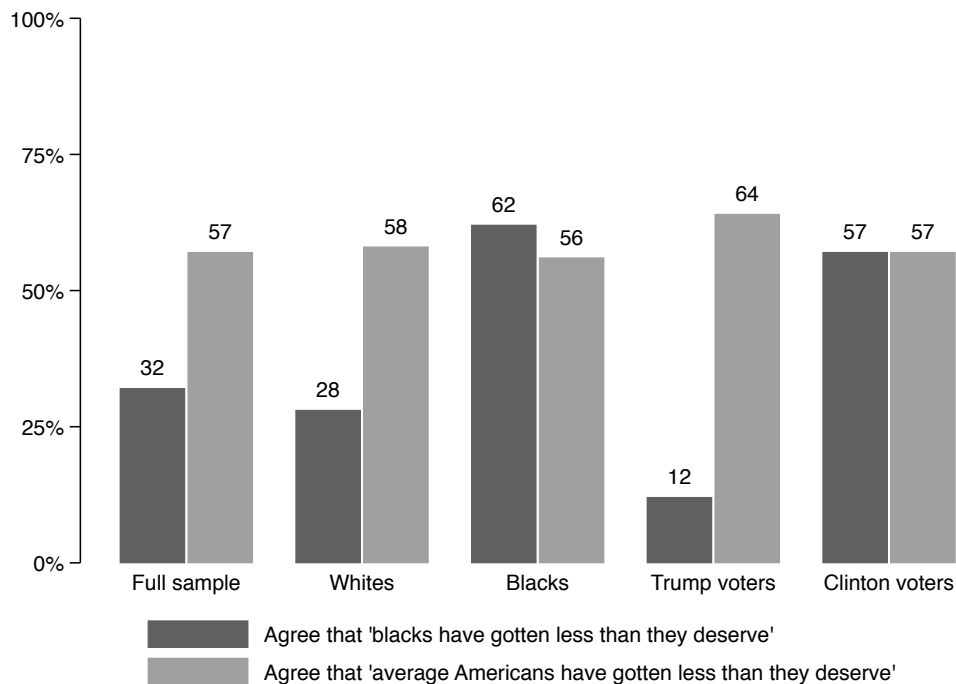[28] Michele Lee He Yee. 2016. "Trump's ridiculous claim that veterans are 'treated worse' than undocumented immigrants." *Washington Post,* September 13; FactCheck.org. 2016. "Trump Still Off on Immigration." September 1. https://www.factcheck.org/2016/09/trump-still-off-on-immigration/; Louis Jacobson and Mirian Vlaverde. 2016. "Donald Trump's False Claim Veterans Treated Worse than Immigrants." PolitiFact. http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/sep/09/donald-trump/trump-says-veterans-treated-worse-illegal-immigran/. Cohn, Sally. 2016. "Nothing Donald Trump Says on Immigration Holds Up." *Time*, June 29. http://time.com/4386240/donald-trump-immigration-arguments/ Hoban, Brennan. 2017. "Do Immigrants 'Steal' Jobs From American Workers?" Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/08/24/do-immigrants-steal-jobs-from-american-workers/. For a full transcript of Obama's Farewell Address, see: http://beta.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-obama-farewell-speech-transcript-20170110-story.html

"average Americans"—a group that research has shown is implicitly synonymous with being white.[29]

A clear majority of respondents (57%) said that average Americans had gotten less than they deserved, while only 32% said this about African Americans. Blacks and whites answered these two questions very differently: blacks who were equally likely to agree with this statement regardless of who it referenced, but whites were 30 points more likely to say that average Americans had gotten less than they deserved (58% vs. 28% who thought African Americans had gotten less than they deserved). The disparity was even bigger among Trump voters. Almost two-thirds of Trump voters said that average Americans were not getting what they deserve, but only 12% said this about blacks. Among Clinton voters, there was no such disparity. In other words, the dividing line between Clinton and Trump voters was not the widespread belief that average Americans are being left behind. Rather, the divide was about who deserved to be helped.

The same finding emerged in another experiment. The political scientists Matthew Luttig, Christopher Federico and Howard Lavine found that Trump supporters were significantly more opposed to a federal mortgage relief program when they were shown a picture of a black man standing next to a foreclosure sign than when shown the exact same picture of a white man. Clinton supporters were not affected by the picture.[30]

Figure 8.8. Perceptions of Racial Deservingness

Agree that 'blacks have gotten less than they deserve'

Agree that 'average Americans have gotten less than they deserve'

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[29] For more on this survey, see Tesler, Michael. 2016. "Trump Voters Think African Americans are Much Less Deserving than 'Average Americans.'" *Huffington Post/Pollster*, December 19. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-tesler/trump-voters-think-africa_b_13732500.html. Devos, Thierry, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. 2016. "American=White?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88(3): 447-66.

[30] Luttig, Matthew D., Christopher M. Federico, and Howard Lavine. 2017. "Supporters and Opponents of Donald Trump Respond Differently to Racial Cues: An Experimental Analysis. *Research & Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017737411.

These two experiments show exactly how economic concerns entered into white voters' choices in 2016: not through a self-interested concern about one's own financial situation, but through racialized perceptions of economic deservingness. These perceptions are linked to a strong sense of white grievance. In one post-election survey, more Trump voters said that whites faced a lot of discrimination than said this of African-Americans, Latinos, and Jews.[31] Thus, it is too simplistic to say that voters' choices in 2016 were about how much pure prejudice they felt toward minorities, although there were certainly voters who expressed explicitly prejudiced views. Instead, the more striking divide had to do with how people explained economic outcomes in the first place—and especially whether they believed that hard-working white Americans were losing ground to less deserving minorities.

Explaining the "diploma divide"
The final part of the story entails explaining the growing educational divide among whites that helped Trump win votes in important battleground states. Here again, racial attitudes—more than economic anxiety—was key.

The relationship between education and support for Donald Trump is plain: Trump did worse—and Clinton better—among whites with college degrees or some post-graduate education than among whites who do not have college degrees (Figure 8.9). However, this relationship disappears once views of African-Americans and illegal immigrants are taken into account in the statistical analysis. Because whites with more formal education have long had more positive views of racial and ethnic minorities,, and because these attitudes were themselves strongly related to how Americans voted in 2016, the education gap was largely a racial attitudes gap.

Figure 8.9. Relationship between Education and Whites' Support for Donald Trump

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[31] Edwards, Ariel-Levy. 2016. "Nearly Half Of Trump Voters Think Whites Face A Lot Of Discrimination." HuffPost/Pollster. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/discrimination-race-religion_us_5833761ee4b099512f845bba
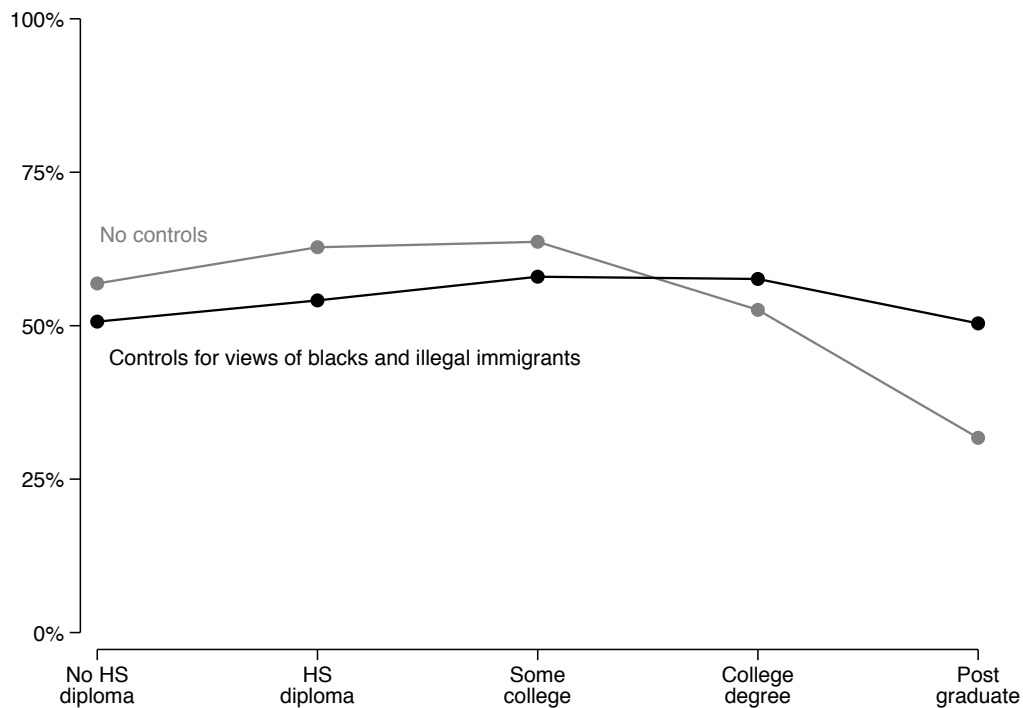
Graph depicts the average percent of whites who supported Trump at each education level, with and without accounting for attitudes toward African-Americans and illegal immigrants. Source: 2016 American National Election Studies.

A variety of analyses support this finding. For example, in the VOTER Survey, the correlation between education and people's preference for Trump over Clinton was again negative (*r*=-0.13), as people with more formal education were less likely to vote for Trump. But once attitudes toward African-Americans and immigration were taken into account, the correlation disappeared (*r*=0.01).

Notably, economic factors did not much affect the correlation between education and voters' preference for Clinton or Trump. Despite the conventional wisdom, voters' household incomes did not explain the educational divide. Trump voters who did not attend college were actually relatively affluent and, moreover, the educational divide among whites was present among voters at all income levels. Similarly, economic anxiety did not explain much of the educational divide. For example, the correlation between education and voters' choices visible in Figure 8.9 is virtually unchanged when economic anxiety—the composite index in Figure 8.7—is included as a factor.[32] In fact, one study of white voters without a college education or salaried jobs found that those who reported being in fair or poor financial shape were actually more likely to support Clinton, not Trump, compared to those who were in better financial shape.[33] Ultimately, no

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[32] The bivariate correlation between education and vote choice in the 2016 ANES is -0.19. Once the index of economic anxiety is accounted for, the (partial) correlation between education and vote choice is -0.17.

[33] Carnes, Nicholas and Noam Lupu. 2017. "It's Time to Bust the Myth: Most Trump Voters Were Not Working Class." Washington Post/Monkey Cage. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/05/its-time-to-bust-the-myth-most-trump-voters-were-not-working-class/?utm_term=.9a3fa2021084. See also Cox, Daniel, Rachel Lienesch, and Robert P. Jones. 2017. "Beyond Economics: Fears of Cultural Displacement Pushed the White Working Class to Trump." Public Religion Research Institute.

other factor in these surveys explained the education gap as well as racial attitudes—not partisanship, not ideology, not authoritarianism, not sexism, not income, not economic anxiety.

When combined, these threads tell a straightforward story. In 2016, the presidential campaign frequently focused on issues tied to racial, ethnic, and religious identities and attitudes—and the two candidates took very different positions on those issues. Voters came to perceive Trump and Clinton as far apart on those issues, farther even than Obama and Romney had been. These same issues were then "activated" as decision-making criteria and became even more strongly associated with white voters' preference for Clinton or Trump than they were with their preferences in 2012 or other recent elections. This pattern emerged even when attitudes about these issues were measured years before the election—thereby guarding against the possibility that people simply changed their attitudes to match what their preferred candidate was saying. Thus, the origins of Trump's appeal in the general election were no different than the origins of his appeal in the primary: in both cases, his candidacy helped to make racial issues central to voters' choices. And it was these issues that largely explained the most notable demographic divide in the electorate: between voters with more or less formal education.

The activation of racial issues helped Trump because there were so many Obama voters who views on these issues were arguably closer to Trump's than to Obama's or Clinton's—and these voters were especially prevalent in battleground states. This helped Trump prevail in the Electoral College, despite a convincing defeat in the popular vote.

The Drop in Black Turnout

Despite her losses among white voters, it was still possible for Hillary Clinton to win an Electoral College majority. To do so, she needed the "Obama coalition"—the voters she had always banked on—to turn out and vote. One key part of the Obama coalition was African-American voters. Of course, African-Americans have been a crucial Democratic constituency since the civil rights era. But with Obama on the ticket, blacks developed not only a stronger Democratic identity (see Chapter 2) but turned out to vote in record numbers. Clinton needed black turnout to remain as high.

It did not. According to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, the percentage of blacks who turned out declined from 66% of eligible voters in 2012 to 59% in 2016. According to analysis of voter file data by Bernard Fraga and colleagues, black turnout by 5 points nationally and by even more in key swing states. Black turnout decreased by over 12 percentage points in Michigan and Wisconsin.[34]

Many, including Clinton herself, attributed this decrease to strict voter identification laws. "In short," Clinton wrote in her campaign memoir, "voting laws matter. A lot." But although there are good reasons to suspect that voter identification laws could depress African-American turnout, the best-designed studies have thus far uncovered only modest, if any, effects.[35] To be

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https://www.prri.org/research/white-working-class-attitudes-economy-trade-immigration-election-donald-trump/; and Schaffner, et al., ibid.

[34] See Fraga, Bernard. 2018. *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. Fraga, Bernard, Sean McElwee, Jesse Rhodes and Brian Schaffner. 2017. "Why did Trump win? More whites — and fewer blacks — actually voted." *The Monkey Cage*, May 8. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/08/why-did-trump-win-more-whites-and-fewer-blacks-than-normal-actually-voted/?utm_term=.8f1662ce7d7b

[35] Clinton, ibid., p. 420. For a review of this literature, see Highton, Benjamin. 2017. "Voter Identification Laws and Turnout in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:149-167.

sure, black turnout dropped substantially in some states with strict identification laws, like Wisconsin and Mississippi. But in other states with similarly restrictive laws, such as Texas and Virginia, black turnout dropped much less—in fact, less than it did nationally. Black turnout also dropped substantially in places without strict identification laws, such as Michigan and Washington D.C.

A more important explanation for the drop in African-American turnout had to do with Obama and Clinton themselves. When Obama ran in 2008 and 2012, black turnout was over five percentage points higher than it had been in any election on record, with African-Americans voting at a higher rate than whites for the first time ever in 2012. Obama's staunch support from African Americans confirms the extensive research showing that African-Americans' in-group identity—that is, their identification with blacks as a group—strongly impacts how they think and act in politics. Indeed, Barack Obama's extraordinary black support was concentrated among African-Americans with a strong sense of solidarity with other blacks.[36]

It was arguably unrealistic to expect similarly high levels of black turnout for a white Democratic candidate in 2016. That certainly does not mean that Clinton was unpopular among African-Americans. They were crucial to her victory in the Democratic primary and, throughout 2016, an average of 73% rated her favorably in both Gallup and YouGov polls. But despite that support and her campaign's outreach to black voters, Hillary Clinton still faced hurdles within the African-American community.

For one, several prominent African Americans cited her previous rhetoric and positions on criminal justice as reasons for black voters to not vote for her—despite the openly racist campaign that they believed Donald Trump was running. Some black celebrities also refused to vote for a candidate whom they considered the lesser of two evils. Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback who made headlines for protesting racial injustice by refusing to stand up during the pre-game national anthem, did not vote and said that "it almost seems like [the candidates] are trying to debate who's less racist." The Trump campaign sought to capitalize on this controversy about Clinton's racial history. Trump repeatedly called Clinton "a bigot," reminded black voters that Clinton had once implied that black youths were "super-predators," claimed that Democratic politicians had let down the African-American community, and said that Clinton had treated Barack Obama with "terrible disrespect" in their 2008 presidential debates. He even falsely accused Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign of starting the lie that Obama was not born in the United States.[37]

See also Fraga, *The Turnout Gap*, ibid., who finds no consistent relationship between the establishment of voter identification and the turnout of racial and ethnic minorities.

[36] On black in-group identity, see Gurin, Patricia, Shirley Hatchett, and James Jackson. 1989. *Hope and Independence: Blacks' Response to Electoral and Party Politics*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation; Dawson, Michael. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Harris-Lacewell, Melissa. 2004. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; and Tate, Katherine. 1994 *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. On Obama support and black solidarity, see Kinder and Dale Riddle, ibid., and Tesler, *Post-Racial or Most Racial?*

[37] Prominent African-Americans who spoke against Clinton included Cornel West, Marc Lamont Hill, and Eddie Glaude Jr. The Kaepernick quote is from Alcindor, Yamiche. 2016. "Colin Kaepernick Says Presidential Candidates Were Trying to 'Debate Who's Less Racist.'" *New York Times*, September 28. Bump, Phillip. 2016. "Donald Trump's Risky Plan to Use the Internet to Suppress Hillary Clinton's Turnout." *Washington Post*, October 27. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/10/27/donald-trumps-risky-plan-to-use-the-internet-to-suppress-hillary-clintons-turnout/?utm_term=.cb78a82cab05

Unsurprisingly, then, Hillary Clinton was less popular with black voters than Barack Obama was in 2016 (Figure 8.10). Although both Clinton and Obama were rated favorably by most African Americans, many fewer rated Clinton "very favorably"—a sentiment that may capture the enthusiasm that motivates voters to turn out. In the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS), which included interviews with over 3,000 African-Americans, only 34% rated Clinton very favorably, while 76% rated Obama very favorably. About one-in-five blacks actually rated Clinton unfavorably. Similarly, African-Americans were much less likely to believe that Clinton "cares about the needs and problems of black people." In 2009, 78% of blacks said that Obama cared a lot about their needs. In four polls conducted between June and September 2016, only 42% of blacks said Clinton cared a lot about their needs; the majority said that she cared "some" (31%) or "not at all" (20%).

Clinton's challenges were particularly acute among blacks who expressed racial solidarity or doubted her commitment to helping black people. In the CMPS, most blacks (62%) said that what happened to blacks as a group affected them "a lot" or "some." This sense of "linked fate" has long been a potent force in African Americans' political opinions and behavior.[38] Among that group, 79% had a very favorable view of Obama, compared to 72% of blacks with who said that what happened to blacks affected them little or not at all. In other words, racial solidarity was associated with more favorable views of Obama. But for Clinton, that was not true: among blacks who expressed racial solidarity, 33% had a very favorable view of her. Among black who expressed less racial solidity, 36% had a very favorable view of her. Racial solidarity did little to help improve blacks' views of Clinton.

Figure 8.10. African-American Views of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton

Favorability toward Obama and Clinton

Belief that Obama and Clinton Care About Blacks

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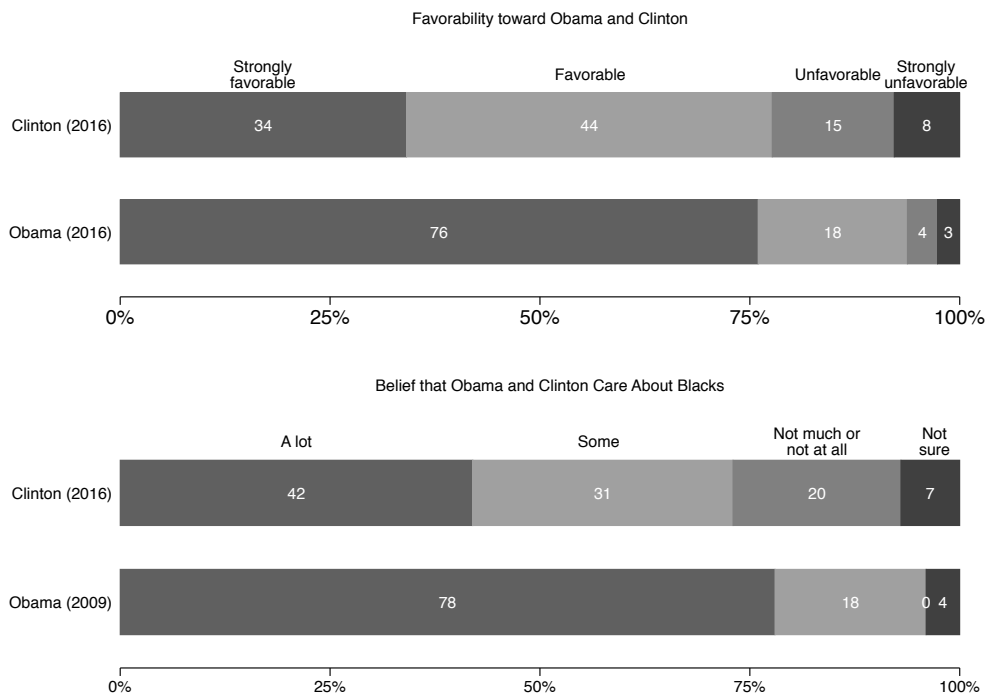
[38] Dawson, ibid. McClain, Paula D., Jessica D. Johnson Carew, Eugene Walton Jr, and Candis S. Watts. 2009. "Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness: Measures of Racial Identity in American Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 471-485.

Source for the top graph: African American respondents in the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Election Survey. Sources for the bottom graph: African-American respondents in an April 2009 CBS/New York Times poll and in 4 combined June-September 2016 YouGov/Economist polls.

Unsurprisingly, Clinton was also far less popular among blacks who believed that she did not care about their interests. About 85% of African Americans who thought that Hillary Clinton cared "a lot" about black people rated both her and Obama very favorably. That percentage was only 20% among African Americans who thought Hillary Clinton did not care a lot about blacks, while 50% of this group rated Obama very favorably.

In short, Hillary Clinton faced major challenges in sustaining the record black turnout that Barack Obama had inspired. She was not fully able to overcome those challenges, even though she faced an opponent whom 75% of African-Americans described as "racist" in 2016 YouGov/*Economist* polls. Blacks were less confident that Clinton cared about their interests and arguably therefore less enthusiastic about her candidacy. The resulting drop in black turnout was a crucial factor in key battleground states.

The Sleeping Giant?

Even with the drop in black turnout, many suspected that the Latino vote—often called the "sleeping giant" of American politics—would help deliver the election to Hillary Clinton. There were headlines in the final week of the campaign like "Trump, Waking a 'Sleeping Giant,' Helps Clinton Build an Unlikely Firewall" and "The Hispanic Sleeping Giant has Awakened." The argument was certainly plausible: Donald Trump's hostile rhetoric about immigrants and especially Mexican immigrants would mobilize Latinos to vote for Hillary Clinton. This argument was so prominent that it was spoofed on the post-election episode of *Saturday Night Live*. In the sketch, a group of unsuspecting white Clinton supporters early on Election Night thinks that shifting demographics will give the Democrats the White House forever, leading them to make a toast: "To Latinos!"

So when the numbers came in on Election Night, many observers were stunned. According to the exit poll, Clinton won only 69% of the major-party vote among Latinos, which was down three points from Obama's share in 2012. That estimate immediately came in for criticism, with scholars arguing that the exit poll was skewed toward Latinos who do not live in high-density Latino precincts and who have higher incomes and greater English proficiency—thereby underestimating Latino support for Clinton. However, these biases in exit poll estimates of the Latino vote have been documented for years. Unless these biases were somehow worse in 2016, it is unlikely that Clinton significantly outperformed Obama among Latinos.[39]

Moreover, other data do not consistently show an upsurge in Latino support for the Democrats. The Pew Hispanic Center's pre-election survey of Latinos showed that the group preferred Clinton over Trump by a 58% to 19% margin, giving her 75% of the major-party vote in that survey. This was slightly less than the 77% that Obama received in Pew's 2012 pre-election survey of Latinos. In the Latino Decisions 2016 Election Eve poll, 79% of Latinos supported Clinton, which is only slightly larger than the 75% that had supported Obama in their 2012 Election Eve poll. Finally, the results in heavily Latino counties suggest that Clinton's margin of victory was actually smaller than Obama's margin in 2012, on average. In short, while Clinton

[39] Segura, Gary and Matt Baretto. 2016. "Lies, Damn Lies and Exit Polls…" *Huffington Post*. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/latino-decisions/lies-damn-lies-and-exit-p_b_12903492.html. Barreto, Matt A., Fernando Guerra, Mara Marks, Stephen A. Nuño, and Nathan D. Woods. 2006. "Controversies in exit polling: Implementing a racially stratified homogenous precinct approach." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39(3): 477-483.

certainly did well among Latinos, it is not clear that she did any better than Obama, and she may have done worse.[40]

There was also little evidence of a large Latino surge in turnout. Census Bureau surveys, which rely on respondents' own reports of turnout, suggest a very modest increase in the percentage of eligible Latinos who voted: from 43.1% in 2012 to 44.9% in 2016. Voter file data avoid the issue of relying on people to accurately report whether they voted, but do not record ethnicity for most voters. An analysis that imputed ethnicity for voters—based on factors such as voters' surnames and the demography of where they lived—suggested a 4-point increase in Latino turnout in 2016 compared to 2012. Latino turnout may have increased, but not enough to ensure Clinton's victory.[41]

How could it be that Donald Trump did not provoke a stronger backlash from Latinos? After all, Trump was certainly unpopular among Latinos, especially after he launched his presidential campaign by talking about rapists and other criminals coming across the border from Mexico. Trump was also less popular among Latinos than his Republican opponents in the primary and, by the end of the general election campaign, than Mitt Romney was in 2012. According to the final Latino Decisions tracking polls in 2012 and 2016, Romney and Trump were rated unfavorably by 63% and 77% of Latinos, respectively.[42]

The challenge for Clinton was that she was also less popular among Latinos than was Barack Obama in 2012. According to the same Latino Decisions polls, 81% of Latinos rated Obama favorably in 2012, but 71% rated Clinton favorably in 2016. Latinos, like African-Americans, manifested less apparent enthusiasm for Clinton as well: 60% of Latinos rated Obama "very favorably" in 2012, but only 41% rated Clinton very favorably in 2016. In fact, Latinos' net favorability ratings of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates in 2012 and 2016— the percentage with a favorable view minus the percentage with an unfavorable view—showed that Clinton had no greater advantage over Trump than Obama had over Romney.[43] Trump's

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[40] Lopez, Mark Hugo, Ana Gonzalez, Barrera, Jens Manuel Krogstad and Gustavo López. 2016. "Democrats Maintain Edge as Party 'More Concerned' about Latinos but Views Similar to 2012." Pew Hispanic Center. http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/10/PH_2016.10.11_Politics_FINAL4.pdf. For the Latino Decisions 2012 and 2016 polls, see: http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/5913/5204/1319/Tracker_-_toplines_week_11.pdf and http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/1514/7839/2130/Wk8_Full_Tracker.pdf. On the country-level data, see Enten, Harry. 2016. "Trump Probably Did Better with Latino Voters Than Romney Did." *FiveThirtyEight*, November 18. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trump-probably-did-better-with-latino-voters-than-romney-did/.
[41] For estimates of the Census Bureau data that correct for over-reporting and non-response error, see Michael McDonald's estimates here: http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/demographics. For the analysis based on voter file data, see Fraga, *The Turnout Gap*, ibid.
[42] Tesler, Michael. 2016. "The Massive Gap Between Whites and Latinos in How They Perceive Donald Trump." *The Monkey Cage*, January 21. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/01/21/the-massive-gap-between-whites-and-latinos-in-how-they-perceive-donald-trump/?utm_term=.28c3317a816f Newport, Frank. 2016. "Trump Has a Major Image Problem with Hispanics." *Gallup*. March 11. http://news.gallup.com/poll/189887/trump-major-image-problem-hispanics.aspx. For the 2012 Latino Decisions data, see: http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/5913/5204/1319/Tracker_-_toplines_week_11.pdf
For 2016 polling, see: http://www.latinodecisions.com/files/1514/7839/2130/Wk8_Full_Tracker.pdf
[43] In Latino Decision's final 2012 pre-election tracking poll, Obama's and Romney's net favorability ratings were +64 and -38, respectively, yielding an absolute difference of 102. In

unpopularity among Latinos was less of a liability because Clinton herself was less popular than Obama had been.

Moreover, to improve on Obama's support among Latinos, Clinton had to reach out to a subset of Latinos that is harder for Democrats to mobilize: those with a weaker identity as Latinos. Although Latino group identity has grown stronger over time, Latinos still vary in how much they identify with other Latinos. It depends on factors such as their country of origin, generation, immigration experiences, socioeconomic status, and English proficiency. Moreover, Latinos with a weaker identity are less likely to respond to appeals to ethnic identity, which are often the go-to tactic for Democratic candidates who want to mobilize Latinos. Similarly, Latinos with a weaker identity are harder to mobilize against xenophobic rhetoric.[44]

Before 2016, Democrats had built considerable support among Latinos with a stronger group identity. In 2012, the American National Election Study showed that Obama won the support of nearly 90% of Latinos who said that being Hispanic is an "extremely important" part of their identity as well as about 90% of Latinos with a strong sense of linked fate with other Latinos. But about 19% of Latinos said that being Hispanic was "not at all" or "a little important" to their identity, and fewer than 50% of them voted for Obama. Support for Obama also dropped to 70% among those with a weaker sense of linked fate.

In 2016, the same patterns held. Latinos with weaker group identities did not clearly rally to Clinton despite Trump's rhetoric and Clinton's argument that Trump was fundamentally hostile to Latinos. In the American National Election Study, Latinos with a weak group identity were still much less likely to support Clinton—about 40 points less likely—than were Latinos with the strongest identity. This relationship was essentially the same as in 2012.[45] Similarly, in the 2016 CMPS, a sizable minority of Latino voters (23%) said that their decision to turn out was not motivated much or at all by "wanting to show solidarity and support for the Latino community," and only about half of them supported Clinton. By comparison, 53% said solidarity with the Latino community was a major factor, and 90% of them supported Clinton. A last piece of evidence comes from comparing Latinos who primarily speak Spanish—and tend to have a stronger Latino identity—to those who speak English.[46] In the Pew Hispanic Center survey,

Latino Decision's final 2012 pre-election tracking poll Clinton's and Trump's net favorability ratings were +45 and -59, respectively, yielding an absolute difference of 104 between the candidates.

[44] On the strengthening of Latino group identity, see Barreto, Matt, and Gary Segura. 2014. *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation*. New York: Public Affairs. On the diversity among Latinos, see Citrin, Jack, and David O. Sears. 2014. *American Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Schildkraut, Deborah J. 2011. *Americanism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Sanchez, Gabriel R., and Natalie Masuoka. 2010. "Brown-Utility Heuristic? The Presence and Contributing Factors of Latino Linked Fate." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 32(4): 519-531. On the impact of appeals to Latino group identity, see Valenzuela, Ali A., and Melissa R. Michelson. 2016. "Turnout, Status, and Identity: Mobilizing Latinos to Vote with Group Appeals." *American Political Science Review* 110(4): 615-630. On appeals focused on xenophobic rhetoric, see Pérez, Efrén O. 2015. "Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3): 549-564.

[45] In a least squares regression, the relationship between Hispanic group identity and support for Obama vs. Romney was b=0.124 (s.e.=0.022). In 2016, the relationship was very similar b=0.123 (s.e.=0.025). Unfortunately, the samples of Latinos in the 2012 and 2016 ANES were not large enough to say conclusively that Clinton or Obama performed better or worse among subgroups of Latinos defined by the strength of their identity.

[46] Masuoka, Natalie. 2008. "Defining the Group: Latino Identity and Political Participation." *American Politics Research* 36(1): 33-61. Valenzuela and Michelson, ibid. Citrin and Sears, ibid.

Clinton led Trump by 72 points among Latinos who primarily speak Spanish, but only by 23 points among English-dominant Latinos.

Of course, Latinos are strongly Democratic-leaning and the 2016 election did little to change this. Given Trump's unpopularity among Latinos, it is not hard to imagine that a more popular Democratic candidate might have earned more Latino support. But Clinton's relative unpopularity and the challenge of mobilizing Latinos who do not strongly identify as such meant that it was difficult for her to be that candidate. The "sleeping giant" was not enough to propel her to the White House.

The Highest and Hardest Glass Ceiling

Even if Clinton struggled to mobilize black and Latino voters, there was possibly another important source of support for her: women. Throughout the campaign, people speculated that Clinton's historic bid to become the first female president would mobilize unprecedented support from women. As Clinton herself wrote after the election, "even before I ran, political commentators wondered whether I'd inspire an unbeatable wave of women to come out and vote for me, in the same way President Obama inspired record-breaking black turnout." But she had always had doubts, noting, "Gender hasn't proven to be the motivating force for women that some hope it might be."[47] That proved true in 2016: women did not rally to Clinton's candidacy, while men shifted to Trump—especially men with more sexist attitudes.

Clinton's skepticism about gender as a motivating force was based on personal experience. Her 2008 run for the Democratic presidential nomination had not mobilized women in the same way that Barack Obama's campaign had mobilized African Americans and racially liberal whites.[48] Despite embracing the history-making elements of her candidacy in 2016, the song remained the same: In the primaries, Clinton did not draw disproportionate support from self-identified feminists, women with strong gender identities, or Democratic voters with the most progressive views about gender roles (see Chapter 6).

But perhaps things would be different in the general election—where the salience of gender would be magnified by Donald Trump's history of explicitly sexist comments, campaign controversies involving his remarks about Megyn Kelly ("blood coming out of her wherever"), Carly Fiorina ("look at that face"), and Alicia Machado ("she gained a massive amount of weight and it was a real problem"), and the accusations of sexual misconduct leveled against him— behavior that he explicitly acknowledged in the "Access Hollywood" tape. In fact, Trump predicted back in 1998 that his record with "the women" would be a lightening-rod for controversy if he ever ran for president.[49] Certainly Trump's opponents, including Clinton, tried to ensure that his history of sexism would cost him on Election Day.

Certainly Americans were paying attention. In a poll shortly after the "Access Hollywood" tape surfaced, 63% of Americans said that they were paying close attention to "the recent news about allegations that Donald Trump made unwanted advances on different women." Among those were paying attention, most thought that the allegations were probably or definitely true. Unsurprisingly, then, four different surveys in late October showed that majorities of Americans thought that Trump was "biased against women" or that "sexist" described him somewhat or very well. At that point, polling data suggested that, although Trump was winning men by margins typical of Republican presidential candidates, he was losing a historic share of the vote

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[47] Clinton, Hillary, ibid, p. 128.

[48] Kinder and Dale-Riddle, ibid. Tesler and Sears, ibid.

[49] NBC News. "Decades Old Video Shows Trump Predict His Campaign Problems with Women." October 10, 2016. https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/decades-old-video-shows-trump-predict-his-campaign-problems-with-women-783048771685

among women. It seemed that the 2016 election was headed for a record gender gap, driven by women's aversion to Donald Trump.[50]

There was indeed a historic gender gap in 2016—but not because the behavior of women changed. The exit polls showed Clinton winning women by 12 percentage points, which was similar to Obama's 13- and 11-point margins of victory among women in 2012 and 2016, respectively. Instead, it was men whose voting behavior changed. Trump won men by 12 points in 2016—up from 1 point in 2008 and 7 points in 2012. This was a wider margin among men than any candidate since George H.W. Bush won the 1988 election in a landslide.

Why didn't the first female presidential nominee of a major political party, whose feminist persona was often contrasted with her opponent's sexism, perform better among women voters? One reason in the weaker gender solidarity among women. For example, in the September 2016 wave of the RAND Presidential Election Panel Study, only about a third of women said that being a woman was "extremely important" to their identity, while 61% of blacks said their race was "extremely important." That lack of gender solidarity was politically consequential too. Hillary Clinton was significantly less popular than Obama was among the majority of women who did not see gender as extremely important to their identities.[51] Thus, Clinton's performance among women both in the Democratic primary and the general election was consistent with past research showing that race and partisanship are more important than gender in how people vote. The salience of race and partisanship helps explain why Clinton lost white women by 9 points—a deficit larger than Barack Obama's in 2008 and Al Gore's in 2000.

If Clinton did not benefit from gender solidarity, then the question arises: was she penalized because of sexism? Democrats and Republicans have long been more divided by gender attitudes—such attitudes about feminism and women's roles in society—than by gender per se. Moreover, attitudes about gender roles tend to be strongly held and relatively stable at the individual level, which enables a political campaign to "activate" those views much as a racialized campaign can activate views of racial and ethnic groups.[52]

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[50] The 63% figure is from a Monmouth University Poll. The 4 surveys from late October were: ABC/*Washington Post* (October 29-November 1), 55% said Trump is biased against women, compared to 40% not biased; Associated Press (October 20-24), 46% say sexist describes Trump "very well," 13% "somewhat well," 18% "slightly well," and 21% "not well at all"; CBS/*New York Times* (October 28-November 1), 20% say Trump respects women "a lot," 25% "some," 15% "not much," and 38% "not at all"; and Pew Research Center (October 20-25), 14% say Trump respects women "a great deal," 24% "a fair amount," 24% "not too much," and 36% "not at all." The results were accessed from Roper Center's iPoll archive. Enten, Harry. 2016. "Men Are Treating 2016 As A 'Normal' Election; Women's Aren't." *FiveThirtyEight*, October 17. http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/men-are-treating-2016-as-a-normal-election-women-arent/

[51] On gender consciousness among women, see Gurin, Patricia. 1985. "Women's Gender Consciousness." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49(2): 143-163; Burns and Kinder, ibid.; Kinder and Dale-Riddle, ibid.; and Stout, Christopher T., Kelsy Kretschmer, and Leah Ruppanner. "Gender Linked Fate, Race/Ethnicity, and the Marriage Gap in American Politics." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(3): 509-522. On gender identity and views of Clinton and Obama, see Tesler, Michael. 2016. "Why the Gender Gap Doomed Hillary Clinton." *The Monkey Cage*, November 9. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/09/why-the-gender-gap-doomed-hillary-clinton/.

[52] Stimson, James A. 2004. *Tides of Consent: How Opinion Movements Shape American Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Huddy, Leonie, and Johanna Willmann. 2017. "Partisan Sorting and the Feminist Gap in American Politics." Unpublished manuscript, Stony Brook University. McThomas and Tesler, ibid.

That is exactly what happened in 2016. Among men in particular, a measure of sexism was more strongly correlated with vote choice in 2016 than it was in 2012 (Figure 8.11). This measure of sexism—called "modern sexism" in the scholarly literature—draws on responses to statements like "Women who complain about harassment cause more problems than they solve" and is intended to capture more subtle biases against women (see Chapter 6). One caveat is that sexism was measured in surveys conducted during and after the 2016 campaign, so some people may have changed their answers to questions about things like sexual harassment based on their views of Trump and his accusers. If so, gender attitudes may be both a cause and a consequence of how people voted.

Figure 8.11. Whites' Sexism and Likelihood of Voting for the Republican Presidential Candidate
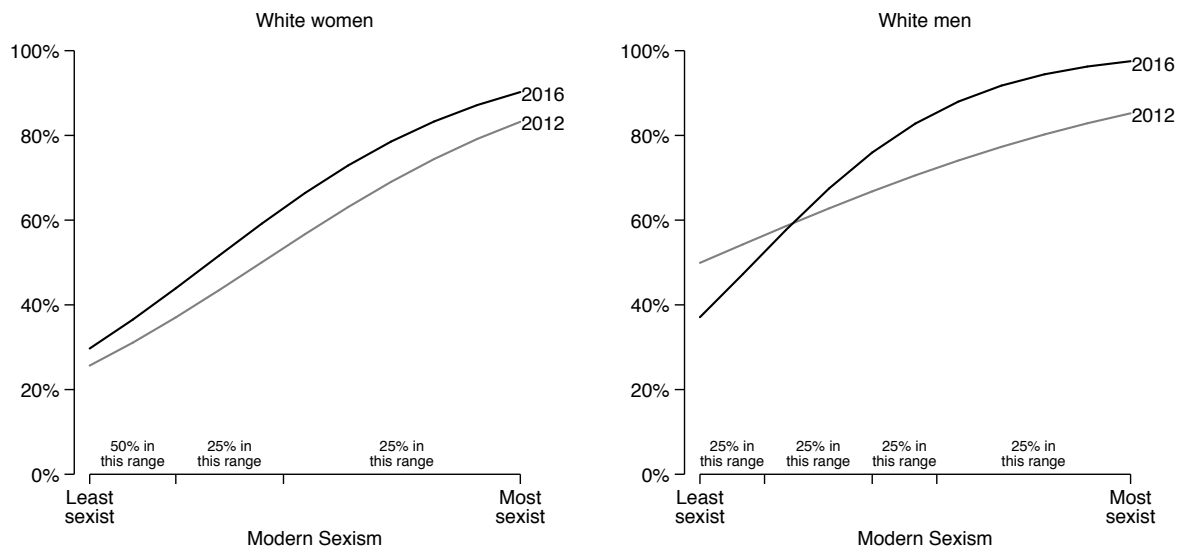
Findings based on statistical models that also account for party identification, self-reported ideology, and attitudes toward African-Americans. Source: 2012-2016 VOTER Survey.

With that caveat in mind, it appears that the 2016 campaign activated modern sexism, especially among white men and even after accounting for party identification, self-reported ideology on the liberal-conservative spectrum, and attitudes toward African-Americans. (Attitudes about gender were not significantly related to the vote choices of non-whites.) Among white women interviewed in the December 2016 VOTER Survey (left panel of Figure 8.11), the relationship between modern sexism and vote choice was similar, with both Obama and Clinton doing worse among white women with higher modern sexism scores. These results support Clinton's contention after the election that many of the women who voted against her "were quite sexist, too." But in the aggregate, this did not cost Clinton many votes, since only a minority of women have higher scores on this scale. However, these results also show that Clinton failed to capitalize among women who expressed more liberal views on this scale: she did not do much better than Obama, despite her gender and Trump's history of sexism.[53]

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[53] For a similar finding regarding the activation of sexism, see Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta, and results from the American National Election Study of the appendix. On the correlation between attitudes toward gender and voting among non-whites, see Frasure, Lorrie. n.d. "Women Voters, Attitudes on Feminism, and Voting in 2016." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, forthcoming. The quote about sexist women is from Clinton, ibid., p. 128.

These results also support Clinton's contention that her candidacy generated unusually strong opposition from sexist men (right panel of Figure 8.11). Although Clinton appeared to do somewhat better than Obama among white men who scored low in modern sexism, white men with higher scores on this measure were more likely to vote for Trump than they had been to vote for Romney. And this was a substantial number of white men: nearly a third scored above the midpoint on this measure. Thus, the increasing correlation between this measure of sexism and vote choice appeared to hurt Clinton overall. In the exit poll, Clinton lost white men by a whopping 31 points—a wider margin than any candidate since Walter Mondale lost 49 states to Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Beyond activating sexist attitudes, gender may have also mattered in subtle ways that are more difficult to quantify. There are at least three possibilities, although the evidence is necessarily speculative. For one, the well-documented double-bind that women in leadership roles often face—whereby women who show they are tough enough for the job risk being disliked—may have contributed to Hillary Clinton's high unfavorable ratings. Clinton certainly thought it did, referencing the double-bind in her memoir and citing data that shows "the more successful a man is, the more people like him. With women it's the exact opposite."[54]

For another, Clinton may also have faced a double standard in which women are held to a higher ethical standard than men. Female candidates are generally perceived as more honest and ethical than male candidates. Because voters expect women to be honest, the penalty for appearing dishonest may be greater for women than for men. For example, one study found that the American Bar Association punished female attorneys more severely than male attorneys for similar ethical violations.[55] This double standard may, therefore, explain some of the reason why the media and public focused so much on Hillary Clinton's dishonesty and why she was rated as less honest and trustworthy than Trump (see Chapter 7).

Finally, there is the question of gender bias in media coverage of Clinton. In 2014, Clinton told an audience that there was a "double standard" for women leaders and "the media is the principal propagator of its existence." Clinton's impression may have stemmed from her experience in the 2008 campaign. Although there was mixed evidence that overall media coverage of Clinton in 2008 was more negative than that of candidates like Obama, there were many examples of gendered language and even overt sexism in the broader media, especially in editorials and on cable news networks (e.g., Tucker Carlson, then at MSNBC: "when she [Clinton] comes on television, I involuntarily cross my legs").[56]

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[54] Clinton. ibid., p. 125. The data she cited data are from Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead.*

[55] On the ethical standard, see Dittmar, Kelly. 2015. *Navigating Gendered Terrain: Stereotypes and Strategy in Political Campaigns.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. On the perception that female candidates are more honest than male candidates, at least in the abstract, see Dolan, Kathleen. 2014. *When Does Gender Matter?* New York: Oxford University Press. The study of the ABA is Kennedy, Jessica, Mary-Hunter McDonnell, and Nicole Stephens. 2016. "Does Gender Raise the Ethical Bar? Exploring the Punishment of Ethical Violations at Work." *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2016 (1): 11664.

[56] One study of coverage by Regina Lawrence and Melody Rose examined three major newspapers (the *Los Angeles Times*, New *York Times*, and *Washington Post*) and the nightly news broadcasts of ABC, NBC and CBS and found that the overall tone of Clinton's coverage was more negative: 23% of stories had a negative comment about Clinton, compared to 16% of stories about Obama and 13% of stories about John McCain. See: Lawrence, Regina G. and Melody Rose. 2010. *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics & the Media on the Campaign Trail.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. But a Project for Excellence in Journalism study of a larger number of outlets did not find that the tone of Clinton's coverage was more negative than Obama's coverage. See: Pew Research Center. 2008. "Character and the Primaries

Nothing about Clinton's experience in 2015-2016 changed this. She saw a double standard in terms of personal appearance: In her mind, if she did not spend an hour or more each day on her hair, make-up, and clothes, it would not look as good and this would become a media story. Clinton also saw a double standard in how the media covered her speeches. "I suspect that for many of us," she wrote in her memoir, "It's discordant to tune into a political rally and hear a woman's voice booming ("screaming", "screeching") forth."[57]

She had a point. Media commentators made complaints about Clinton that were rarely if ever made of male candidates—for example, telling to her to "lower her voice." One difference, however, was that sexist comments were called out more frequently. In 2008, one study found that news outlets did relatively little to point out instances of sexist speech and portray Clinton as a victim of this speech—especially compared to their attention to racially insensitive remarks about Barack Obama. In 2016, however, the backlash was swifter. For example, after MSNBC's Joe Scarborough told Clinton to "smile" more, the comedian Samantha Bee mocked him with a Twitter campaign and viral hashtag, tweeting "Ladies, it's very important that you #SmileforJoe."[58] But hashtags may not have been enough. The fact remains that despite the continual controversy that Trump generated, despite comments that both parties condemned, despite a comment that suggested he had sexually assaulted women by grabbing their genitals, it was Clinton's scandals, mainly involving the email server, that got more attention from the news media (see Chapter 7). This helped make news coverage overall only slightly less negative for Clinton than it was for Trump.

Of course, the impact of Clinton's gender is impossible to precisely quantify—short of replaying the 2016 campaign with a Democratic nominee who was identical to Clinton in every respect except gender. Nevertheless, it appears that she was hurt more by her gender than she was helped. Clinton did not draw much additional support from women, showing again the limited power of gender solidarity in U.S. elections. And she lost support among men, especially men with more sexist views. The combination helped keep Clinton from shattering the highest and hardest glass ceiling in the world.

An "Arrogant" Campaign

When a candidate loses—especially one that nearly everyone thought was going to win—the verdict is usually harsh. This was certainly the case for Hillary Clinton. News accounts cited an "arrogant" Clinton campaign that "made a series of strategic mistakes" because she "mastered the science of politics but forgot the art."[59] Some of this criticism was ironic, to say the least.

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of 2008." http://www.journalism.org/2008/05/29/character-and-the-primaries-of-2008/. The Pew Center's finding comports with a recent in-depth study of newspaper coverage of male and female House candidates in the 2010 and 2014 elections. See Hayes. Danny and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2016. *Women on the Run: Gender, Media, and Political Campaigns in a Polarized Era*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[57] Clinton, ibid. p. 121.

[58] The 2008 study is Lawrence and Rose, ibid. On the reaction to sexist comments in 2016, see Dittmar, Kelly. 2017. *Finding Gender in Election 2016*. Center for American Women and Politics.

[59] Catanese, David. 2016. "DNC Staff: Arrogance Cost Clinton the Election." *US News*, November 11. https://www.usnews.com/news/the-run-2016/articles/2016-11-11/dnc-staff-arrogance-cost-hillary-clinton-the-election-vs-donald-trump. Phillip, Abby, John Wagner, and Anne Gearan. 2016. "A series of strategic mistakes likely sealed Clinton's fate." *Washington Post*, November 12. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-series-of-strategic-mistakes-likely-sealed-clintons-fate/2016/11/11/82f3fcc0-a840-11e6-ba59-a7d93165c6d4_story.html?utm_term=.0408f31ec21c&wpisrc=nl_wemost&wpmm=1. Stein, Sam. 2016. "Clinton Camp Mastered The Science of Politics But Forgot the Art, Staffers Say."

After all, the "science of politics"—the use of data to target voters and determine the most effective ways of reaching them—was widely credited for Obama's victories, much more so than the evidence would really support.[60] That the tenor of commentary would change on a dime shows that the post-mortem evaluations of campaign strategy are mostly circular logic: winning campaigns were good because they won, and losing campaigns were bad because they lost.

To be sure, the Clinton campaign's polling and other data underestimated Trump's strength in key battleground states. The campaign's data—which was fed into an algorithm named "Ada" for a famous nineteenth-century mathematician, Ada Lovelace—did recognize the importance of certain battleground states, such as Pennsylvania. But it did not see, at least until too late, Clinton's vulnerabilities in states like Michigan and Wisconsin. Of course, few people did. Publicly available polls suggested that she was likely to win an Electoral College majority. The Trump campaign's own data, as well as that of the Republican National Committee, gave him at best a 20% chance of winning. Thus, the shortcomings of horserace polling were systemic and not only an error of the Clinton campaign. Later analyses would suggest that state polling errors stemmed in part from late shifts to Trump and a failure to correct for the over-representation of college-educated voters in poll samples.[61]

But the critiques of the Clinton campaign were not just about data. They centered on what critics argued were two bigger failures: first, a failure of messaging, and, second, a failure of resource allocation.

The question of Clinton's message was hotly debated within her campaign itself as far back as the primary. For example, after her narrow loss to Bernie Sanders in the Michigan primary, Clinton apparently "complained to her communications team that her economic messaging sucked." After the November election, critics said the same thing and argued that she had focused too much on criticizing Trump. As a *Washington Post* story put it: "One error was to stick with a long-standing, one-dimensional campaign strategy: attacking Donald Trump. That strategy had been

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Huffington Post, November 21. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/clinton-campaign-politics_us_5833866de4b030997bc10520.

[60] See Sides and Vavreck, ibid.

[61] On the Ada algorithm, see Wagner, John. 2016. "Clinton's data-driven campaign relied heavily on an algorithm named Ada. What didn't she see?" *Washington Post*, November 9. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/11/09/clintons-data-driven-campaign-relied-heavily-on-an-algorithm-named-ada-what-didnt-she-see/?utm_term=.d9c753bdc956. On forecasts based on the public polls, see the aggregation here: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/upshot/presidential-polls-forecast.html. On the Trump campaign and RNC forecast, see Ward, Jon. 2016. "Trump's victory stunned even GOP digital team." *Yahoo*, November 9. https://www.yahoo.com/news/trumps-victory-stunned-even-gop-digital-team-081014018.html. On polling error, see especially the report commissioned by the American Association of Public Opinion Research: http://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Reports/An-Evaluation-of-2016-Election-Polls-in-the-U-S.aspx. On the overrepresentation of college-educated voters, see also Silver, Nate. 2016. "Pollsters Probably Didn't Talk To Enough White Voters Without College Degrees." *FiveThirtyEight*, December 1. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/pollsters-probably-didnt-talk-to-enough-white-voters-without-college-degrees/. Polling errors were strongly correlated with the share of the share of the electorate that was whites without college degrees. On last-minute shifts, see Hopkins, Dan. 2016. "Voters Really Did Switch to Trump At The Last Minute." *FiveThirtyEight*, December 20. http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/voters-really-did-switch-to-trump-at-the-last-minute/. There was less evidence that Trump supporters simply were less willing to reveal their support for him in polls. See Enten, Harry. 2016. "'Shy' Voters Probably Aren't Why The Polls Missed Trump." *FiveThirtyEight*, November 18. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/shy-voters-probably-arent-why-the-polls-missed-trump/.

devised despite overwhelming evidence, not only in Trump's rise but also in Clinton's struggles during the Democratic primary against Bernie Sanders, that the electorate was looking for political and economic change." Of course, the electorate was not clearly "looking for change" at all, but the idea that Clinton should have focused less on attacking Trump and more on offering a positive case for her candidacy persisted.[62]

This criticism, however, ignores the evidence that Clinton's messaging seemed to work. In collaboration with the political scientist John Geer, we conducted experimental tests throughout the summer and fall of 2016. The experiments tested real ads aired by or on behalf of Clinton and Trump during the week that the ads were initially aired.[63] From week to week, a representative sample of American adults was randomly assigned to watch a Trump ad, a Clinton ad, or a non-political ad (a Nationwide Insurance ad starring Peyton Manning). These experiments provided a clean test of causation: did a specific ad change people's attitudes about the candidates in real time? Of course, respondents could not easily change the channel or otherwise avoid watching the ad—which means that the experiments could exaggerate the impacts of ads. On the other hand, respondents only saw the ad once, which could mitigate its impact compared to what might have been happening in battleground states saturated with thousands of campaign advertisements.

Although not every ad was tested and their impacts varied, on average Clinton ads attacking Trump helped her. Compared to watching the non-political ad, watching a Clinton ad attacking Trump lowered people's favorability of him by 2 points and increased her vote share by 1.6 points. In fact, Clinton's attacks were arguably more effective than Trump's attacks on her: watching a Trump ad attacking Clinton did increase his favorability rating by 2.7 points, on average, but this did not affect her favorability rating or people's vote intentions. (See the appendix to this chapter for more details.)

Clinton's attacks on Trump appeared most effective among respondents who identified as an independent or had at least some college education. Trump's attacks on her mainly polarized people along party lines—helping him among Republicans but hurting him among Democrats—which is one reason why their overall effect was more limited. Ultimately, Clinton's attacks on Trump proved effective in these simple tests, including among better-educated voters, who were increasingly key to the Democratic coalition, as well as among independents who were potential swing voters. If attacking Trump was a failure of messaging, these tests do not show it.

The question, however, is whether the impact of advertising in these experiments was manifest in the real world. There, Clinton had a significant advantage. Clinton raised far more money than Trump did—$955 million to $546 million, including both candidate campaigns and outside groups. Her advantage was similar to Obama's in 2008, when John McCain was hamstrung by the cap on spending imposed by the public financing system, and much different than the parity between Obama and Romney in 2012. This exemplified Trump's struggle to build a professional campaign, including not only a fundraising apparatus but also a policy shop and data and analytics team. The Trump campaign was more dependent than a typical Republican candidate on the Republican Party for a variety of important tasks.[64]

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[62] Allen and Parnes, p. 190. Philip, Wagner, and Gearan, ibid.

[63] More information about the Spotcheck ad project is here: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/spotcheck/.

[64] In the primary and general elections, Clinton's campaign committee raised $564 million, while Trump's raised $333 million. Among outside groups, $231 million was spent to support Clinton and $75 million was spent to support Trump. Clinton also raised more money via joint fundraising committees: $160 million vs. $138 million for Trump's campaign. The figures reported in the text add up these numbers. The data on 2016 fundraising is from Open Secrets: https://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/ and https://www.opensecrets.org/jfc/index.php.

With less money to spend, Trump consistently trailed Clinton in television advertising in most media markets (Figure 8.12). Clinton opened an early advantage in June, while Trump did not ramp up until August. Then in September Trump's advertising all but vanished; a late surge in October and early November could not begin to close the gap. Altogether Clinton and allied groups aired 268,817 ads between September 1 and Election Day, while Trump and allied groups aired only 104,904. Altogether, nearly three-fourths (72%) of the television ads supported Clinton. This is a far greater imbalance than in recent presidential elections. For example, in 2000, George W. Bush and allied party and interest groups aired 55% of the major-party presidential campaign advertising during the fall campaign, compared to 45% for Gore. The split was similar in 2004, except that John Kerry led Bush with 56% of the fall advertising. In 2008, Obama's financial advantage helped him to open a slightly larger lead (59%-41%). In 2012, Obama, Romney, and their allies were evenly split (49.6% for Obama vs. 50.4% for Romney).[65]

Obama's fundraising in the 2008 general election period is summarized here: http://www.cfinst.org/pdf/federal/president/2010_0106_Table1.pdf. See also Nagourney, Adam, and Jeff Zeleny. 2008. "Obama Forgoes Public Funds in First for Major Candidate." *New York Times*, June 20. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/20/us/politics/20obamacnd.html?mcubz=3. Fundraising in 2012 is summarized here: https://www.opensecrets.org/pres12/. Ward, Jon. 2016. "Trump's lack of a data operation is hurting the GOP, operatives say." *Yahoo*, August 25. https://www.yahoo.com/news/trumps-lack-of-a-data-operation-is-hurting-the-gop-operatives-say-192334775.html?soc_src=mail&soc_trk=ma. Rogin, Josh. 2016. "Inside the collapse of Trump's D.C. policy shop." *Washington Post*, September 8. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/josh-rogin/wp/2016/09/08/inside-the-collapse-of-trumps-d-c-policy-shop/?utm_term=.b8913a5103fa. Confessore, Nicholas, and Rachel Shorey. 2016. "Donald Trump, With Bare-Bones Campaign, Relies on G.O.P. for Vital Tasks." *New York Times*, August 21. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/22/us/politics/donald-trump-fundraising.html?_r=0.

[65] On patterns in the 2016 advertising, see also Fowler, Ridout, and Franz, ibid. On Trump's advertising strategy, see Shepard, Steven. 2016. "Trump's bizarre ad strategy." *Politico*, September 22. http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/donald-trump-ad-strategy-228505. The 2000 figures are expressed as the percentage of gross rating points (August 20 until Election Day) and are taken from Shaw, Daron. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p.84. The 2004-2012 figures are expressed as the percentage of ad airings (September 1 until Election Day). The 2004-2008 data are from Franz, Michael M., and Travis N. Ridout. 2010. "Political Advertising and Persuasion in the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections." *American Politics Research* 38(2): 310. The 2012 data are from Sides and Vavreck, ibid.

Figure 8.12. Balance of Clinton and Trump Advertising in Media Markets
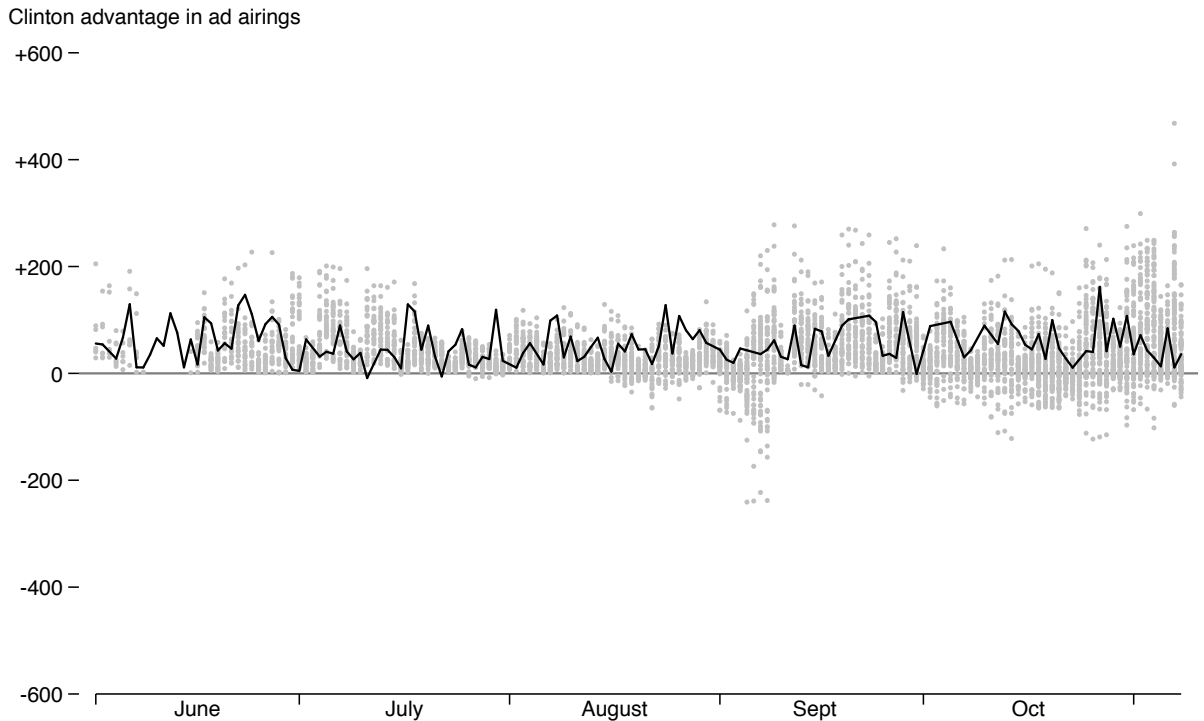
The dots represent the balance of ad airings in media markets on each day. Positive numbers indicate an advantage for Hillary Clinton. Ads by the candidates and groups advertising on their behalf are included. Markets with no advertising are clustered at zero, although we do not show that clustering visually. The black line is the population-adjusted average balance of ad airings in battleground states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Ohio, Michigan, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin). Source: Kantar Media/CMAG.

Clinton's televised advertising appeared to help her. Clinton's vote share at the county level was higher in places where she advertised more heavily—even after accounting for how well Obama had done in those counties in 2012 as well as demographic characteristics of these counties as well as changes in demographics between 2012 and 2016. If Clinton's advertising is measured simply by summing up the ads aired between June 1, 2016, and Election Day in each county, each additional 1,000 ads that she ran in a given county was associated with an increase of a tenth of a point of vote share in that county on Election Day. The relationship of vote share to Trump's advertising was much less precisely estimated, meaning that there is more uncertainty about whether that impact was real (see the appendix to this chapter).

But because the impact of televised campaign advertising is often short-lived, it may be more appropriate to focus on advertising closer to Election Day.[66] Here again, the same story emerges, but with an even larger apparent impact of Clinton's advertising. In the last week of the campaign, a 1000-ad increase in Clinton's advertising in a given county was associated with an additional seven-tenths of a point of vote share in that county, averaging across all counties. This is after accounting not only for both the 2012 presidential election results and the demographics in these counties but for how many ads Obama and Romney themselves ran in these places. Accounting for Obama's and Romney's ads helps guard against the possibility that Clinton and

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[66] Bartels, Larry M. 2014. "Remembering to Forget: A Note on the Duration of Campaign Advertising Effects." *Political Communication* 31(4): 532-544. Seth J. Hill, James Lo, Lynn Vavreck, and John Zaller. 2013. "How Quickly We Forget: The Duration of Persuasion Effects From Mass Communication." *Political Communication* 30(4): 521-547. Sides and Vavreck, ibid.

Trump were simply advertising in places where presidential candidates always advertise. In a sense, this analysis captures the unique impact of Clinton's ads on her vote share. Meanwhile, the apparent impact of Trump's advertising in this last week—when he ramped up his advertising considerably—was significantly smaller and imprecisely estimated, so much so that it is difficult to say with any confidence that his advertising was associated with his vote share.

Thus, both experimental tests and real-world advertising data suggest that Clinton's message and her large advantage on the airwaves may have helped her gain voters. The overall impact was small—likely measured in the tenths of percentage points in the places where she ran thousands of advertisements—but that is typical for television advertising in a presidential general election. Indeed, the impact of ads is small enough that Clinton would have had to run thousands of more ads to have a chance of prevailing in key states. For example, to win Wisconsin or Pennsylvania, Clinton needed an additional eight-tenths of a point of vote share across the state. Hypothetically, this would have meant running 1,000 more ads in the last week of the campaign in every media market in these states—or 11,000 more ads in Pennsylvania and 8,000 in Wisconsin. This would have been a massive increase: two-and-a-half times what the Clinton campaign actually ran in Pennsylvania in the last week, and two times what they ran in Wisconsin. Of course, this assumes that the Clinton campaign had the financial resources to buy airtime for these ads, that there was in fact enough available airtime on local networks to buy this many ads, and that additional ads would have had the same impact even though they might have needed to air during programs that fewer targeted voters were even watching. Just as was true for Mitt Romney in 2012, it appears unlikely that advertising alone could have given Clinton victories in these states—even though her advertising advantage generally helped her win votes.[67]

But perhaps the Clinton campaign made a different mistake with their advertising strategy: spending too much money on television ads and not enough in other mediums. After the election, the much-maligned Trump campaign was suddenly discovered to have been smart all along because it focused on digital advertising and especially advertising on Facebook. In this account, the Trump campaign "saturated" the Facebook feeds of "millions of Americans" with "eye-catching ads." The Trump campaign's digital director, Brad Parscale, said that "If you imagine the country as the haystack, Facebook is the needle finder." One particularly breathless story was headlined "Here's How Facebook *Actually* Won Trump the Presidency."[68]

In fact, there is little evidence as yet that digital advertising has much impact on voters or consumers. Experiments that have examined large digital ad campaigns by U.S. retailers have found it very difficult to identify any impact on consumer behavior. The same is true in politics. In one experiment, researchers exposed some Americans to an on-line ad about the Black Lives Matter movement. Over 10 days, respondents saw the ad an estimated 27 times, but it produced no changes in their attitudes about policing, racial bias, and the like. Two experiments in electoral campaigns, one involving a state legislative candidate and the other a congressional candidate, found that an even larger number of Facebook ads—a typical voter was exposed to the ads 38 times—did not change voters' views of these candidates. And, of course, Facebook ads would likely matter *less* in a presidential election than in down-ballot races for U.S. House or state legislature because voters know more about presidential candidates and therefore have opinions

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[67] On Romney's advertising, see Sides and Vavreck, ibid., p.221.

[68] Gold, Matea, and Elizabeth Dwoskin. 2017. "Trump campaign's embrace of Facebook shows company's growing reach in elections." *Washington Post*, October 8. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-campaigns-embrace-of-facebook-shows-companys-growing-reach-in-elections/2017/10/08/e5e5f156-a93b-11e7-b3aa-c0e2e1d41e38_story.html?utm_term=.70a26c0c6c5d&wpisrc=nl_daily202&wpmm=1. Lapowsky, Issie. 2016. "Here's How Facebook *Actually* Won Trump the Presidency." *Wired*, November 15. https://www.wired.com/2016/11/facebook-won-trump-election-not-just-fake-news/.

that are more difficult to change. Experiments measuring the impact of on-line ads or Facebook ads on voter turnout in presidential elections have found either very small effects or no effects at all. To be sure, the study of digital campaign advertising is in its infancy, and these ads may yield some benefits, such as donations. But there is no evidence that digital ads "won Trump the presidency" and little reason to believe that those ads had much effect on how voters viewed Trump or Clinton.[69]

The critique of Clinton's campaign went beyond advertising, however. It faulted her for not investing enough in a field organization, particularly in Midwestern states like Michigan and Wisconsin that she ended up losing. This criticism was somewhat ironic, too, in that, prior to the election, her "extensive field organization" was thought to give her a "big advantage" over Trump, since his campaign lacked the capacity to build such an organization and had to depend on the Republican Party for this as well. The Trump campaign's inability to build a field organization was encapsulated in a report that one of its Colorado field offices was actually run by a 12-year-old.[70]

But after the election, the prevailing view of Clinton's field organization quickly changed. Post-mortem accounts reported that there were concerns about her campaign's field organization dating back to the primaries. Before the Michigan primary, Rep. Debbie Dingell—a Democrat from one of the most venerable political families in the state—reportedly warned Clinton that she "didn't have enough of a presence on the ground." According to one account of the Michigan primary, the Clinton campaign was "relying on polling and analytics, instead of a robust organization in the state, to dictate strategy." The lengthy primary then delayed Clinton's ability to build this robust organization. Meanwhile, the campaign designated Michigan and Wisconsin only as "watch" states—ones the campaign "should keep its eye on"—but not as crucial

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[69] The consumer experiments are described in Lewis, Randall A., and Justin M. Rao. 2015. "The Unfavorable Economics of Measuring the Returns to Advertising." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*: 1941-1973. The Black Lives Matter experiment is described in Coppock, Alexander, and David Broockman. 2015. "Summary Report: The Effectiveness of Online Ads: A Field Experiment." http://alexandercoppock.com/papers/CB_blacklivesmatter.pdf. The campaign experiments are described in Broockman, David E., and Donald P. Green. 2014. "Do Online Advertisements Increase Political Candidates' Name Recognition or Favorability? Evidence from Randomized Field Experiments." *Political Behavior* 36(2): 263-289. Three experiments involving voter turnout are: Jones, Jason J., et al. 2017. "Social Influence and Political Mobilization: Further Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election." *PLoS ONE* 12(4): 1-9. Collins, Kevin, Joshua L. Kalla, and Lauren Keane. n.d. "Youth Voter Mobilization Through Online Advertising: Evidence from Two GOTV Field Experiments." https://www.dropbox.com/s/4pr2f0s26sves1e/Collins-Keane-Kalla-APSA-2014%20sans%20Fig%204.pdf?dl=0; and also Joshua Kalla's analysis of online ads by NextGen Climate in 2016 (https://www.dropbox.com/s/ssd1cqcc0pk2oqq/NGC%20Online%20Ad%20GOTV%20Resul ts.pdf?dl=0).

[70] The "big advantage" quote is from Burns, Alexander, and Jonathan Martin. 2016. "Clinton Pushes Minority Turnout as Trump Tries to Rally His base." Bump, Philip. 2016. "Donald Trump still hasn't figured out the ground game." *Washington Post,* August 9. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/08/09/donald-trump-still-hasnt-figured-out-how-to-run-a-field-campaign/?utm_term=.acae47005e68&wpisrc=nl_most&wpmm=1. Gray, Rosie, and Tarini Parti. 2016. "In Key States, The Trump Campaign Still Lags Badly." *Buzzfeed*, August 14. https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosiegray/in-key-states-the-trump-campaign-still-lags-badly?utm_term=.vjlPmBbXk#.ooVOJQME4. Hensch, Mark. 2016. "12-year-old running Trump campaign office in Colorado. *The Hill*, August 22. http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/292180-12-year-old-running-trump-campaign-office-in-colo

battleground states. After the election, Democratic operatives in Michigan complained bitterly that the Brooklyn-based campaign headquarters largely ignored them and gave interested volunteers little to do. A Democratic organizer said of the campaign's Wisconsin operation, "What is the point of having a hundred people on the ground if you're not giving them any of the tools to do the work?" Of course, Wisconsin and Michigan alone would not have given Clinton an Electoral College victory, but these states became symbols of the Clinton campaign's mistakes.[71]

There is no question that Clinton's overall field organization was smaller than Obama's in 2012. The political scientist Joshua Darr has estimated that Clinton had 537 field offices throughout the country, compared to 789 for Obama in 2012. Clinton did not lag Obama everywhere, to be sure. According to our tabulation, she had more offices in Pennsylvania (57 vs. 53) and almost the same number in Michigan (27 vs. 28). But in Florida, Clinton had 59 offices to Obama's 102. In Ohio, it was 91 vs. 130. In Wisconsin, it was 40 vs. 67. For the most part, these differences arose because Clinton's offices were concentrated more in areas with high concentrations of Democrats, while Obama's offices were spread more throughout these states.[72]

Could Clinton's smaller field organization have cost her the election? In fact, this is not at all clear. For one, the percentage of Democrats who said that they had been contacted by a campaign was almost the same as in 2012, (the percentage of Republicans who reported being contacted, however, dropped sharply). For another, the apparent impact of Clinton's field organization was not large enough that a bigger organization would necessarily have won her the election. As in other recent presidential elections, there was a positive correlation between the number of Clinton's field offices in a county and her vote share.[73] After accounting for other factors in these counties—including demographics, Obama's vote share in 2012, and the number of offices that Obama had opened—each additional Clinton field office was associated with an additional three-tenths of a point of major-party vote share. Thus, the presence of Clinton field offices appeared to help her, over and above what was done in 2012.

But what does this add up to in terms of votes? Imagine that Clinton had emulated Obama's 2012 strategy and opened the same number of offices in each state, thereby increasing her total number of offices. Based on the 0.3-point increase in vote share per field office and the number of votes cast in each county, increasing the number of offices to mimic the Obama campaign would have netted Clinton about 195,000 more votes nationwide. Of course, what really matters is how things could have changed in the states that could have swung the election—and in which Clinton volunteers were reportedly begging for more to do. In Wisconsin, for example, setting up the same number of offices as Obama did in 2012 would have netted Clinton about 10,300 additional votes—a measurable increase but not enough to overcome her margin of defeat (22,748 votes). Even doubling what Obama did in 2012 would not have been enough. The same

[71] Allen and Parnes, ibid., pp. 182-83, 234-235, 312. Dovere, Edward-Isaac. 2016. "How Clinton lost Michigan—and blew the election." *Politico*, December 14. https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/michigan-hillary-clinton-trump-232547. Allen and Parnes, ibid., p. 368.

[72] Darr, Joshua. 2017. "The incredible shrinking Democratic ground game." *Vox*, November 16. https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2017/11/16/16665756/shrinking-democratic-ground-game. Our data differs slightly from Darr's but these differences do not change the substantive conclusions about 2012 vs. 2016.

[73] On the trends in self-reported campaign contact, see this graph by political scientist Barry Burden: https://twitter.com/bcburden/status/887057997926715393. Darr, Joshua, and Matthew Levendusky. 2014. "Relying on the Ground Game: The Placement and Effect of Campaign Field Offices." *American Politics Research* 42(3): 529–548. Masket, Seth, John Sides, and Lynn Vavreck. 2016. "The Ground Game in the 2012 Presidential Election." *Political Communication* 33: 169-187.

is true in other key battleground states where her field organization was smaller than Obama's. All of this is, again, a hypothetical based on a statistical model and a variety of assumptions. But these estimates are broadly similar to what other research has found. It is difficult for the ground game alone to turn most election defeats into victories.[74]

Perhaps, however, the issue was not so much the sheer size of Clinton's field organization but how and where its efforts—and hers—were deployed within states. One critique on this score came from none other than Bill Clinton himself. He wanted Hillary to campaign to a broader coalition outside of Democratic strongholds, including to the kinds of white voters integral to his own presidential win. This critique implied that Clinton needed to spend less time in a place like Detroit and more time in a place like Macomb County, a county north of central Detroit where 85% of the voters of white, according to the 2010 Census. One Clinton campaign official said, "If you're a white voter in Macomb County, [it] means something" for Hillary Clinton to come there.[75]

But this, too, is unclear. Candidate appearances in towns or counties often have small and temporary effects on poll numbers—and thus an uncertain impact on vote share. One person who knows campaigns from the inside and outside, former Mitt Romney staffer and political scientist Tom Wood, captured the uncertainty inherent in candidate visits with an article titled "What the Heck Are We Doing in Ottumwa, Anyway?" Setting aside time on Hillary Clinton's itinerary for speeches or glad-handling in Macomb County was arguably unlikely to make much difference.[76]

Perhaps the issue was different still. Many critics of the Clinton campaign focused on how her field organization was being used: to register and mobilize the core groups in the coalition she was targeting—a "focus on turning out supporters rather than trying to persuade fence-sitters." As one operative put it, "The undecided voters were being left to their own devices." To these critics, the Clinton campaign needed to be sending its volunteers door-to-door to persuade people face-to-face. Again and again, critics faulted Clinton for eschewing tactics that her campaign's senior staff believed were likely to be ineffective and inefficient.[77]

But these tactics really are often ineffective and inefficient. Multiple randomized experiments show that face-to-face contact has little persuasive effect in general elections. This buttresses the view of at least one Clinton campaign aide, who said, "Imagine you're on the ground and you're sent to suburban white voters to persuade them to support Hillary Clinton. Imagine what that experience would have been like and how many households you could really change." Indeed, it is even possible that attempts at face-to-face persuasion can backfire. One study of the 2008 Obama campaign—a campaign that was routinely praised for the efficacy of its field organization—found that a face-to-face persuasion experiment in Wisconsin may have *reduced* support for Obama.[78] For these reasons it is entirely possible Clinton would have won more

[74] For a similar conclusion, see also Silver, Nate. 2017. "Clinton's Ground Game Didn't Cost Her The Election." *FiveThirtyEight*, February 13. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/clintons-ground-game-didnt-cost-her-the-election/

[75] Allen and Parnes, ibid. p. 307-308.

[76] Wood, Thomas. 2016. "What The Heck Are We Doing in Ottumwa, Anyway? Presidential Candidate Visits and Their Political Consequences." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667(1): 110-125. For a similar conclusion based on data from the 2000 and 2004 presidential campaigns, see Shaw, Daron. 2006. *The Race to 270*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

[77] The "fence-sitters" references is from Allen and Parnes, ibid., p. 308. The "own devices" quote is from Stein, ibid. See also Dovere, ibid.

[78] The "imagine you're on the ground" quote is from Allen and Parnes, ibid., p. 398. The study of the multiple experiments is Kalla, Joshua L. and David E. Broockman. 2018. "The Minimal

votes by focusing on mobilizing core Democratic voters, perhaps in black communities near Detroit, than on persuading white voters in Macomb County.

Of course, this analysis and earlier academic studies cannot conclusively determine what would have happened if the Clinton campaign had made different decisions. If the hypothetical involves a wholesale remaking of the campaign's strategy—message, field operation, coalition, and so on—then no analysis can credibly speak to that hypothetical. What can be said is this: her campaign was well-funded and professionalized and its advantages in advertising and field organization appeared to help Clinton win votes at levels typical of recent presidential elections. At the same time, the Clinton campaign was surely culpable for underestimating how close the campaign would be and, no doubt, it would have allocated resources differently if it had known this. But as is often the case in presidential general elections, the impact of those resources would likely not have overcome the other forces at work.

The KKK, the FBI, and the KGB
On a phone call with a friend after the election, Hillary Clinton reportedly blamed three factors for her defeat: the KKK, the FBI, and the KGB. The KKK was a shorthand for the role of white identity in building support for Trump. There was something to this. Although few whites support the KKK, more have a politicized white identity, and this became more strongly related to voters' choices in 2016.[79] White identity was clearly one important factor.

By FBI, Clinton meant the investigation of her private email server and especially the brief re-opening of the investigation in late October. Within days of the election, she and others in her campaign would claim that Comey's October 28 letter "stopped our momentum." Months later, in a rare public appearance, Clinton said "If the election had been on October 27, I would be your president." This is plausible but far from certain, given that the hit to Clinton's favorability rating was mostly temporary and public polling did not clearly show a decrease in her lead over Trump (see Chapter 7). But we cannot know what might have happened without the letter's release.[80]

By KGB, Clinton meant Russian interference in the presidential election. This intervention took several forms. One was hacking emails from the Democratic National Committee and Clinton adviser John Podesta emails and releasing them via Wikileaks, which then became the subject of multiple news stories. Another was purchasing advertisements on Facebook that played on divisive issues such as race and immigration. Russian actors were also linked to Facebook and Twitter accounts that disseminated false stories. U.S. intelligence agencies concluded that these efforts were ordered by the Russian government and reflected an explicit attempt to hurt

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Persuasive Effects of Campaign Content in General Elections: Evidence from 49 Field Experiments." *American Politics Science Review* 112(1): 148-166. The study of the Obama Wisconsin experiment is Bailey, Michael, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Todd Rogers. 2016. "Unresponsive and Unpersuaded: The Unintended Consequences of Voter Persuasion Efforts." *Political Behavior* 38(3): 713-746.

[79] On white identity vs. support for the KKK, see Jardina, Ashley. 2017. "White identity politics isn't just about white supremacy. It's much bigger." *The Monkey Cage*, August 16. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/16/white-identity-politics-isnt-just-about-white-supremacy-its-much-bigger/?utm_term=.66a85078236a

[80] The phone call is described in Allen and Parnes, ibid., p. 394. Chozick, Amy. 2016. "Hillary Clinton Blames F.B.I. Director for Election Loss." *New York Times*, November 12. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/13/us/politics/hillary-clinton-james-comey.html. Rucker, Philip. 2017. "'I would be your president': Clinton blames Russia, FBI chief for 2016 election loss." *Washington Post*, May 3. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/hillary-clinton-blames-russian-hackers-and-comey-for-2016-election-loss/2017/05/02/e62fef72-2f60-11e7-8674-437ddb6e813e_story.html?utm_term=.bd57b020acc3.

Clinton's candidacy and help Trump's. The investigation into Russian interference was then criticized by Trump, who believed it cast doubt on the legitimacy of his victory. Trump ultimately fired FBI Director James Comey, leading to the appointment of a special prosecutor, former FBI Director Robert Mueller, who sought to determine whether there had been contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian actors. Mueller brought indictments against several former members of the Trump campaign for offenses ranging from lying to federal officials to conspiracy to launder money. In February 2018, Mueller brought indictments against 13 Russian individuals and 3 organizations for violating federal law by attempting to influence the U.S. election, largely through the information they had promulgated on social media. When these indictments came down, more breathless headlines followed: "Did Russia Affect the 2016 Election? It's Now Undeniable."[81]

In reality, it was deniable. Although Russian interference was and is deeply concerning, there are many reasons to doubt that it changed the outcome of the election. For one, although the hack of the DNC and Podesta emails created unfavorable headlines for the Clinton campaign—anything that put "emails" in the headlines was a reminder of the investigation into Clinton's own email server—the release of these emails in late July and in October did not clearly affect her favorability, perceptions of her honesty, or her lead over Trump. Indeed, any impact was swamped by other events that worked in Clinton's favor, including the Democratic National Convention in July and the debates and release of the "Access Hollywood" tape in October. The Clinton campaign believed that the release of these hacked emails hurt their campaign, and Clinton would write that the combination of the email hack and the Comey latter was a "devastating combination." But Clinton's email problem was more the FBI investigation of her than the hacked emails from her campaign—and the case for the Comey letter's impact on the election is stronger than the case for the hacked emails.[82]

Similarly, Russian-sponsored content on social media likely did not decide the election. The money spent on specific Facebook ads was not targeted effectively at battleground states and was dwarfed by the estimated $81 million spent by the Trump and Clinton campaigns on digital ads. Moreover, although many news reports cited social media metrics that appeared large on their face—1,108 Russian-sponsored videos on YouTube, 2,752 Twitter accounts as well as 36,000 Twitter bots that had tweeted 1.4 millions times during the elections, 126 million people who may have been exposed to Russian-sponsored content on Facebook—these reports typically suffered from what we might call "the denominator problem": they rarely calculated the total amount of content on various social media and thus what *fraction* of that content might have been Russian-sponsored propaganda. Given the billions if not trillions of tweets and posts on these media during the election campaign, Russian-sponsored content was an infinitesimal fraction.[83]

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[81] McKew, Molly. 2018. "Did Russia Affect the 2016 Election? It's Now Undeniable." *Wired*, February 16. https://www.wired.com/story/did-russia-affect-the-2016-election-its-now-undeniable/

[82] Clinton, ibid. p. 407. See also Enten, Harry. 2016. "How Much Did WikiLeaks Hurt Hillary Clinton?" *FiveThirtyEight*, December 23. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/wikileaks-hillary-clinton/.

[83] Ruffini, Patrick. 2017. "Why Russia's Facebook ad campaign wasn't such a success." *Washington Post*, November 3. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/why-russias-facebook-ad-campaign-wasnt-such-a-success/2017/11/03/b8efacca-bffa-11e7-8444-a0d4f04b89eb_story.html?utm_term=.87c799fc5d13. The apparently large numbers are from Timbert, Craig, and Elizabeth Dwoskin. 2017. "Russian content on Facebook, Google, and Twitter reached far more users than companies first disclosed, congressional testimony says." *Washington Post*, October 30. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/2017/10/30/4509587e-bd84-11e7-97d9-bdab5a0ab381_story.html?utm_term=.4683d135f7fe

Moreover, even if people did happen to see and engage with Russian-sponsored content amid the blizzard of posts and tweets in their social media feeds, there is still the question of whether or how it affected their voting behavior. It is not that this content had zero impact. For example, Russian actors used Facebook ads to convince some people to show up for stage pro- or anti-Trump rallies. But it is far less clear whether it changed voters' minds about Trump or Clinton or encouraged them to turn out and vote. Studies of the false information propagated on social media not only showed that it was far from the most shared content (see Chapter 7) but also that it was viewed mostly by a small number of diehard conservative news consumers. Moreover, another study estimated that for this false information to have changed the outcome of the election, a single false story would have needed to have massive impact—equal to seeing a television ad 37 times.[84]

In short, the best way to think about the impact of Russian interference on the outcome of the 2016 election is somewhere between agnosticism and skepticism—and probably leaning toward skepticism. Evidence from this election and previous presidential elections shows that, first, most voters are predictable partisans whose minds are hard to change and, second, very large and expensive efforts to change minds or mobilize voters, including especially the efforts of the presidential candidates' campaigns, have at best modest effects. Given that it would have taken very large shifts in televised advertising or field organizations to tip the election in Clinton's favor, it is not likely that the small fraction of on-line content attributed to Russian actors tipped the election in Trump's favor—especially given the equivocal impact of digital ads and false stories, period.[85]

Moreover, although the Russian content was misleading and polarizing in its intent—leading to headlines like "How Russia Harvested American Rage to Reshape U.S. Politics"— U.S. politics and the 2016 campaign were *already* full of misleading and polarizing information, and more than a little rage. And most of that information and emotion did not come from Twitter bots, but from the mouths of the candidates, especially Trump, and their surrogates. The real polarizers in politics are humans, not robots. For these reasons, Russian interference is best seen as a real cause for concern—but not because it threw the election to Trump.[86]

Conclusion

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[84] Faris et al., ibid. Guess, Andrew, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2018. "Selective Exposure to Misinformation: Evidence from the consumption of fake news during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign." Working paper, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~nyhan/fake-news-2016.pdf. Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. 2017. "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." Working paper. See also Nyhan, Brendan. 2018. "Fake News and Bots May be Worrisome, but Their Political Power Is Overblown." *New York Times*, February 13. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/upshot/fake-news-and-bots-may-be-worrisome-but-their-political-power-is-overblown.html.
[85] For an agnostic view, see Silver, Nate. 2018. "How Much Did Russian Interference Affect the 2016 Election?" *FiveThirtyEight*, February 16. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-much-did-russian-interference-affect-the-2016-election/. A journalistic account with an appropriately uncertain answer about the impact of Russian interference is Martin, Jonathan, and Maggie Haberman. 2018. "Indictment Leaves No Doubt: Russia Backed Trump. But Was It the Difference?" *New York Times*, February 18. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/18/us/politics/trump-election-russia.html.
[86] Confessore, Nicholas, and Daisuke Wakabayashi. 2017. "How Russia Harvested American Rage to Reshape U.S. Politics." *New York Times*, October 9. On the spread of false information by people versus bots, see Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. 2018. "The spread of true and false news online." *Science* 359(6380): 1146-1151.

After the election, Clinton acknowledged that her campaign "likely contributed to [2016's] heightened racial consciousness." "As a result," she wrote, "some white voters may have decided I wasn't on their side."[87] This is reasonably tidy summary of what happened. Of course, it was not only the result of her campaign. Trump's racially charged rhetoric and views set him apart not only from Clinton but from past Republican nominees. And even before the 2016 election, the Democratic and Republican parties were already polarizing on their beliefs about racial inequality, on their concerns about immigration, on their views of Muslims, and on many related issues. The campaign only magnified that polarization. Thus, the presidential election was not only remarkable in that it put an unlikely candidate, Donald Trump in the White House. It was remarkable in how it crystallized the country's broader identity crisis: sharp divisions on what America has become, and what it should be.

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[87] Clinton, *What Happened*, p.415.

Appendix to Chapter 8

Part 1: Activation of racial attitudes

The analysis presented in Figure 8.6 shows that white respondents' attitudes related toward African-Americans were more strongly related to how people voted in the 2016 presidential election than in the 2012 election. This analysis relied on two surveys, the 2008-2016 American National Election Survey (ANES) and the VOTER Survey, which included interviews with 8,000 respondents in December 2011, November 2012, and December 2016.

Table A8.1 shows the statistical models using ANES data. A separate model was estimated for each election year. Each model included party identification (a seven-point scale ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican) and self-reported ideology (a seven-point scale ranging from strong liberal to strong conservative). Attitudes toward African-Americans, sometimes called "racial resentment" in the scholarly literature, were measured by combining responses to four statements with which respondents could agree or disagree on a five-point scale:

- Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.
- Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

These four items scaled together reliably (alpha=0.84 in the 2016 ANES). Views of illegal immigrants were measured with a 0-100 feeling thermometer.

The relationship between both racial resentment and views of illegal immigrants and vote choice was larger in 2016 than in 2008 or 2012 (Table A8.1). This was apparent first from estimating separate models in each of these years (which in turn underlie Figure 8.6). Pooling the data and estimating a single model that allowed the relationship of these two measures to vary by year showed that the differences between 2016 and earlier years were statistically significant.

Table A8.1. Models of Whites' Vote Choice, 2008-2016 American National Election Study

	2008	2012	2016	2008-2016	2008	2012	2016	2008-2016
Party identification	4.88*	5.75*	4.92*	5.29*	4.92*	5.71*	4.54*	5.16*
	(0.36)	(0.26)	(0.32)	(0.18)	(0.35)	(0.26)	(0.29)	(0.17)
Ideology	4.28*	4.37*	3.45*	4.09*	4.45*	4.70*	4.37*	4.52*
	(0.64)	(0.42)	(0.56)	(0.30)	(0.60)	(0.41)	(0.52)	(0.28)
Racial resentment	3.26*	3.28*	5.36*	3.20*				
	(0.46)	(0.32)	(0.41)	(0.30)				
Views of illegal immigrants					1.06*	1.63*	3.08*	1.60*
					(0.41)	(0.28)	(0.34)	(0.27)
Racial resentment × 2008				0.11				
				(0.56)				
Racial resentment × 2016				2.37*				
				(0.51)				
Illegal immigrants × 2008								-0.55
								(0.50)
Illegal immigrants × 2016								1.57*
								(0.44)
Year 2008				-0.04				0.39

			(0.39)				(0.34)
Year 2016			-1.02*				-0.70*
			(0.34)				(0.30)
Constant	-6.65*	-7.16*	-7.13*	-6.74*	-5.30*	-6.22*	-6.12*	-5.84*
	(0.48)	(0.33)	(0.40)	(0.27)	(0.41)	(0.30)	(0.34)	(0.24)
N	775	2530	2021	5326	777	2525	2008	5310

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment and views of illegal immigrants are coded such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes toward blacks and illegal immigrants, respectively. Source: American National Election Studies 2008-2016.

A similar set of models using the 2016 Voter Survey showed a similar pattern (Table A8.2). Here the data were based on three waves of interviewing; December 2011 (where all independent variables were measured), November 2012 (when vote for Obama or Romney was measured), and December 2016 (when vote for Clinton or Trump was measured). Again, the use of measures from December 2011 guarded against the possibility that people changed their views of these issues to match the views of their preferred candidate.

Here, party identification, ideology, and racial resentment were measured in a similar fashion. Views of immigration were captured with a scale based on three items: support or opposition to a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, beliefs about whether undocumented immigrants contribute to society or are a "drain," and beliefs about whether immigration should be increased or decreased. These items also scaled together reliably (alpha=0.72). Views of Muslims were captured with a 0-100 feeling thermometer. All models included only whites who reported voting in both elections.

Table A8.2. Models of Whites' Vote Choice, 2016 VOTER Survey

	2012	2016	2012-2016	2012	2016	2012-2016	2012	2016	2012-2016
Party ID	5.30*	3.96*	4.50*	5.38*	4.09*	4.62*	5.07*	4.03*	4.50*
	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.14)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.14)	(0.23)	(0.21)	(0.15)
Ideology	4.91*	5.26*	4.70*	5.08*	5.43*	4.83*	6.15*	6.00*	5.48*
	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.22)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.22)	(0.39)	(0.37)	(0.23)
Racial resentment	3.63*	4.33*	3.65*						
	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.25)						
Views of immigration				2.44*	3.31*	1.95*			
				(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.18)			
View of Muslims							1.58*	2.58*	1.39*
							(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.21)
Resentment × 2016			0.75*						
			(0.36)						
Immigration × 2016						1.53*			
						(0.26)			
Muslims × 2016									1.19*
									(0.30)
Year 2016			-0.1			-0.53**			-0.37*
			(0.26)			(0.17)			(0.18)
Constant	-7.44*	-7.17*	-7.01*	-6.58*	-6.41*	-5.85*	-6.42*	-6.20*	-5.71*
	(0.28)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.17)	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.18)
N	5152	5152	11167	5111	5111	11088	4743	4743	10269

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment, views of immigration, and views of Muslims are coded

such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes. All independent variables were measured in December 2011. Source: VOTER Survey.

The results against showed that the relationship between vote choice and racial resentment, views of immigration, and views of Muslims were larger in 2016 than in 2012. Models that pooled the 2012 and 2016 waves of the survey showed that these differences across years are statistically significant.

Finally, a similar set of models using surveys from 2004, 2012, and 2016 showed that whites' perceptions of how much discrimination whites face because more strongly related to vote choice in 2016 (Table A8.3). These models also account for party identification, ideology, and a two-item measure of racial resentment ("blacks have gotten less than they deserve" and "blacks should do the same without any special favors"), which were the only two items included in all 3 surveys. Again, models estimated separately by year showed this larger relationship. The difference between 2016 and the two earlier elections was statistically significant in a model that pooled all three surveys.

Table A8.3. The Relationship between Whites' Perceptions of Discrimination against Whites and Vote for President

	2004	2012	2016	All 3 years
Perceived discrimination against whites	0.28	0.36	1.47*	-0.24
	(0.40)	(0.33)	(0.39)	(0.33)
Racial resentment	0.85*	3.05*	4.45*	2.91*
	(0.41)	(0.32)	(0.38)	(0.20)
Party identification	8.88*	5.48*	4.81*	5.94*
	(0.49)	(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.18)
Ideology	3.26*	4.53*	3.49*	3.58*
	(0.41)	(0.45)	(0.56)	(0.25)
Perceived discrimination against whites × 2012				0.62
				(0.46)
Perceived discrimination against whites × 2016				2.19*
				(0.52)
Year 2012				-0.18
				(0.20)
Year 2016				-0.26
				(0.22)
Constant	-6.68*	-7.19*	-7.19*	-6.64*
	(0.44)	(0.35)	(0.41)	(0.26)
N	680	2284	1966	4930

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. The measure of ideology is a 5-category scale in 2004 and a 7-category scale in 2012-2016. Racial resentment and perceptions of discrimination against whites are coded such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes toward blacks and the perception of more discrimination against whites, respectively. The measure of perceived discrimination against whites is a 4-category scale in 2004 and a 5-category scale in 2012-2016. Source: 2004 National Politics Survey, 2012-2016 American National Election Studies.

This pattern was confirmed in the 2016 Voter Survey, with the important caveat that perceptions of discrimination against whites were measured in the December 2016 interview and could thus have been affected by the campaign itself. Nevertheless, the relationship between those perceptions and whites' choice of Clinton or Trump (b=2.05; s.e.=0.25) was larger than with those same whites' choice of Obama or Romney (b=1.14; s.e.=0.21), and this difference was

statistically significant (p=0.02). These models also accounted for party identification, ideology, and racial resentment as measured in the December 2016 wave.

Part II. Activation of economic anxiety

A similar set of models undergird the analysis of economic anxiety and whether its relationship to presidential vote choice increased in 2016 (see Figure 8.7). This analysis draws on the 2012 and 2016 ANES, which asked a battery of questions about respondents' economic circumstances, including their level of worry about losing their job, whether they were likely to miss a housing payment, whether they were likely to miss a health care payment, and their overall level of worry about their financial situation. (Note: In the 2012 ANES, the question about missing a housing payment was asked only of respondents interviewed face-to-face, not respondents interviewed on-line. This explains the smaller sample in that statistical model.) Separate statistical models in 2012 and 2016 show no consistent statistically significant relationships between any of these items and white respondents' presidential vote choice in 2012 or 2016. Moreover, there was no consistent increase in the size of these relationships between 2012 and 2016 (Table A8.4).

Table A8.4. The Relationship between Whites' Economic Anxiety and Vote for President

	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
Worry about losing job	0.85*	-0.50						
	(0.34)	(0.38)						
Likelihood of missing housing payment			1.40*	0.67				
			(0.52)	(0.40)				
Likelihood of missing health care payment					0.15	0.65*		
					(0.20)	(0.26)		
Worry about financial situation							0.09	0.46
							(0.23)	(0.29)
Racial resentment	2.90*	6.06*	2.35*	5.24*	3.31*	5.29*	3.32*	5.28*
	(0.41)	(0.55)	(0.56)	(0.49)	(0.33)	(0.41)	(0.33)	(0.41)
Party identification	5.04*	4.81*	5.17*	4.77*	5.48*	5.01*	5.48*	4.96*
	(0.36)	(0.42)	(0.52)	(0.39)	(0.27)	(0.33)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ideology	4.89*	3.68*	3.69*	4.02*	4.58*	3.46*	4.57*	3.50*
	(0.62)	(0.70)	(0.86)	(0.66)	(0.45)	(0.57)	(0.45)	(0.56)
Constant	-6.94*	-7.59*	-6.20*	-7.48*	-7.17*	-7.40*	-7.16*	-7.33*
	(0.43)	(0.53)	(0.58)	(0.51)	(0.35)	(0.42)	(0.35)	(0.43)
N	1266	1324	403	1395	2282	2014	2285	2019

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment is coded such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes toward blacks. The economic measures are coded such that higher values indicate more concern or worry. Source: 2012-2016 American National Election Studies.

Combining these items into an omnibus measure of economic anxiety (alpha=0.70 in the 2016 ANES) produced similar findings (Table A8.5). Although the relationship between economic anxiety and presidential vote choice appeared larger in 2016 than 2012, this difference was not statistically significant. Moreover, the relationship between economic anxiety and vote choice was much smaller than the relationship between racial resentment and vote choice—and this latter relationship was larger in 2016 than 2012.

Table A8.5. The Relationship between Whites' Economic Anxiety (Omnibus Index) and Vote for President

	2012	2016	2012-2016

Economic anxiety index	0.31	0.76*	0.44
	(0.28)	(0.37)	(0.27)
Economic anxiety index × 2016			0.13
			(0.44)
Racial resentment	3.29*	5.24*	3.84*
	(0.33)	(0.41)	(0.27)
Racial resentment × 2016			0.75**
			(0.28)
Party identification	5.49*	5.01*	5.25*
	(0.27)	(0.33)	(0.21)
Ideology	4.59*	3.45*	4.15*
	(0.45)	(0.56)	(0.35)
Constant	-7.21*	-7.36*	-7.31*
	(0.35)	(0.43)	(0.27)
N	2287	2021	4308

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment is coded such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes toward blacks. The economic measures are coded such that higher values indicate more concern or worry. Source: 2012-2016 American National Election Studies.

Several other findings support the conclusions of these models. For example, in the VOTER Survey, whites' subjective assessments of personal finances as well as the national economy (as measured in December 2011) were not more strongly related to voting in 2016 compared to 2012. (And even though these were measured in December 2011, they were still strongly affected by partisanship even then, making any correlation with voting behavior potentially spurious.)[88]

A stronger test is to compute changes in people's subjective assessments between December 2011 and December 2016 and see if this was correlated with how people voted in 2016. One might think that people whose assessments worsened would tend to favor to Trump while those whose assessments improved would tend to favor Clinton. But there was no such correlation, once party identification, ideology, and racial resentment were taken into account. Similarly, in a model of 2016 vote choice that included only 2012 vote choice and changes in economic assessments, these assessments had no statistically significant impact.

Part III: Activation of sexism

The analysis of gender attitudes relies on a measure described as "modern sexism." In the VOTER Survey, this was measured with four items, each of which asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with these statements:

- Women should return to their traditional roles in society
- When women demand equality these days, they are actually seeking special favors
- Women often miss out on good jobs because of discrimination
- Women who complain about harassment often cause more problems than they solve.
- Sexual harassment against women in the workplace is no longer a problem in the United States.

In addition, the statistical models included racial resentment (measured as described earlier), party identification, and ideology.

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[88] See Sides, "Race, Religion, and Immigration in 2016," ibid.

Table A8.6. The Relationship between Whites' Modern Sexism and Vote for President (VOTER Survey)

	White women			White men		
	2012	2016	2012-2016	2016	2012	2012-2016
Modern sexism	2.67*	3.09*	1.92*	1.76*	4.20*	1.41**
	(0.42)	(0.48)	(0.39)	(0.49)	(0.65)	(0.47)
Racial resentment	2.32*	3.59*	2.89*	2.56*	4.61*	3.31*
	(0.35)	(0.41)	(0.23)	(0.42)	(0.54)	(0.30)
Party identification	4.32*	4.72*	4.29*	5.17*	5.84*	5.50*
	(0.30)	(0.34)	(0.21)	(0.35)	(0.43)	(0.26)
Ideology	1.89*	3.36*	3.02*	6.10*	8.44*	6.76*
	(0.50)	(0.60)	(0.34)	(0.62)	(0.82)	(0.45)
Modern sexism × 2016			1.12*			1.61*
			(0.57)			(0.65)
Year 2016			0.18			-0.28
			(0.20)			(0.28)
Constant	-5.61*	-7.15*	-6.51*	-7.91*	-11.44*	-8.77*
	(0.32)	(0.41)	(0.26)	(0.43)	(0.72)	(0.36)
N	2438	2438	5311	2540	2540	5487

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment is coded such that higher values equal less favorable attitudes toward blacks. Modern sexism is coded such that higher values equal higher levels of sexism. Source: VOTER Survey.

The pattern in the VOTER Survey data emerges in the ANES as well, although only two the items measuring modern sexism were included in these surveys ("special favors" and "complain about harassment"). The main difference is that the increasing relationship between modern sexism and vote choice is visible among both white men and white women.

Table A8.7. The Relationship between Whites' Modern Sexism and Vote for President (ANES)

	White women			White men		
	2012	2016	2012-2016	2012	2016	2012-2016
Modern sexism	0.93	2.10*	0.74	1.64**	2.99*	1.47**
	(0.58)	(0.60)	(0.57)	(0.57)	(0.70)	(0.55)
Racial resentment	2.81*	5.23*	3.78*	3.27*	4.41*	3.76*
	(0.45)	(0.58)	(0.35)	(0.53)	(0.61)	(0.40)
Party identification	5.06*	4.82*	4.91*	5.98*	5.05*	5.59*
	(0.36)	(0.43)	(0.27)	(0.43)	(0.51)	(0.32)
Ideology	5.01*	2.81*	4.16*	4.18*	3.59*	3.88*
	(0.64)	(0.77)	(0.49)	(0.67)	(0.91)	(0.53)
Modern sexism × 2016			1.67*			1.89*
			(0.82)			(0.88)
Constant			0.004			-0.22
			(0.28)			(0.31)
N	-7.08*	-7.19*	-7.14*	-7.64*	-7.63*	-7.55*

Cell entries are logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1=Trump and 0=Clinton. Party identification and ideology are coded such that higher values equal stronger Republican and conservative identification, respectively. Racial resentment is coded such that higher values equal less favorable

attitudes toward blacks. Modern sexism is coded such that higher values equal higher levels of sexism. Source: 2012-2016 American National Election Studies.

Part IV: SpotCheck advertising analysis

The SpotCheck project was led by political scientists Lynn Vavreck and John Geer in collaboration with the survey firm YouGov, G2 Analytics, and SageEngage. Each week between February 2016 and Election Day, a representative sample of Americans were randomly assigned to three groups: two groups watch one of two political ads and a third group watched a non-political ad (for the Allstate insurance company, featuring Peyton Manning). Respondents rated the ads as they watched them and afterward answered questions about the ads and the candidates.

The analysis in this chapter uses the 18 weeks of data from June 6—after Clinton and Trump had officially won enough delegates to become their party's nominees—to Election Day (N=23,000). In most of these weeks, the ads tested were attack ads: 17 waves between June 6 and Election Day tested an attack on Trump (N=8,220 saw one of these ads) and 12 waves tested an attack on Clinton (N=4,240).

We measured views of the candidates first with 3-category favorability scales (-1=somewhat or very unfavorable, 0=neither favorable nor unfavorable, +1=somewhat or very favorable). We also asked people their vote intentions, which we then measured two ways: as a binary variable capturing preference for Clinton or Trump (excluding those who were undecided or supported a third-party candidate) and as a three-category variable that places undecided and third-party voters in the middle category. We then modeled vote intentions as a function of which ad respondents had seen (an anti-Clinton or an anti-Trump ad, with those who saw the Allstate ad as the excluded category). The analysis also accounted for age, race, education, party identification, and gender. (Accounting for the amount of time until the election did not change these estimates.)

The table below presents the results of the models. First, neither Trump's attacks on Clinton nor her attacks on him affected her favorability ratings. Second, Trump's favorability ratings were 2 points lower among those who saw an ad attacking him and 2.7 points higher among those who saw an ad attacking Clinton. Third, in the model of three-category vote intentions, Clinton's vote share was 1.6 points higher among those who saw an attack on Trump, compared to those who saw the Allstate ad. (In the model of two-category vote intentions, it was about 1 point higher.) By contrast, there is little difference between those who saw an attack on Clinton and the control group.

Table A8.8. Treatment Effects of Campaign Ads in SpotCheck Experiments

	Vote intention (3-category)	Vote intention (2-category)	Trump favorability	Clinton favorability
Model 1:				
Saw attack on Trump	0.016	0.009	-0.020	0.014
	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.012)	(0.011)
N	15,003	12,699	14,807	14,850
Model 2:				
Saw attack on Trump	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Saw attack × Democrat	0.01	0.002	-0.04	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Saw attack × independent	0.08	0.05	-0.10	0.04

	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
N	15,003	12,699	14,807	14,850
Model 3:				
Saw attack on Trump	-0.003	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Saw attack × college grad	0.03	0.03	-0.01	0.06
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
N	15,003	12,699	14,807	14,850
Model 4:				
Saw attack on Clinton	0.002	-0.01	-0.03	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)
N	8,650	7,423	8,563	8,572
Model 5:				
Saw attack on Clinton	-0.03	-0.03	0.04	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Saw attack × college grad	0.04	0.03	-0.02	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)
N	8,650	7,423	8,563	8,572
Model 6:				
Saw attack on Clinton	-0.02	-0.01	0.05	-0.01
	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Saw attack × Democrat	0.06	0.02	-0.09	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Saw attack × independent	0.04	0.02	-0.02	-0.03
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
N	8,650	7,423	8,563	8,572

Source: SpotCheck. Each model also includes these covariates: race/ethnicity, age, education, gender, and party identification. Models including interactions include all constituent terms of the interaction. Cell entries are least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

The results also suggest that at least two groups were particularly affected by Clinton's attacks on Trump: political independents and those with college degrees. That political independents would respond more strongly is unsurprising, given that they have weaker preexisting loyalties to the parties and are thus more susceptible to the influence of campaign information. The larger reaction among college-educated voters suggests that Clinton's appeals were particularly effective among those predisposed to agree with her attacks on Trump's temperament and his treatment of women and racial and ethnic minorities. Trump's attacks on Clinton appeared to have a polarizing effect: increasing support for Trump among Republicans but increasing support for Clinton among Democrats.

Part V: Analysis of Television Advertising and Field Offices

The analyses of the relationship between vote share and both television advertising and field offices are based on statistical models of all counties in the U.S. (exclusive of boroughs in Alaska and Washington DC). The dependent variable is Clinton's share of the major-party vote in each county. The television advertising data are from Kantar Media/CMAG under license to authors. Ads are measured in terms of thousands of ads aired (not gross ratings points) and include ads aired by the candidates' campaigns as well as by outside groups supporting each candidate. The field office data are from Clinton's campaign website and Obama's 2012 campaign website. Field offices are measured as the number of field offices in a county. The demographic variables are

from the U.S. Census and the American Community Study. Contemporaneous measures are from 2016 and changes in these measures are between 2012 and 2016. All statistical models also include fixed effects for states. The standard errors are clustered at the level of the state.

Table A8.9. The Relationship between Vote Share and Television Ads and Field Offices in U.S. Counties

	Cumulative ads (June 1-Election Day)		Ads in last week of campaign only		Number of field offices	
	coeff	s.e.	coeff	s.e.	coeff	s.e.
2012 Democratic vote share	0.856	0.016	0.857	0.016	0.855	0.016
Clinton ads (1,000s)	0.099	0.061	0.734	0.399		
Trump ads (1,000s)	-0.276	0.221	-0.152	0.578		
Obama 2012 ads			-0.524	0.362		
Romney 2012 ads			-0.091	0.311		
Clinton field offices					0.299	0.130
Obama 2012 field offices					0.046	0.099
No ads in media market	-0.264	0.203	-0.308	0.205		
Unemployment rate	0.071	0.077	0.075	0.079	0.067	0.078
Change in unemployment	-0.130	0.063	-0.126	0.062	-0.128	0.062
Median income ($1000s)	-0.020	0.017	-0.021	0.017	-0.020	0.017
Change in income	-0.030	0.018	-0.030	0.018	-0.029	0.018
Population (millions)	0.513	0.370	0.501	0.362	0.295	0.308
Change in population (persons)	0.001	0.005	0.002	0.005	0.002	0.006
Percent college degree	0.454	0.026	0.454	0.027	0.448	0.026
Change in % college degree	-0.169	0.024	-0.169	0.024	-0.166	0.024
Percent no H.S. degree	0.101	0.028	0.099	0.028	0.098	0.027
Change in % no H.S. degree	-0.045	0.029	-0.044	0.029	-0.045	0.028
Percent Latino	0.104	0.014	0.103	0.014	0.105	0.014
Change in % Latino	-0.051	0.076	-0.054	0.077	-0.049	0.077
Percent black	0.162	0.014	0.162	0.014	0.161	0.014
Change in % black	-0.293	0.095	-0.290	0.094	-0.250	0.089
Median age	-0.073	0.016	-0.071	0.016	-0.071	0.016
Constant	-11.406	1.275	-11.457	1.293	-11.230	1.305
Fixed effects for states	Y		Y		Y	
N of counties	3107		3109		3109	
N of states	49		49		49	
R-squared	0.97		0.97		0.97	

Cell entries are least squares regression coefficients with estimated standard errors clustered by state. The dependent variable is Hillary Clinton's percent of the major-party vote.