For Hate or Money; Causes of Support for President Trump and Conservatism

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Abstract

In this paper I explore voter choice and what influences candidate support. Using the 2016 ANES pre- and post-election survey data I was able to examine the different social and economic variables that contributed to President Donald Trump’s election. The largest predictor of support for President Trump was having values associated with the alt-right movement; thus, sexism, racism, and nationalism were very influential in determining if a White individual would support then-candidate Trump. While current economic pessimism was also a contributing factor, it was the social issues of racism, nationalism, sexism, and anti-LGBTQ sentiment that influenced support the most. In addition, when looking at the 2012 and 2008 ANES pre- and post-election data, and comparing the variables with conservatism, it is clear that racist, sexist, and nationalistic values became correlated with conservatism within the last 10 years and were not introduced by President Trump’s campaign. Finally, the Kinder scale of racism was found to be the most relevant way to measure racism while stereotypical and biological based racism were much less correlated with either support for President Trump or conservatism.

Keywords: President Trump, Conservatism, Sexism, Racism, Nationalism, Economic Voting, LGBTQ, White Nationalism, Alt-right
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Introduction

Every four years voters make a decision on which candidate they will support to become, or remain, the United States’ President. What causes an individual to support one candidate over another has been the focus of many political science studies. Party affiliation, political ideology, and economic health have, previously, been the main indicators of which candidate a voter chooses to support. The last Presidential election, held in 2016, has created a new opportunity to examine what causes support for a candidate to vary.

By all accounts, President Donald Trump’s election campaign was unique for many reasons. His rhetoric had not been used by a major party backed candidate before, and he made numerous missteps that have ruined candidates in previous races. President Trump’s strategies and speeches were able to energize a fiercely loyal base and helped him win the White House. In addition to the economy, then-candidate Trump focused many of his speeches on social issues. Specifically, the issues of race, immigration, LGBTQ rights, and women’s rights were all mentioned at one point or another. In this paper I will help to identify the factors that influenced White individuals to support the then-candidate Donald Trump; as well as work to ascertain if it was the economic issues, social issues, or a combination of the two that made his campaign so successful. I will also use previous Presidential election data to uncover any unique factors or patterns that may exist in the White Conservative population.

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1 President Trump mocked disabled reporter, Serge Kovaleski. This has polled as the action that bothered voters the most (Carmon, 2016). Yet, Howard Dean lost respectability when he gave an awkward ‘battle cry’ (Walsh, 2008)
2 48% of Independent voters and 41% of moderates voted for President Trump. He was able to pull populists from the Democratic party and Independents (Drutman, 2017; Weldon, 2018)
3 President Trump called Mexican immigrants rapists, demanded a ban on Muslims, and proposed punishing women who get an abortion (Diamond, 2015; Kertscher, 2016; “What Trump has said about Mexicans,” 2016).
Relevance

Determining the factors that create support for a political candidate is of the utmost importance for our democracy. Voting, the ultimate show of support, is a pillar of our governmental system. Campaigns, whether they are at a city or federal level, live and die by knowing how to garner more support than their opponents. As such, candidates must determine the best substance and medium for their message to garner more support than that of their opponents.

Understanding what societal and economic factors inspire support helps to increase our understanding of our political and social structures. Knowing how influential race, gender, sexual orientation, and economic health is to the polity can also be instrumental in policy creation and improving society in general. With every election the voters define the issues that are most important to them and this can pinpoint their wants and needs.

Examining the 2016 Presidential election can help to increase our knowledge base. President Trump was able to persuade non-conservative voters to throw their support behind him, thus providing additional data. This data on support, the economy, and social issues can create a more vivid, complete picture that can explain what causes variation. For example, the economy has been recovering steadily for years; the stock market continuously broke records, unemployment was down, and inflation was low (“United States Economy - GDP, Inflation, CPI and Interest Rate,” 2018). In previous elections a healthy economy usually meant that voter support would fall to the incumbent’s party (Erikson, 1989). This shift from the norm has allowed for a more in-depth look at the causes of voter support by allowing us to narrow the focus to what caused support for then candidate Trump to vary.
Argument

President Trump was accused of using many dog whistles in his campaign speeches, as well as bluntly using terms that many considered racist, xenophobic, and sexist. He was very specific in his discriminating descriptions of Mexicans, African Americans, Muslims, and women while obliquely disparaging other minorities[^4]. He outlined plans to end Muslim immigration, abortion, illegal immigration, inner-city crime, and other social ills (Diamond, 2015; Farley & Kiely, 2017; Kertscher, 2016; McCammon, 2016).

Conversely, President Trump’s comments about the economy, and how he would provide a remedy, were vague and unfocused. One example of this is President Trump’s proposed withdrawal of the United States from the global economy; yet, he gave few details on how this could be done or how any negative effects would be avoided (“What is Trump’s economic plan?,” 2016). In addition, the general economy was recovering, but President Trump based much of his campaign on improving the economy for those that were not recovering as well and others. To point, President Trump focused on the White middle-class blue-collar workers along the Rust-belt of America, but once again, there was declarations of change with little detail. This difference implies that his supporters saw his social stances clearly, but his economic policies were not as tangible.

[^4]: At a stump speech he pointed out that he had the support of the African-American community by pointing out a person at his rally. He pointed at the man and exclaimed, “Look at my African-American over here...” (CNN, 2016). President Trump also claimed that Mexican immigrants are, “Drug dealers, criminals, and rapists...” (“What Trump has said about Mexicans,” 2016). Finally, when discussing Megan Kelly’s questions during a debate he stated, "You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her — wherever," (Alexander, 2015). These are just a few examples of his statements about minorities and women, but they are by far not isolated incidents.
Hypothesis

Due to the prevalence of social issues during the last Presidential election, in addition to then-candidate Donald Trump’s clear stance on these issues, I believe that White Conservatives based their support for then-candidate Trump on these social issues\(^5\) rather than fear about the current or future economic health of themselves or the country.

As a second hypothesis, I have a theory that there is a connection between social issues, involving race, gender, nationality, and sexual orientation, which are linked to political ideology. This goes beyond social conservatism that supports established institutions and traditional values. Specifically, Conservatives are more likely to hold ideals that rank them higher on scales that measure racism, sexism, nationalism, and anti-LGBTQ sentiment\(^6\).

Theoretical Framework

The study of what causes individuals to support one candidate over another has been well examined. In the past, research has shown that many individuals use party affiliation and political ideology when determining whom to support; while others find that voters look at what the candidate will do for them personally. These gains, real or imagined, can come in the form of economic gains that would give tax relief or job gains, uplifting the voter’s socio-economic class, or punishing a different socio-economic class. There is also evidence that the race, age, and sex of the candidate are influential. It is difficult to fully examine data around a question so large, therefore I will examine the smaller question of what caused support for President Trump to vary

\(^5\) Social issues for this paper will refer to topics that revolve around race, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation.
\(^6\) This argument is not new, but it is controversial. When Dr. Jim Sindanious wrote about cognitive style, authoritarianism, conservatism, and racism is 1985 Dr. John J. Ray compared Dr. Sindanious’ work to that done by the Nazis (Ray, 1988; James Sidanious, 1985; Jim Sidanious, 1988).
in the 2016 election. The breadth of literature that covers the wider question is diverse and will help to focus my research to discover meaningful connections.

**Conservatism**

One of the most predictive variables in determining voter choice is party identification and ideology. While this has been researched extensively, there are questions about whether party identification is a non-political, causal issue. This could be due to the relatively static nature of party affiliation that is related to social upbringing (Burbank, 1997; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1980; Erikson, 2009). While political ideology can be mutable, it is still a valid measure for prediction that may be more useful that party identification (Laméris, 2015). Others see directionality and proximity of a candidate to a voter to be the most influential variable on voter choice. When a candidate leans in the same direction as the voter and have a proximity to their ideology the voter is more likely to support them (Tomz & Van Houweling, 2008).

Regardless, political ideology may be influenced by many different variables. The numerous studies pinpoint economics, utility, emotion, and social reasons as important factors influencing a voter’s level of support for a candidate. This creates an opportunity to examine any social and economic factors that can influence voter choice, political ideology, and how they interact together.

**Social Conservativism**

Social conservatism is based on the idea that traditions and the family values are necessary for a well-run society. While much of the social conservative dogma relates to same-sex marriage and the pro-life movement, there is also the belief that self-reliance and
independence are necessary for a good life. In addition, a woman’s place in the world and the home are also very important. There can be undercurrents of segregation, in that individuals of the same faith, culture, and sometimes race should remain together (Bailey & Brady, 1998; Dochuk, 2012; Trentmann, 1998). The relationship with racism, nationalism, and sexism is likely linked to their correlation with general conservative values of limited government, free markets, and personal responsibility.

General Economy

Many scholars have found that voter choice is heavily influenced by their perceptions of the economy. The nation’s economic health, current and past, can influence which candidate a voter will support. Voters will act against the incumbent, or the incumbent’s party, when the current economy is doing poorly and will vote for the incumbent, or their party, when the current economy is doing well (Erikson, 1989, 2009; Hibbs, 1989; Lewis-Beck & Tien, 2010; Lockerbie, 1991; Tufte, 1980; Wlezien, Franklin, & Twiggs, 1997).

Yet, Hellwig claims that voters will reduce the amount of economic responsibility a candidate holds if the global economy is restricting the candidate’s political options, but they will increase the weight of other non-economic issues. Hellwig’s findings state that when a country is active in the global economy the voters disregard many economic issues, assuming that they are out of the hands of the politicians, instead focusing on any relevant social issues (Hellwig, 2008). This implies that voters care more about current and past economic

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7 During the 2016 election cycle, the global economy, and the United States’ position therein, was discussed in general terms, but may have developed a link between the United States and global economy.
performance rather than future gains and that economics can be sidelined in favor of using a social issue as a measuring stick.

**Pessimism**

Pessimism, in general, can be seen as an innate trait. Long-term pessimism, in particular, has a physiological basis for being a fairly static characteristic. While the level of long-term pessimism can remain relatively unchanged, it is not a fully immutable trait. An individual is located along a small range between completely optimistic and completely pessimistic. Where someone sits on this reduced spectrum is dependent on current conditions as well as the status of their neural network (Hecht, 2013).

This neural network is mapped in early childhood and gives an individual their preset range of how optimistic or pessimistic they will be (Hecht, 2013). In addition to this, pessimism dominates when the costs of a choice are uncertain, but optimism prevails when the benefits are uncertain. Because the benefits are usually uncertain in democracies, optimism can be more influential (Zorn & Martin, 1986). When the range and the separation between long-term pessimism and short-term pessimism is included in the analysis, it is logical to have future and current economic pessimism variables.

**Future Economic Pessimism**

Lockerbie found that when voters do take the economy into account they tend to use their thoughts about the future rather than the past to determine their voter choice. He determined that voters are more likely to make predictions about how the candidate will affect the future economy rather than how they, or their opponent, has already influenced the economy. It is a system of fortune telling, not punishment and reward (Lockerbie, 1991). Wilson has written
about voter choice in relation to utility and political reward. He found that voters examine what their vote can accomplish and how it can help achieve a desired goal (Wilson, 2008). They both found that the economy was the most influential factor in voter choice during the election.

**Current economic pessimism**

As mentioned previously, current and future economic pessimism stem from different thought processes and neural impulses. While current economic pessimism may be the same level as future economic pessimism, this does not preclude the idea that an individual can believe that the economy will be better in a year while thinking it is in poor shape today. This is an important distinction to make, because future pessimism can be related to an individual’s level of general, innate optimism or pessimism while current economic pessimism is linked to recent conditions that the individual perceives as good or bad (Hecht, 2013). This implies that long-term pessimism, as a personality trait, is fairly static; while current pessimism may fade as economic conditions improve (De Grauwe, 2011; Hecht, 2013; Zorn & Martin, 1986).

**Social variables**

The basis for all discrimination is the human created group dynamic. Humans form an in-group, filled with people like them, and an out-group whose individuals are not like them. This in-group/out-group mentality can cause discrimination and strife. Out-groups can be created by individuals dividing people by skin color, religion, sex, gender, culture, country of origin, or other factors (Mansfield & Mutz, 2009; Omi & Winant, 1994; Redlawsk, Tolbert, & McNeely, 2014; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1982; Sundstrom & Kim, 2014).
Nationalism

Nationalism focuses on out-groups that have a different culture and are from a different country, but the individuals do not need to be of a different race (Mansfield & Mutz, 2009; Sundstrom & Kim, 2014). Nationalism’s ability to create ‘national enemies’ moves the antagonism from a personal level to a national one (Schrock-Jacobson, 2012). Though this is removed from the personal level, individuals are still punished, or rewarded, according to their nation of origin. Discourse focusing on interactions with foreign powers, global trade, war, and refugees have the potential to allow nationalism to influence public opinion.

When issues about immigrants are a strong part of an election cycle, voters can be influenced by their level of nationalism. This can cause voter support to vary along a left-right spectrum depending on the nature of the issue (Vecchione, Caprara, Dentale, & Schwartz, 2013). Blind patriotism⁸, another side of nationalism, can be used to influence voters. When the lens of nationalism and blind patriotism focus on those of different ethnic or national backgrounds their influential powers also magnify (Parker, 2010; Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999).

Anger can increase the influence of nationalism on voter choice. When anger is involved, it can take the form of voting against a candidate, a party, a socio-economic class, or immigrants in general. High levels of nationalism can engender anger against those that the voter views as being unsupportive of a nation’s explicit or implicit values (Glazer, 2008). Regardless of the pathology of nationalism it can be very influential when voters choose who they will support.

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⁸ Blind patriotism is defined as, “rigid identification, global positive evaluation, staunch allegiance, and intolerance of criticism.” (Schatz, 1994)
**Racism**

While racism and extreme nationalism\(^9\) are very similar, many believe that they are different concepts with different mechanisms. Racism tends to affect an individual’s beliefs about different races within their country, not their feelings on international issues (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010; Omi & Winant, 1994; Sundstrom & Kim, 2014). The waters do become a bit muddy when immigration from a country inhabited by a different race is the issue. As an example of the complexity of the issue, the impact of the racism that some feel toward Latinx can be exacerbated when the individuals also originate from a different country.

There are multiple measurable forms of racism. Stereotypical racism, biological-based racism\(^10\), fear based racism, and Kinder scale racism. Stereotypical racism is measured by asking if a respondent feels that Blacks or Latinx are lazy or violent. Biological-based racism is founded on the premise that those of a different race are genetically inferior and creates a general dislike of those not of the individual’s race. Symbolic racism is measured by the Kinder scale: Blacks do not try hard enough, Blacks should work their way up, Black leaders are pushing too hard, Blacks are responsible for racial tension, Blacks are not limited in their ability to get ahead, slavery and discrimination are not an issue, and Blacks do not get less than they deserve (Kinder & Sears, 1981). All types of racism, but specifically Kinder scale racism, have the ability to influence an individual’s vote choice (Henry & Sears, 2002; Jacobson, 1998; Kleinpenning & Hagendoorn, 1993; Virtanen & Huddy, 1998).

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\(^9\) Extreme nationalism encompasses issues such as xenophobia

\(^10\) For the purposes of this paper, biological based racism will be referred to as dislike of people of color or anti-POC
This effect can be negated when the voter is feeling hopeful or proud of their country, but the opposite can be seen if they are feeling fear or anger. Redlawsk and others make this connection in their 2014 paper. In conjunction with this theory, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, and Rudman make the argument that some White voters may vote in such a way as to prove that they do not hold racist feelings (Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Redlawsk et al., 2014).

There may be a connection between economic structure and racism. The ‘Southern Strategy’ as described by Inwood shows the links between our economic system and hidden racism. This creates a situation where Southern Republicans can use a mixture of economic policy choices and statements that, on the surface, seem to have no relation to racism, but still cause racist outcomes (Inwood, 2015).

**Sexism**

Sexism can be overt, covert, or a mixture of the two. In recent months the amount of sexual harassment that occurs in Washington D.C. has been revealed to be relatively high. This example demonstrates how sexism is relevant in elections. The disregard of women in power, by both the men in power and the general public, gives insight to how sexism can influence voter choice. When casual sexism in accepted by the public, there is a greater chance that they will not be receptive to women in positions of power (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Mills, 2003; Morrison, Morrison, Pope, & Zumbo, 1999).

It has been found that the majority of women tend to vote for women and men vote for men. When there are two candidates that are the same race and age, but different genders the majority of men will vote for the male yet only a slight majority of all women will vote for the female candidate (Fulton, 2012; Matson & Fine, 2006; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Sigelman &
Sigelman, 1982). When political ideology is included, liberal women are more likely to vote for female candidates, but conservative women are less likely to vote for a female candidate (Ekstrand & Eckert, 1981).

Anxiety

Ladd and Lenz have written extensively on the effects of emotions on voter choice. Anxiety and fear are two of the most persuasive emotions. When fear or anxiety is triggered in a voter it changes how they process information and what issues are influential. While pride and hope can help mask racist, nationalist, and sexist traits, anxiety and fear amplifies these traits. Anxiety can also cause voters to disregard party affiliation in favor of rhetoric that fits with their world view (Ladd & Lenz, 2008).

Voter anxiety has been viewed as an influential emotion in voter choice by both Ladd and Lenz, as well as Marcus. When voters have anxiety they can be more likely to seek out information about the candidates and less likely to vote along party lines (Ladd & Lenz, 2008; Marcus, 2002; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Redlawsk et al., 2014). This creates a polity that is more active in the election process and one that use ideology more, but it does not necessarily mean that the voters are in possession of reliable information.

Methods

I will use the available data to determine if it was President Trump’s stances on social issues of race, immigration, women’s rights, and LGBTQ rights, or his stance on economic
issues that influenced White\textsuperscript{11} voters the most. I will also examine the different forms of racism to see if they had different impacts on support. Using the data of previous Presidential elections I can determine if President Trump’s distinctive style created a unique scenario; one that could limit how the assumptions from the 2016 data analysis can be used for studying the broader question when viewed in isolation.

This study could have used Republicans instead of Conservative as the dependent variable. However, I chose to use the 7-point Liberal/Conservative self-placement scale because choosing party identification could have excluded independent voters, a key bloc in every election. Also, as mentioned earlier, party identification has been seen as a trait that develops early in life and is unlikely to change; while political ideology can change more often.

The economic portion of the data will be divided into present and future economic pessimism. This will allow me to differentiate between current economic dissatisfaction and fear of future personal economic harm to help determine if one has more of an impact than the other. I separated social considerations into multiple parts and sub-parts. Racism will be divided into separate racism measures. I will also combine racism and nationalism to create a White nationalism variable. Finally, I will create an alt-right variable using what I call the hate trifecta; racism, nationalism, and sexism.

\textsuperscript{11} I am focused on White individuals for two reasons. The first is that President Trump carried the election using White votes (“2016 election results,” 2016). The second is demonstrated in a graph, which can be found in appendix A, that shows my alt-right variable and being White interact when looking at support for President Trump.
To help determine if the Trump campaign was a unique occurrence or if it can be used to increase our general knowledge about how support is determined, I will also analyze the 2008 and 2012 Presidential elections. Both the 2008 and 2012 elections had aspects of racism, nationalism, sexism, LGBTQ rights, and economic concerns that will help to shed light on the last election, as well as voter choice in general.

To test my hypotheses I will use the American National Election Studies (ANES) data from the 2016 election. The most recent dataset is the 2016 time series that surveyed individuals pre- and post-election. This set contains numerous questions that cover economic feelings, racist, homophobic, nationalistic, and misogynistic tendencies, as well as political ideology. The 2008 and 2012 ANES pre- and post-election surveys also contain these concepts and will allow me to compare the elections (ANES, 2008; ANES, 2012; ANES 2016).

**Measures**

All data was taken from the ANES pre-post surveys for 2016, 2012, and 2008 (ANES, 2008; ANES, 2012; ANES 2016). Each variable is standardized and has a range of 0 to 1. The specific variables used to create the indexes can be found in Appendix B.

**Dependent variables**

I am examining data from the last three Presidential election cycles. As such, my dependent variable is not the same in all analyses. For the 2016 data I used a feeling thermometer for then-candidate Donald Trump, combining both the pre- and post-election data. In the 2012 and 2008 surveys this was obviously not an option. Therefore, I examined the data using conservatism as my dependent variable; once again combining the pre- and post-survey results.
Current and future economic pessimism

Following the revelations that developed during the literature review, I created a current, as well as a future, economic pessimism measure. This separation will allow me to test the numerous economic and voter choice theories while also determining the effects of current and future economic pessimism on levels of support for then-candidate Trump and conservatives.

The current economic pessimism index consists of variables that gauge the respondents’ thoughts on the current economy as well as the changes in the past year; the existence of a wage gap, economic mobility, and economic health are a few examples. The future economic pessimism index is focused around variables that measure an individual’s feelings about the economy and unemployment situation a year from the time of the survey.

Racism sub-categories

Due to the multiple ways that racism can be expressed I determined that there would need to be multiple racism variables. The first is based on the Kinder scale, which is also considered a measure of symbolic racism, and is the current gold standard. I then created a variable that measured a respondent’s dislike of people of color using feeling thermometers. There is also measures for stereotypical and fear-based racism. All indexes were created by examining the relationships each individual variable had with each other, as well as looking at the F-values. I attempted to use the same or similar questions when making all the variables but each survey was a little different.
Nationalism

Nationalism was created by combining variables that measured a respondent’s feelings about immigrants and immigrant related issues. To be clear, I am making a distinction between nationalism and racism. The literature gives evidence that while the two are related, they stem from different ideas about out-groups. Therefore, I focused on variables that indicated dislike for people originating from outside the United States. While the nationalism measure from each of the years did not use all of the same questions, I used variables that were similar and/or relevant for that time period.

Sexism

The measure for sexism used the typical questions that determined a respondent’s feelings about women’s traditional roles; for example, some questions focused on women in the work force, discrimination, and how women treat men. Once again, I tried to keep the variables as close to the same as possible and relevant to the year of the survey.

Anti-LGBTQ

To create the anti-LGBTQ index I simply combined the variables that related to gay and lesbian rights as well as feeling thermometers for gays, lesbians, and transgender individuals. The measure for the years 2012 and 2008 have questions that were not asked in 2016 as they were not relevant in the 2016 election. These are questions that focus on gay marriage, military

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For the purposes of this paper, nationalism relates to the extreme forms. Therefore, it is not referring to general pride in your country, but more “excessive patriotism” that creates a negative force ("Nationalism | Define Nationalism at Dictionary.com," 2018)
service, and adoption. I believe that this is still a viable measure because these issues were the pillars of the gay and lesbian rights debate in 2008 and 2012.

White Nationalism

Due to the close relationship between racism and nationalism in the United States, I created a measure that combines these two variables. The FBI, and many others, define white nationalism as holding the belief that the United States should be a white nation with little to no immigration. As such, white nationalists support segregation and closed borders (FOIA, 2006; Swain, 2004; Zeskind, 2005). With the increase visibility of the white nationalists it seemed prudent to try to develop a measure that can tap into those combined feeling. Due to the Kinder racism scale being the current standard, that was the racism variable I used when creating the white nationalists variable.

Alt-Right

As with white nationalism, the alt-right movement has also entered into the American political arena. This measure adds sexism to the white nationalism variable, because the alt-right combine the values of white nationalists (racism and nationalism) with sexism. There is some discussion about the alt-right movement also holding anti-LGBTQ views, but this is not as well documented. While they do focus on Alpha males, traditionally masculine males, and Beta male, those then view as feminized, there is no firm information on their LGBTQ stance (Daniszewski, 2016; Landsbaum, 2016; Romo, 2017; “What You Need To Know About The Alt-Right Movement,” 2016). For this reason I chose to keep the anti-LGBTQ variable separate.

While the term “alt-right” was not coined until 2015, I am still using this variable name for the 2012 and 2008 data. The rational is that even though this group may not have had an alt-
right label, individuals still held the same views and the racist, nationalistic, and sexist views were linked as they are today.

Demographics

Age, gender, political affiliation, education level, and religiosity were all included in the analysis. I used the recognized variables for religiosity whenever possible, but some years did not contain the same questions.

Results

The amount of significant findings are fantastically large. The plethora of results cannot be discussed in this small paper, and I will limit this section to discussing the results in relation to White support for President Trump and how it relates to previous cycles conservative supporters. While all tables exclude demographics, they were included as controls in all models.

Kinder scale racism (table 1) and fear racism (table 2) are the two most influential variables measuring racism. Kinder scale racism is the most significant in the 2008 and 2012 models, with the highest beta, .273, in the 2008 analysis and .189 in 2012. 2016 is the only year that the fear based racism, .195, exceeded the Kinder scale racism, .134. When the Pearson’s $r$ (Appendix C) is analyzed, Kinder scale racism, .613, and fear based racism, .594, have the largest correlation with White supporters of President Trump. This is repeated in 2012 for Conservatives, but there is no fear based racism variable for 2008, so I am unable to compare these two variable for this year. Even with the lack of a fear based racism measure, it is clear that Kinder based racism has, by far, the largest correlation with White Conservatives.

The betas show that the Kinder scale, stereotypical, and anti-People of color racism have decreased in the past decade while fear based racism has increased, in relation to White
conservatives and supporters of President Trump. Yet, when the Pearson’s $r$s are examined, all the racism variables have increased since 2008. After further analysis, I determined that all forms of racism are negatively modified by the nationalism variable and this, as well as the other forms of racism (in the bivariate correlation), is causing the difference in scale (Appendix D).

Table 1: Kinder based racism model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2012 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2016 (Trump Support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>.042 (.025)</td>
<td>.092*** (.019)</td>
<td>.275*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder based racism</td>
<td>.273*** (.031)</td>
<td>.189*** (.018)</td>
<td>.134*** (.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>.076 (.043)</td>
<td>.410*** (.023)</td>
<td>.460*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.253*** (.023)</td>
<td>.137*** (.014)</td>
<td>.120*** (.027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.372*** (.048)</td>
<td>.202*** (.024)</td>
<td>.373*** (.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.012 (.019)</td>
<td>.002 (.019)</td>
<td>-.140*** (.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.318*** (.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.204* (.084)</td>
<td>-.142*** (.026)</td>
<td>-.415*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 968 3,061 2,376
Adjusted R-squared 0.383 0.484 0.654

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses
*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001
Table 2: Fear based racism model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2012 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2016 (Trump Support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>.124*** (.018)</td>
<td>.262*** (.033)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear based racism</td>
<td>.106*** (.013)</td>
<td>.195*** (.026)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>.436*** (.023)</td>
<td>.456*** (.034)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.133*** (.014)</td>
<td>.122*** (.027)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>.216*** (.024)</td>
<td>.363*** (.030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>.002 (.020)</td>
<td>-.139*** (.025)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>.307*** (.023)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.077** (.026)</td>
<td>-.364*** (.034)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3,044</td>
<td>2,346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses
*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

Nationalism varies in influence, with the largest betas seen in all the 2016 models (tables 1-6). In the 2008 analysis nationalism has little correlation; and while it has significance in all the 2012 model the betas are anemic at best. Yet, the betas are close to doubling every Presidential election from 2008 to 2016, in every model. The Pearson’s $r$ also jump from .198 (2008) to .613 (2016). As stated with the racism variables, nationalism and racism are linked and they modify each other in the regressions. Unlike the racism variables, there is an undeniable increase between surveys in all models.
Table 3: Dislike of people of color based racism model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 Conservatism</th>
<th>2012 Conservatism</th>
<th>2016 Trump Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>.100***</td>
<td>.180***</td>
<td>.368***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.025)</td>
<td>(.019)</td>
<td>(.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-POC racism</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>-.056*</td>
<td>-.106**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.041)</td>
<td>(.022)</td>
<td>(.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.458***</td>
<td>.504***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.045)</td>
<td>(.022)</td>
<td>(.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.283***</td>
<td>.149***</td>
<td>.163***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.023)</td>
<td>(.014)</td>
<td>(.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.420***</td>
<td>.239***</td>
<td>.378***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.049)</td>
<td>(.024)</td>
<td>(.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.129***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.020)</td>
<td>(.007)</td>
<td>(.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.334***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.364***</td>
<td>-.071**</td>
<td>-.403***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.088)</td>
<td>(.027)</td>
<td>(.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>3,057</td>
<td>2,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses
* p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

The greatest correlation, in all 2012 and 2016 models, is sexism (tables 1-6). With a beta varying between .410 to .458 (2012), and .456 to .504 (2016) there is a very tight spread between models and years. In the 2012 and 2016 models, sexism is moderately suppressed, decreasing from a Pearson’s r of .596 (2012) and .622 (2016). While there is little change in values between 2012 and 2016, there is a large difference in the 2008, .184, and the 2012 values. The sexism variable is affected by the anti-LGBTQ variable in all models, as shown in the analysis (Appendix D).
Table 4: Stereotypical racism model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2012 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2016 (Trump Support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>.133*** (.025)</td>
<td>.344*** (.033)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical racism</td>
<td>-.017 (.065)</td>
<td>-.069* (.031)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>.078 (.045)</td>
<td>.499*** (.034)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.287*** (.023)</td>
<td>.154*** (.027)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.432*** (.049)</td>
<td>.382*** (.030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.010 (.020)</td>
<td>-.141*** (.026)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
<td>.332*** (.024)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.389*** (.091)</td>
<td>-.379*** (.035)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>2,335</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses
*p < .05  **p < .01   ***p < .001

In all models, stereotypical racism (table 4) has little to no significance, or correlation, with support for President Trump or conservatism. As with Kinder based racism, both the stereotypical and anti-people of color (table 3) variables’ betas decrease through the last three Presidential election, while their Pearson’s rs increased. Even with this increase, the only relevant Pearson’s r, .315, appeared in 2016 with the anti-people of color measure and support for President Trump. Similar to the Kinder and fear based racism, nationalism modified the betas; the sexism and anti-LGBTQ variables are also modifying the results in the regressions in comparison to the bivariate models (Appendix D).

The 2008 models have an interesting relationship with sexism. Sexism is not significant in any models for this year, and even the Pearson’s r between sexism and conservatism is low at
.184. Yet, when I examined the relationship between sexism, conservatism, and current economic pessimism there is a surprising finding. This change is best described when viewed as an interaction (graph 1). Individuals that score low on the sexism scale have a steep decline in conservatism as their current economic pessimism increases. In contrast, individuals that are sexist do not change their level of conservatism at their current economic pessimism increases.

*Graph 1: 2008 interaction between conservatism, current economic pessimism, and sexism*

One of the largest changes between the Pearson’s $r$ and beta values is seen in the anti-LGBTQ variable (tables 1-6). Starting in 2008, this variable has a beta of between .253 and .283; while the Pearson’s $r$ is correlated at .514 with conservatism. All models have the highest significance and very low standard error values. As observed, anti-LGBTQ sentiment is the most influential social variable during the 2008 survey for White Conservatives, except in the Kinder based racism model. In this model the anti-LGBTQ and Kinder based racism variable were close in value (table 1).
In the following years the anti-LGBTQ betas decrease from their 2008 levels to hover in the low teens in all models except in the alt-right analysis (tables 1-5). While in the 2016 alt-right model the anti-LGBTQ variable is a bit higher at .215 (table 6). The Pearson’s rs for 2012 and 2016 have a slight increase from .542 to .600 respectively. As mentioned previously, the anti-LGBTQ and sexism variables are linked and this causes them to vary their values from the bivariate analysis and the regressions.

Table 5: White nationalism (Kinder based racism and nationalism) model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2012 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2016 (Trump Support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White nationalism</td>
<td>.273*** (.067)</td>
<td>.283*** (.021)</td>
<td>.359*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>.067 (.043)</td>
<td>.416*** (.023)</td>
<td>.488*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.261*** (.023)</td>
<td>.133*** (.014)</td>
<td>.131*** (.027)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.403*** (.048)</td>
<td>.200*** (.024)</td>
<td>.381*** (.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.009 (.019)</td>
<td>-.001 (.019)</td>
<td>-.133*** (.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.338*** (.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.244** (.085)</td>
<td>-.139*** (.026)</td>
<td>-.413*** (.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>3,061</td>
<td>2,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses
* p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

The white nationalism variable has a larger affect with a .273 beta in 2008, .283 in 2012, and a .359 in 2016 (table 5). In all models, white nationalism is significant with a P of 0.000 and low standard errors. A correlation with conservatism and support for President Trump shows a Pearson’s r of .335 (2008), .512 (2012), and .629 (2016), respectively; which, when viewed all together, shows that white nationalism has increased from past elections, in the analysis. The
difference between the Pearson’s $r$ and the beta can be explained by the sexism variable, in the 2012 and 2016 models, and the anti-LGBTQ variable, in all models. While white nationalism explains much of the variation, it is not the complete picture.

*Table 6: Alt-right (Kinder based racism, nationalism, and sexism) model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2012 (Conservatism)</th>
<th>2016 (Trump Support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alt-right</td>
<td>.253***</td>
<td>.608***</td>
<td>.608***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.036)</td>
<td>(.026)</td>
<td>(.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti LGBTQ</td>
<td>.274***</td>
<td>.170***</td>
<td>.215***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.022)</td>
<td>(.014)</td>
<td>(.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.386***</td>
<td>.177***</td>
<td>.425***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.047)</td>
<td>(.024)</td>
<td>(.029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future econ pessimism</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.169***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.019)</td>
<td>(.020)</td>
<td>(.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>.295***</td>
<td>-.130***</td>
<td>-.325***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.082)</td>
<td>(.026)</td>
<td>(.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>3,061</td>
<td>2,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-squared</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>0.630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Coefficients are standardized and standard errors are in parentheses.

*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001

The alt-right variable is very significant in the 2018 model with a beta of .608 and a Pearson’s $r$ of .658, showing that the inclusion of additional variables has a negligible effect (table 6). Since this variable is composed of Kinder based racism, nationalism, and sexism it stands to reason that it would be prominent; they are all influential and influenced by each other when examined separately in the multiple regression. Including these three variables into one measure reduces the amount of mediation that is seen when they are separate. In addition to the high Pearson’s $r$, beta, and significance, the alt-right variable fits a tight line when graphed with support for President Trump, displaying the strong predictive ability of the analysis (graph 2).
In 2012 alt-right is, again, the most influential variable, with a beta of .608, same as the 2016 model, and a Pearson’s $r$ of .619. Overall, in 2016 and 2012 the alt-right measure is the most correlated variable with Trump support, and conservatism; additionally, the slight changes between the beta and Pearson’s $r$ show that the difference between the two is negligible. The alt-right measure was much less correlated to conservatism in the 2008 data, and while it was influential, it was not the most influential.

In all of the 2016 models the current economic pessimism betas are very significant, varying between .363 and .425 (tables 1-6). The Pearson’s $r$ of .574 for current economic pessimism in 2016 is, in relation to White supporters of President Trump, fairly influential and fairly close to the betas. In comparison, the future economic pessimism measures between -.129 and -0.169, the only distinguishing feature is that the direction was opposite that of current economic pessimism, in 2012 and 2016, and its Pearson’s $r$ is very low, .081 (tables 1-6).
In the 2012 analysis current economic pessimism betas dropped quite a lot to average around .207, and the future economic pessimism variable lost all significance, when examined with white conservatism. Interestingly, the current economic pessimism betas change directions in the 2008 model and ranges between -.372 and -.432; with a Pearson’s $r$ of -.295. The future economic pessimism remains non-significant with no correlation.

All interactions with current economic pessimism show a large gap between those on the low and high ends of the alt-right variable (graphs 3-5). Those that are on the high side of the alt-right scale are more correlated with conservatism or support for President Trump than those on the low side; and in the case of 2008, they fall at a more gradual slope than those that are low on the alt-right scale.

*Graphs 3 & 4: Interaction between conservatism, current economic pessimism, and alt-right*
The usual controls, race, sex, age, education, and religiosity, are used in all models and all years. Conservatism is the only significant demographic in the 2016 data (0.307 to 0.385), and this is no surprise as the 2016 Presidential candidate campaigned under the conservative banner. Otherwise, the demographics did little to affect the overall model.

Discussion

In 2016, White individuals that felt that the future economy would improve were less likely to support President Trump; and this was also the year that current economic pessimism had the largest positive affect on White individual’s support for Trump. The overall economy during the 2016 election was doing well in general, but many blue-collar workers were suffering from economic hardship. This falls in line with many authors that beliefs that voters will change their ideology to support the party that is not in power during poor economic times (Erikson, 1989, 2009; Hibbs, 1989; Lewis-Beck & Tien, 2010; Tufte, 1980; Wlezien et al., 1997). However, the analysis implies that the future economic pessimism variable can work in the opposite direction, or have little to no impact, on White Conservative support. This counters
Lockerbrie and Wilson’s hypotheses on the effect of future economic pessimism (Lockerbrie, 1991; Wilson, 2008).

This pattern can be seen in the 2008 election, with some marked differences. In 2008 the economy was in crisis and the Great Recession was hurting many Americans (Rich, 2013). The negative correlation between current economic pessimism and conservatism in 2008 can be explained by the extremely poor economic situation in addition to the Republican Party being the incumbent candidate. This supports the conventional wisdom that voters punish the incumbent, or their party, when they have current economic pessimism (Erikson, 1989, 2009; Hibbs, 1989; Lewis-Beck & Tien, 2010; Tufte, 1980; Wlezien et al., 1997).

After analyzing the data from the three Presidential elections, I believe that White Conservatives and supporters of President Trump based some of their support on the current economic climate while giving little credence to the health of the future economy. The difference in values between current and future economic pessimism elucidates this point quite well. Regardless, it was only in 2008, during the Great Recession, where economic issues were influential enough for social issues to become secondary.

This analysis implies that White Conservative voters and supporters of President Trump, after the Great Recession, were more influenced by their thoughts on social issues rather than their feelings on the economy. Racism, nationalism, sexism, and anti-LGBTQ sentiment helped to influence White voters to place their ideology on the conservative side of the political spectrum as well as support President Trump. The similarities between the 2012 and 2016 models help to illustrate that White supporters of President Trump and those that fall on the conservative side of the political spectrum hold many of the same ideals.
Many social issues have increased their influence since 2008. While the regressions show that anti-LGBTQ sentiment has stabilized in most models, I believe that the connection with sexism and conservatism are deceptively lowering the anti-LGBTQ variable’s impact. The bivariate correlations show a small increase with conservativism and this is repeated in the regressions that include the alt-right variable from 2012 to 2016. These models illustrate that with the exception of the small groups of LGBT conservatives, such as the Log Cabin Republicans, the conservative ideology does not support the LGBTQ community (Berger, Davie, & Fokas, 2008; Worthen, Lingiardi, & Caristo, 2017).

As mentioned above, the analysis shows that sexism has increased since 2008, in White Conservative individual with the largest increase seen between 2008 and 2012. It indicates that in 2012 and 2016 sexism is a very influential, and potent, factor in voter choice. The large increase, in both the Pearson’s r and betas, from the non-significant 2008 levels points to a possible value shift in White Conservative voters. Yet, the deeper analysis, using interactions, disagree with the idea of a drastic shift.

While sexism has no significance or correlation in the 2008 model, the interaction with current economic pessimism and Conservatism show that there is a connection. Whether or not an individual is sexist is more indicative of their political ideology than their level of current economic pessimism in 2008, regardless of the strength of the current economic pessimism variable. Though this dramatic difference is only seen in the 2008 model, in 2012 and 2016 there is still a large gap between those that have sexist traits and those that do not13. This indicates that sexism is still a large issue for some White Conservative voters and has been as early as 2008.

13 See appendix E for these graphs (graph 6 & 7)
Nationalism is another social variable that has increased dramatically since 2008. The consistent doubling of the beta and Pearson’s $r$ demonstrates that the current levels of nationalism cannot be blamed entirely on President Trump’s campaigning style. While President Trump is not responsible for the earlier increases in nationalism, this does not mean that he did not use this social issue to gain the White House. Also, while every sovereign country needs some nationalism to promote cohesiveness, an overabundance of nationalism may cause isolationism and economic issues, as well as social strife (“The new nationalism,” 2016). The increase in nationalism between 2008 and 2016 is large and worrisome.

The examination between Kinder scale racism, fear racism, stereotypical racism, and dislike of people of color demonstrated that the Kinder scale of racism is still the most accurate, informative, and relevant measure of racism at this time. It also shows that many respondents who exhibited racist tendencies were less likely to base these values on stereotypical ideas of people of color. In addition, the variable that measures general dislike of people of color was also inconsequential, thus it is not a form of racism that has a large influence on White Conservative Americans. This creates a situation where Kinder scale racism and fear-based racism can become the focus of policy while resources are not wasted on trying to eliminate stereotypical and general dislike of people of color forms of racism.

More specifically, the last election cycle brought many questions about how ‘post-racist’ our country actually is. Since social factors were paramount, there will need to be a reassessing of our social dynamic. If, as my analysis shows, racism, nationalism, and sexism were instrumental in President Trump’s successful campaign it brings into question the amount of representation that people of color and female citizens have in our political system, as well as the amount of discrimination they encounter in their daily lives.
When women and minorities face discrimination at the ballot box, and in general, this creates a situation when they have less representation in the government. This includes physical representation as well as the proxy representation that allies provide. With sexism becoming more influential and pervasive, the status of women may need to be monitored. Without representation in the government and private sectors women and minorities may have a harder struggle to have their issues heard and remedied. It is well documented that without adequate representation, minimized groups in society cannot get their issues and needs heard as efficiently as the majority that holds the power (Darden, 1984; Engstrom & McDonald, 1982; Pearson & Dancey, 2011; Rule, 1994; Sanbonmatsu, 2002, 2003).

There is also the issue with the Conservatives, and the Republican Party, and the levels of racism, nationalism, and sexism that may be promoted by the platform. The Republican Party is becoming increasingly White, Christian, and male while the United States is becoming more diverse (Bernstein, 2016; Chinni, 2017). The data shows a link between support for President Trump, social issues, and being a Conservative, and this may be used to influence the Republican Party and their platform, thus encouraging them to enact policies that make them more inclusive to people of color and women.

The apparent ability of social issues to dominate over economics, except in the most drastic of economic situations, allows for the acceptance of my hypotheses. In addition, this implies that voter choice may be highly influenced by the media. When authority figures who hold racist, nationalistic, sexist, and anti-LGBTQ ideals are given credence this may increase their levels in the general populous. If individuals with extreme, or undesirable social values, can sway large swaths of voters, elections are no longer about one man one vote. Policies that restrict the influence one group has over the electorate would help mitigate this issue.
I neglected to include authoritarianism in my models. As such, I will investigate links between authoritarianism, conservatism, and social issues in later papers. My results will determine if my analysis suffers from omitted-variable bias. For example, Edward Rickert found a connection between authoritarianism and an unwillingness to support marginalized groups (Rickert, 1998). While there is a connection between authoritarianism and conservativism, the examination of how racism (and other social issues) fit into this picture has been contentious to say the least (Matthews, Levin, & Sidanius, 2009; Ray, 1988; Jim Sidanius, 1988; Thórisdóttir & Jost, 2011). Expanding on this theory may create a viable way to test any connections that may exist.

Suggestions for further research

When individuals are made to feel safe or strong their thoughts on social issues becomes more liberal (Bargh, 2017). It is not a stretch to believe that when people feel unsafe they tend to prefer more socially conservative policies. The idea that the news programs, crime dramas, other media outlets, and even search engines have increased fear of black men, Muslims, refugees, and general fear is not a new concept (Altheide & Michalowski, 1999; Callanan, 2012; Entman, 1992; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Ghandnoosh & Lewis, 2014; Lee, 2013; Roosvall, 2015). In addition, some researchers have found that radio and television programs have increased in the amount of ‘outrage’ speech in the last 30 years. While this increase was slight in the liberal programs, the majority of ‘outrage’ speech was seen in conservative programs (“Wrath of the talking heads,” 2014). Connecting any increase in subtle, and not so subtle, hate in media and the results from this study would increase our knowledge base on hate and how it is formed and proliferated.
While the general economic health of the United States had steadily increased in the Great Recession, individuals in the Rust-belt, as well as coal miner, were not seeing an increase in prosperity (Millsap, 2017). While being fearful of the future state of the economy was not associated with support for President Trump, having current economic pessimism was highly influential. This could imply that President Trump’s supporters felt that if he won the economy would increase within a year, or that future economic calculations were just not part of their decision process. More research would be needed to make this determination.

As my analysis showed, there is a large correlation between Kinder racism and support for President Trump in White individuals. Amazingly, there was also a high correlation between non-White individuals and Kinder racism. Studying the links between conservatism, people of color, and their feelings about race, immigrants, and women could be very enlightening for political research.

**Conclusion**

Racism, sexism, nationalism, and a pessimistic view of the current economy helped to propel President Trump into the White House. The increase in the level of racism, sexism, and nationalism was not confined to the campaigning period before the 2016 election. This increase began at least 5 years ago, according to my analysis. The worrisome fact that alt-right attitudes that combine racism, nationalism, and sexism are not products of the most recent election creates a less than optimistic picture. The link between holding alt-right beliefs and self-placement as a Conservative is equally troubling and harmful to our two party system.

Additionally, the data shows that economic voting is not always the primary factor in voter choice. Unless the economic situation is dire, social issues can have equal or greater
influence. This revelation needs further evaluation due to the possible ramifications to our democracy. If hate is more powerful than money, then individuals may be able to propel themselves into elected office by promising to subjugate outgroups; and this would be extremely detrimental to the institution of democracy.
References

American National Election Studies -


Schneider


Appendix

Appendix A: Validation of Measure

Graph 6: 2012 interaction between Support for President Trump, alt-right, and ID as white

This graph validates the decision to use the data on individuals that identify as white rather than all Conservatives or President Trump supporters. As this graph shows, holding alt-right views while identifying as white has a larger effect on support for President Trump than for non-whites. While non-White individuals that rank high on the alt-right variable see a small increase in their support for President Trump, the greatest change is in those that identify as White. This opens up an opportunity to examine the non-White alt-right individuals at a later date.

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Appendix B: Index variables

**Racism**

*Kinder based*

**2008**
- Believe that Blacks have not gotten less than they deserve
- Believe that Blacks don’t need to try harder to get ahead
- Believe that slavery is not an issue
- Believe that Blacks should not receive help to improve their lives
- Feel no sympathy for Blacks

**2012**
- Believe that Blacks have not gotten less than they deserve
- Believe that Blacks don’t need to try harder to get ahead
- Believe that slavery is not an issue
- Believe that Blacks should not receive help to improve their lives
- Oppose preferential hiring of Blacks

**2016**
- Oppose preferential hiring of Blacks
- Believe that Blacks don’t need to try harder to get ahead
- Believe that Blacks have not gotten less than they deserve
- Believe that slavery is not an issue
- Believe that Blacks should not receive help to improve their lives
- Believe that Blacks do not suffer from discrimination

*Anti-POC* (all feeling thermometers)

**2008**
- High is bad opinion of Muslims
- High is bad opinion of Jewish people
- High is bad opinion of Asians
- High is bad opinion of Hispanics
- High is bad opinion of Black

**2012**
- High is bad opinion of Muslims
- High is bad opinion of Jewish people
- High is bad opinion of Hispanics
- High is bad opinion of Blacks

**2016**
- High is bad opinion of Muslims
- High is bad opinion of Jewish people
- High is bad opinion of Asians
- High is bad opinion of Hispanics
- High is bad opinion of Blacks

**Fear based**

**2012**
- Believe that Hispanics have a lot of political influence
- Believe that Blacks have a lot of political influence

**2016**
- Believe that cops treat Blacks better than Whites
- Believe that the government treats Blacks better than Whites
- Believe that Whites have little political influence
- Believe that Asians have a lot of political influence

46
Believe that Hispanics have a lot of political influence
Believe that Blacks have a lot of political influence

**Stereotypical based**

**2008**
Believe that Hispanics are lazy
Believe that Blacks are lazy
Believe that Whites work hard
Believe that Whites are smart
Believe that Blacks are not intelligent
Believe that Hispanics are not intelligent

**2016**
Believe that Muslims are violent
Believe that Asians are violent
Believe that Hispanics are violent
Believe that Blacks are violent
Believe that Asians are lazy
Believe that Hispanics are lazy
Believe that Blacks are lazy

**Nationalism**

**2008**
Believe that immigration levels should be decreased a lot
Oppose path to citizenship
Believe that immigrants take citizen’s jobs

**2012**
Believe that immigration levels should be decreased a lot
Oppose path to citizenship
Believe that immigrants take citizen’s jobs
Believe illegal immigrants should be considered felons
Believe that all authorities should check immigration status
Feeling thermometer: High is bad opinion of illegal immigrants

**2016**
Feeling thermometer: High is bad opinion of illegal immigrants
Believe that immigrants are bad for the economy
Believe that immigrants are bad for United States’ culture
Believe that individuals must follow United States’ customs to be a ‘true American’
Believe that individuals must be born in the United States to be a ‘true American’
Believe that individuals must have United States ancestry to be a ‘true American’
Believe that individuals must speak English to be a ‘true American’
Believe that immigrants increase crime

**Sexism**

**2008**
Believe that women who complain about discrimination cause problems
Believe that women do not face discrimination in the workplace
Believe that women seek special favors

**2012**
Feeling thermometer: High is bad opinion of feminists
Believe that there is no discrimination against women
Believe that working moms do not bond with their children
Believe it is better if the man works and the woman stays at home
Believe that a woman’s place is in the home
Believe abortion should be illegal
Believe that abortion should not be a woman’s choice
Believe that the media should pay less attention to discrimination against women
Believe that women have more opportunities than men

2016
Feeling thermometer: High is bad opinion of feminists
Individual does not identify as a feminist
Believe that women keep men on a tight leash
Believe that women gain power by controlling men
Believe that women do not appreciate what men do for them
Believe that women who complain about discrimination cause problems
Believe that the media should not pay attention to discrimination against women
Believe that Donald Trump treats women well

Anti-LGBTQ

2008
Believe that people should be able to refuse service to gay and lesbian people
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be in the military
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to adopt
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to get married

2012
Believe that people should be able to refuse service to gay and lesbian people
Feeling thermometer: high is bad opinion of gay and lesbian individuals
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be in the military
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to adopt
Believe that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to get married

2016
Believe that people should be able to refuse service to gay and lesbian people
Believe that people should use the bathroom of the gender they were born to
Believe that there should be no laws protecting gay and lesbian individual’s jobs
Feeling thermometer: high is bad opinion of transsexual individuals
Feeling thermometer: high is bad opinion of gay and lesbian individuals
Believe that there is no discrimination against transsexual individuals

Economic pessimism

Current Economic Pessimism

2008
Believe that the income gap is larger
Believe that the economy is worse since last year
Believe that inflation is worse since last year

2012
Believe that personal economic situation has decreased in the last year
Believe that the income gap is larger
Believe that unemployment has increased in the last year
Believe the current economy is bad

2016
Believe that personal economic situation has decreased in the last year
Believe that the income gap is larger
Believe that unemployment has increased in the last year
Believe that the economy has become worse since 2008

Future Economic Pessimism
2008
Believe that unemployment will worsen in the next year
Believe that inflation will worsen in the next year

2012
Believe that personal economic situation will worsen in the next year
Believe that the economy will worsen in the next year

2016
Believe that personal economic situation will worsen in the next year
Believe that the economy will worsen in the next year

Appendix C: Pearson’s $r$

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## Appendix D

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| N     | 978   | 3,140 | 2,422 |
| Adjusted R-squared | .314 | .439 | .579 |

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| N     | 978   | 3,140 | 2,422 |
| Adjusted R-squared | .258 | .393 | .582 |

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| N     | 978   | 3,140 | 2,422 |
| Adjusted R-squared | .088 | .475 | .634 |
Appendix E

Graph 7: 2012 interaction between conservatism, current economic pessimism, and sexism

Graph 8: 2016 interaction between support for President Trump, current economic pessimism, and sexism