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Methodological and Substantive Advances in the Study of Group Identity in American Politics

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Political Science

by

Melina Much

Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Inés Levin, Co-Chair
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2024

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents.
To my father, Steve, who was not able to make it to see me finish but was my favorite cheerleader.
To my mother, Faith, who served as steadfast support during the process.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Methodological and Substantive Advances in the Study of Group Identity in American Politics

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Irvine, 2024

Associate Professor Inés Levin, Co-Chair
Professor Michael Tesler, Co-Chair

This dissertation has three stand-alone articles that provide methodological and substantive advances to studying American politics. The introductory section introduces group identity in political science and social science. In "Bayesian Multilevel Models for Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class," I update the functional form of intersectionality to provide a modeling approach that better performs in small sample size environments common in historical survey data. The second article, "The Identity-Based Determinants of Voter Confidence," shows how racial attitudes and group identity frame confidence in election integrity in 2020 and how the Bayesian Multilevel Model can be used to study small but influential subsets of voters. The final article, "The Duality of Gender Consciousness in the Dobbs v. Jackson Era," shows substantively how complicated gender consciousness is in the context of abortion on social media as opposed to exclusively feminist consciousness, as seen in #MeToo. Further, this work provides methodological advances in user-generated content as another avenue to study political psychology concepts in public opinion.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"Arguments continue over what constitutes true "identity politics" as a philosophical construct, a public policy imperative, or a flawed means of picking candidates based solely on external characteristics rather than the candidate's own merit. Rather than engaging in a false choice, I opt to short-circuit the debate with a more simplistic view: identity is real and necessary and intertwined in our politics in such a way that there is no going back."
— Stacey Abrams

Social identity plays both a long-standing and timely role in American Politics (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; Converse et al., 1961; Dawson, 1994; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Mason, 2018; Tesler, 2016*a*; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, 2019; Jardina, 2019; Phoenix, 2019). Racial and gender identities represent structural realities that constrain and frame American citizens' political behavior and attitudes and serve as the organizing feature for the most influential sociopolitical movements in recent times. Understanding identity from a substantive and methodological perspective is paramount to the contemporary study of American Politics.

Intersectionality as a research paradigm and knowledge project provides a crucial lens

to investigate the current landscape of collective identities and the interplay between racial, gender, and class (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Intersectionality poses that sociopolitical categories rooted in structural power, namely race, gender, and class, overlap and interweave to create unique lived experiences often missed with overly aggregated analysis. It centers on the experiences of those whose identities sit at the nexus of multiple oppressive identity structures, thereby focusing on change with those who are most precarious, which, in turn, also remakes the world for those who hold levels of privilege.

Substantively, intersectionality allows researchers to explore how identities such as race and gender are politicized, focusing on those for whom the democratic promise is unrealized. Race and gender often become cohesive group-conscious identities through experience with structural discrimination and overt consciousness-raising tactics of social movement organizations (Dawson, 1994; Gurin, 1985). Racial attitudes and racial group consciousness are long-standing factors for shaping political life, and gender consciousness is an influential piece in understanding the contemporary women's movement engagement (Gurin, 1985). Intersectionality also provides a framework for understanding how to operationalize identity in research, but the quantitative operationalization of intersectionality within Political Science is often unsatisfactory. Consequently, the aim of the dissertation moves the substantive literature on collective identities forward while also reinvigorating academic conversations on how to measure intersectional identities and identity-based psychology concepts. Intersectionality also teaches about the importance of disaggregation to avoid missing the differences of smaller subgroups masked by the majority. This dissertation shows how heterogeneity within groups can be uncovered by careful method choice and digging deeper than overly aggregated trends.

I provide three stand-alone articles in the following chapters. Chapter 2 shows the merit of using Bayesian Multilevel Modeling (BMM) for quantifying intersectional identities. Chapter 3 addresses group identity and racial attitudes in the context of voter confidence while

showing how BMM can support the investigation of small but influential portions of the electorate, like conservative minorities. Chapter 4 details the "Nature of Gender Consciousness in the *Dobbs v. Jackson* Era", which establishes user-generated content (UGC) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) as a viable window into lived experience to broaden what we consider knowledge gained from public opinion and challenge the default of using survey data for public opinion.

Chapter 2

Bayesian Multilevel Modeling for the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class

The centrality of social and group identities to American Politics research has been reiterated over decades of Political Science literature (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; Converse et al., 1961; Dawson, 1994; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Mason, 2018). The need for this work has increased steadily since Obama's tenure, which solidified the importance of race, and the Trump era, which clearly demonstrated the importance of multiple identities like race, gender, and class (Tesler, 2016*b*; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, 2018; Jardina, 2019; Sides, Tausanovitch and Vavreck, 2023).

American politics research, however, has not effectively updated the methods used to study increasingly salient intersecting identities. The leading quantitative methods used to account for race, gender, and class in politics often fall short of the theoretical understanding of their compounding nature. The discipline has made strides in recent years to overcome this

methodological divide by using intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). However, the bulk of work on political behavior and attitudes in the United States omits intersectionality– particularly as it relates to the unique experiences of women of color (WOC) in the United States who face discrimination and oppression on multiple fronts. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that the discipline faces gender blindness, which are studies with theoretical reasons to account for gender that fail to do so (Forman-Rabinovici and Mandel, 2023). As a result, crucial gendered patterns in political life are overlooked.

Some of these failures of operationalization and omission surely stem from the difficulty in operationalizing intersectionality as it requires rich contextual understandings of lived experience and working against the hegemonic norm that race, gender, and class can be studied in isolation from each other (Simien, 2007). However, there are also major methodological impediments to understanding the complex nature of intersecting identities in political behavior. In particular, there are real data limitations for quantitative scholars who study subgroups, as survey data often has too small of subsamples for intersectional analysis (Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Barreto et al., 2018). Further, concepts such as gender and sex are often conflated despite them being separate concepts, contributing to the challenge of precisely studying social identities (Bittner and Goodyear-Grant, 2017).

However, a segment of political science scholars such as McCall (2005), Weldon (2006), Junn (2007), Simien (2007), Hancock (2007*b*,*a*, 2019), and Spry (2018) theorize how to use intersectionality within quantitative methods and challenge these norms. These scholars have created frameworks for applying intersectionality quantitatively, outlined the limitations of current methods, and rethought our survey methodology to understand multidimensional identity better. This piece builds on the contributions of intersectional scholars' recognition that the study of political behavior and attitudes in the United States requires an intersectional understanding of identity. I update this literature by demonstrating that there are already quantitative methods available to capture these relationships. Scholars like Jones,

Johnston and Manley (2016); Evans et al. (2018); Merlo (2018); Johnston, Jones and Manley (2018); Bell, Holman and Jones (2019) and Evans, Leckie and Merlo (2020) have illustrated in fields such as sociology and epidemiology that intersectionality can be examined using multilevel modeling (MM) structures—a modeling tactic already present in the toolkit of many researchers.[1] I aim to bridge the existing body of research on American politics and intersectional models while considering the discipline's specific data constraints and areas of substantive focus.

This piece solidifies Bayesian multilevel models (BMMs) as a better option for estimation framework and statistical model compared to frequentist regression using indicators or interaction terms for the study of multidimensional identities. The contemporary quantitative methods used to study multidimensional identities have shortcomings that can be addressed by BMMs, namely, sample size limitations and false discovery rates. BMMs can account for such group-based heterogeneity in data-scarce environments and reduce multiple testing issues by incorporating priors and specifying group-level effects via partial pooling of groups.

These sorts of models have been shown to have utility for intersectionality in other fields, but have yet to be incorporated into intersectional political science. I depart from these existing intersectional modeling approaches, specifically Multilevel Analysis of Individual Heterogeneity and Discriminatory Accuracy (MAIHIDA), with a simpler model. This model often incorporates demographic identity features at the individual and group levels of the regression, which builds in collinearity because covariates are featured multiple times (Wilkes and Karimi, 2023). I argue for a more parsimonious modeling strategy by including intersectional identities only at the grouping level to not only ameliorate this issue but also to not overextend our models in the data-scarce environments so common in the discipline. I also offer meaningful engagement with Bayesian methodologies by incorporating informative priors that are not yet explored in the intersectional modeling literature. This work also uses

[1]Political science, especially comparative politics researchers, readily use MMs to account for the effects of geographical units like countries.

Bayesian methods to candidly show statistical uncertainty as an alternative to the p-value (Wasserstein and Lazar, 2016; Wasserstein, Schirm and Lazar, 2019). This piece shows how informative priors built on previous intersectional work can bolster the model's estimation process and theoretical utility. Building on these methodological opportunities, this piece shows that BMMs are a better option than standard regression for studying multidimensional identities on many fronts.

First, this paper will outline commonly used methods to quantitatively measure identity, including indicator/dummy variables, interaction terms, and subgroup regressions (no pooling). Secondly, I present why the BMM is superior to conventional tactics to show the structure of the multidimensional lived experience with privileges and/or oppression. Thirdly, this piece applies the BMM to a synthetic data simulation and a real-world example with the 2020 American National Election Study Survey (ANES) to demonstrate the performance and offer new substantive insights into how identity mediates the relationship between ideology and partisanship. The paper concludes by showing that researchers can use this model to recalibrate their conventional approaches to understanding the interwoven nature of identity.

2.1 Operationalizing Intersectionality

Intersectionality was pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as she critiqued identity literature and White feminism for a lack of understanding of the interwoven nature of race/ethnicity, gender, and class. In particular, Crenshaw highlighted how the lived experience of racism, sexism, and classism do not line up with the societal understanding of them being separate concepts and left the experiences of lower-income Black women in the shadows. Crenshaw's original intention was to explain this regarding the legal system as an interventionist and practitioner-oriented approach. The intellectual lineage of scholars of color

describing these intersections is long; however, Crenshaw coined the term and approach in a way that has been widely disseminated in academic circles and politics alike (Davis, 2008; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013).[2]

This work is heavily intertwined with feminist and black feminist methodologies in the discipline and beyond. Feminist researchers have long debated the utility of quantitative methods for feminist work as it is rooted in positivist traditions which are seemingly at odds with feminist approaches (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2007; Ackerly and True, 2010). Many of these scholars operate outside the positivist realm through interpretive or ethnographic methods, as these methods provide richer context (Jordan-Zachery, 2007; Alexander-Floyd, 2012). The nuance and context needed for a detailed description of intersections of oppression were often more suited to methods outside of quantitative methods (McCall, 2005).

However, many feminist scholars have used quantitative methods while rejecting positivist notions of objective truth and have a more holistic account of bias and the situated nature of research (Stauffer and O'Brien, 2018). This work is situated along the Stauffer and O'Brien (2018) approach in arguing that a feminist methodology uses the best available method to answer a given question and can reject problematic positivist notions of truth and objectivity. In other words, feminist and intersectional research should be question-driven in picking the method. The BMM is a tool for all researchers, but especially feminist researchers, who have questions best answered by looking at identity in survey studies.[3] The method proposed in this piece is derived from taking the charges of contextual richness and theoretical robustness from interpretive scholars seriously by applying Bayesian methods. Using informative priors and prioritizing the interwoven and modifying nature of social

[2]Scholars and activists include but are not limited to: Gloria Anzaldua, Combahee River Collective, Patricia Hill Collins, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells, and Maria Stewart.

[3]Jordan-Zachery (2007) cautions treating intersectionality as a method to pull out of a researcher's bag of tricks because it is not just a method but a lived experience. This work encourages scholars to meaningfully engage with the intersectionality literature to understand these nuances and employ the method carefully.

identities from the outset creates situated results and, thus more situated knowledge.

Intersectionality poses an invaluable lens by which one can investigate U.S. politics. Americanists using intersectionality have used it to explain: the race-gendering of WOC in political institutions such as Congress (Hawkesworth, 2003; Smooth, 2011; Brown, 2012), the political behavior of WOC (Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Junn, 2017; Junn and Masuoka, 2020; Brown, 2014; Ojeda and Slaughter, 2019), voting rights (Montoya, 2020), interrogating U.S. democracy (García Bedolla, 2007), and political attitudes of different racial groups of women (Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Gershon et al., 2019). Researchers have also sought to apply intersectionality in the comparative context (Weldon, 2006) and have created better datasets for intersectional analysis (Barreto et al., 2018).

2.1.1 Using the Intersectional Research Paradigm

In situating this work in the broader intersectional literature, I will first make an important distinction between intersectionality and multidimensionality and clarify my use of intersectionality. In its travels, intersectionality's intellectual trajectory has morphed so that intersectionality ranges from broader interpretations that employ it as a research paradigm (Hancock, 2007*a*,*b*) and more narrow interpretations that intersectionality should solely focus on the experiences of Black women and social justice projects (Alexander-Floyd, 2012). Therefore, it is important to employ the concept specifically, including how it is being used and who is centered in intersectional analysis.

I employ Hancock's understanding of intersectionality as a research paradigm that "...represents a set of basic beliefs or a worldview that precedes questions of empirical investigation" (Hancock, 2007*a*). In addition, I leverage the claim of Simien (2007) that "... an intersectional approach expects that such identity categories such as race, class, and gender fuse to create distinct opportunities." I use intersectionality to describe the lived experience of

those who face oppression on multiple fronts of their identity, in particular concerning race, gender, and class. Doing this maintains the focus of the intersectionality in this article on WOC. This choice was based on creating research that uses intersectionality in a way that is true to its "world-making possibilities" for articulating the lived experiences of those multiply marginalized (Nash, 2018).[4] I also do not claim to evaluate intersectionality's existence in any of my applications, especially if a result is insignificant, as some research does. I treat intersectionality as the baseline understanding of identity the intersectional paradigm approach recommends. This work is meant to build on intersectionality's long academic lineage even in contexts where quantitative evidence is lacking and show that the BMM can often best capture its effects.

Multidimensionality is used to refer to the larger scope of how race, gender, and class operate interdependently for all individuals, not just those with multiple marginalized identities (Simien, 2007; García Bedolla, 2007; Spry, 2018). In practice, I use intersectionality to explain the experiences of WOC detected by the BMM and multidimensionality to explain the effects on individuals with at least one axis of privilege who are in the model but not the usual focus of intersectional work. This understanding of intersectionality and multidimensionality guides the research questions.

I use the framing for statistical learning contributed by James et al. (2013) to motivate the methodological interrogation of how best to operationalize intersectionality. This framework poses that all statistical learning can be characterized as learning from data about the world around us by looking at the relationship between our inputs ($X's$) and our outputs ($Y's$) (James et al., 2013). We define that relationship as $Y = \hat{f}(x)+\epsilon$. Statistical researchers then have the autonomy to choose their $\hat{f}$, which is the functional form of the relationship between X and Y, or in other words, the systematic information X provides about Y. I

[4]Hancock also outlines the importance of looking at both the individual and structural level to be an intersectional analysis, and I show this method poses a new way to look at the individual level (Hancock, 2007*a*).

will argue that intersectional quantitative methodology as an emerging field should focus on properly specifying the functional form of intersectionality. This is especially important given data size constraints for racial and ethnic groups.

Some have combatted this by purposefully oversampling by race and ethnicity and building survey techniques prioritizing marginalized communities (Barreto et al., 2018). This dissertation provides alternatives when this survey data is unavailable due to data embargo or financial constraints. Therefore, investigating the functional form of intersectionality is particularly helpful when a researcher has underpowered samples (e.g., data from the American National Election Study (ANES)). Researchers must investigate different modeling tactics for $\hat{f}$ to find the best fit given data constraints and the intersectional paradigm.

These theoretical and methodological points lead to the following questions, which guide the rest of the paper. What are the most commonly used methods to incorporate identity into quantitative work? How can these methods better incorporate context and improve the status of data limitations? Scholars utilize three main approaches to identity, none of which pose the same utility as the BMM.

2.1.2 Indicator & Complete Pooling Approaches

The most commonly used approach to account for identity is indicator variables. Additive understandings of identity lead to a reliance solely on binary indicator variables to account for race, gender, and class. Binary dummy variables in regression indicate the influence of a single identity on the outcome and do not consider any combined impact of these identities. Intersectional research shows us that WOC especially do not operate solely through their gender, racial, or class identity at a given moment but are constantly influenced by the three structures (Junn, 2007; Hancock, 2007*b*). Indicator methods cannot be used to study intersectionality as they privilege one aspect of identity and do not consider the holistic

impact of all identities together. This is separate but related to the issues of complete pooling as they both mask group-based heterogeneity.[5] Complete pooling is troubling if the main point of the study is to investigate a particular race/ethnic and gender group, and this tactic "pools" or dilutes group-based heterogeneity (Gelman and Hill, 2006). Indicators are troubling in a similar way, as they mask the combined effect. Indicators or complete pooling will not be considered further as an intersectional method.

2.1.3 Interaction Approach

Secondly, scholars use race and gender interaction terms (accounting for the shared effect of race and gender) in a model as an attempt to accommodate intersectional theory (Weldon, 2006; Block, Golder and Golder, 2023). It allows for the estimation of a baseline and estimate for each intersectional or multidimensional race/gender group. However, it is common practice not to use an indicator of class in the analyses. This is likely due to small sample size issues, but this class disappearing act is problematic as much of the intersectionality literature focuses on the influence of all three identities because class modifies raced and gendered experiences. In addition to this, interaction effects can also have noisy estimates for small sample sizes and are not ideal for estimating grouped effects (Gelman and Hill, 2006). In the synthetic simulation section, I demonstrate that there will often be insignificant interaction terms due to data scarcity in sub-groups rather than a lack of substantive patterns in the data for intersectional patterns. Lastly, interaction terms require interpretation in terms of a reference level. This is problematic for a handful of reasons, namely that, by and large, the racial group chosen to compare against is Whites. Choosing Whites as the baseline without careful consideration can reinforce biases that Whites are the norm and people of color (POC) are deviations from that norm. I will show how MMs allow interpretation without

[5]There are three main ways to "pool" or combine the data: complete, no pooling, and partial pooling. "Multilevel modeling partially pools the group-level parameters at their mean to split the difference between the two extremes of no pooling and complete pooling (Gelman and Hill, 2006).

considering a baseline or reference group, which sidesteps this issue altogether.

There is merit in arguing for the use of interaction terms for their accessibility (many scholars are familiar with them) and the fact that interaction terms account for both the additive and multiplicative forms of race, gender, and class intersections. However, I will argue that the BMM offers a more robust understanding of the effects of intersectionality that better captures the group-based structure in the data. Intersectionality is not about just looking at the identities but understanding the identities relative to the structural power that creates these group-based differences. This structural power and the subsequent effects it causes on each identity group are more compatible with the modeling strategy of an MM that captures overlying structures compared to interaction terms. On a theoretical level, interactions do not give credence to that structure, even if statistically capturing it. Thus, the interactive understanding of identity in practice falls short methodologically and theoretically.

2.1.4 Sub-Group Regression Approach

Alternatively, subgroup regressions, (or a separate regression for each race/ethnic and gender intersection), are another method used by intersectional scholars (Frasure-Yokley, 2018; Hancock, 2019). This tactic lacks modeling parsimony but accounts for the grouped nature of race and gender.[6] Within the methods community, this is called the "no pooling" approach. No pooling methods separate all groups, and regression is run separately for each. This can lead to overfitting issues, and it is problematic for groups with small amounts of data in each group, as the researcher is likely to get more extreme estimates (Gelman and Hill, 2006).

Beyond this, no pooling has four main limitations for intersectional purposes. Most

[6]Parsimony means simplicity and means the models are simple to interpret. It is a desired aspect of a statistical model.

datasets do not often allow for one to subset by race, gender, and class and still maintain large enough sample sizes for robust statistical analysis. This was even outlined in the original discussions of intersectionality within Crenshaw's analysis of defendant experiences with the legal system. The defendants outlined in "Demarginalizing the Intersections" had trouble proving their point as data on Black women were few and far between (Crenshaw, 1989). Secondly, researchers cannot directly compare coefficients across multiple models, so direct comparisons of effects across race, gender, and class subgroups are lost. Third, interpretation is difficult for multiple dependent variables of interest and multiple subgroups, as this requires many to be run for each subgroup and the effect being measured. Lastly, subjecting the same dataset and sets of outcomes to many regression tests results in multiple testing issues, where false discovery rates increase. This means a researcher might get significant estimates for a coefficient of interest by chance rather than based on a true pattern in the data.

BMMs provide an intuitive way to solve the problems posed by the aforementioned methods. In one single model, we can produce an intercept and slope relative to the intersections of race, gender, and class while reducing noise and overfitting risk, maintaining comparisons between groups, and giving more information about the influence of intersectionality. The next section will outline why BMMs are superior to current methods.

2.2 Bayesian Multilevel Models for Intersectional Analysis

Multilevel Models (MMs) are used to accommodate related groups in data. MMs can fit in both Bayesian and frequentist frameworks; however, the utility garnered by Bayesian frameworks makes them a superior choice if possible. A classic example of MMs is using student data in classrooms, where a study that is analyzing these students does not account

for the effect of a given classroom, thus missing an integral component of the student's academic life (Gelman and Hill, 2006; Peugh, 2010). Without accounting for the effect that a given classroom (or group) likely has, a unique trend that holds across students in that classroom is missed. In the case of this piece, the classrooms are the structural impact of intersections of racism, sexism, and classism on identities.[7] For intersectionality, structural oppression is interwoven on many fronts, which creates unique group-level effects for WOC, specifically in many political outcomes.

Multidimensionality also demonstrates that identities with some level of privilege (via race, gender, or class) also have unique lived experiences. To account for these related structures in the data, the MM calculates individual-level effects (the traditional main effects of a regression model), and group-level effects (also called random or mixed effects) which vary across individuals in the sample according to the group. These group-level effects capture the naturally occurring patterns that result from the unique impact of the classrooms, or in this case, race, gender, and class combinations. While this modeling approach has not been approached in political science, the BMM has a proven track record of success in modeling intersectionality (Jones, Johnston and Manley, 2016; Evans et al., 2018; Merlo, 2018; Johnston, Jones and Manley, 2018; Evans, Leckie and Merlo, 2020; Bell, Holman and Jones, 2019). These scholars are more often in data-rich environments and specify their models slightly differently; however, those approaches show that political science as a discipline can also benefit from updating the functional form of intersectionality to a BMM. An outline of the recommended BMM formula for political science use is featured below.

The general form of the individual-level effects is featured below, where i represents a given individual, and j represents the group.

[7]The words effect and estimate will be used interchangeably to talk about MM coefficients; neither is being used in a causal sense.

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

Where the MM differs is the estimation of group-specific effects for both the intercept β_{0j} and the coefficients β_{1j} through partial pooling, which weights the group estimates with the individual level estimates. In other words, partial pooling uses the overall average for the individual level to inform group-level estimates (Gelman and Hill, 2006). The MM also measures residual error terms at the group-level u_{oj}. Those formulas are shown below. In this example, we can estimate the group effect (j) across different coefficients of interest β (slope β_{0j} and coefficients β_{1j}), using the grand mean γ_{00}, deviation from the grand mean in the second level γ_{10}, and group-specific means γ_{01}, γ_{11}. The group-level intercept is β_{0j} and the slope is β_{1j}.

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} Z_j + u_{oj}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} Z_j + u_{oj}$$

For our purposes, I specify the models to have individual-level effects and a grouping variable for each race, gender, and class combination to find specific group-level effects (by the method of partial pooling).[8] This modeling method departs from MAIHDA slightly as the researchers in those projects often account for demographics at the individual level and then group again based on these race, gender, and class combinations. This runs into issues with other researchers arguing that there is collinearity because similar concepts are used at both the individual and group levels. I do not recommend accounting for identities at the individual level. I argue that they should be incorporated at the second level as

[8]The grouping variable is a factor which, for example, has separate levels for Black women, Black men, Latinas, and Latinos, Asian men, Asian women, and White Women and White men in four different class categories (lowest, working, middle, highest). The researcher could enumerate other groups of interest if desired. Multidimensional groups are specified in *one* grouping variable to maintain their interwoven effects.

groups. MMs pose utility for intersectionality without Bayesian methods via partial pooling; however, I will propose using Bayesian methods as they allow for further context to be built into modeling practice and have better small sample size estimation (Rupp, Dey and Zumbo, 2004; Kruschke, Aguinis and Joo, 2012; Zyphur and Oswald, 2015). Bayesian theorem is as follows (Clark, 2018):

$$posterior \propto prior * data$$

$$updated\, belief = prior * current\, evidence$$

Each portion of the Bayesian equation is posed in the context of distributions of values, which is a critical component of Bayesian estimation in contrast to frequentist estimation. Given this, I will estimate individual level and group effects as distributions rather than just point estimates (as in classical regression) through Stan programming and Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) sampling in the *brms* package (Bürkner, 2017).

An in-depth explanation of Bayesian methods will not be given here.[9] While BMM cannot solve all historical data scarcity issues, it can allow researchers to make better use of long-standing datasets like the ANES or their original surveys, which have small sample sizes. In the following subsections, this article details the benefits of moving to a Bayesian framework, the benefits of a multilevel model, and the benefits of combining the two.

2.2.1 Bayesian Benefits

The literature has well documented that Bayesian methods are better suited for small sample group size environments because they utilize a prior distribution during the estimation pro-

[9]For an introduction to Bayesian methods see Gelman et al. (2013), Johnson, Ott and Dogucu (2022) and Clark (2018).

cess (Rupp, Dey and Zumbo, 2004; Kruschke, Aguinis and Joo, 2012; Zyphur and Oswald, 2015). Sample sizes have long been an obstacle for researchers who do quantitative intersectional work, for Crenshaw herself, who ran into issues of sample sizes of Black women being too small for robust statistical analysis (Crenshaw, 1989). Surveys such as the ANES, which is the longest-standing and arguably most well-known American election survey in the discipline, have very small sample sizes of intersectional race, gender, and class groups because it is set up to be representative to the American public. While representative sampling isn't inherently problematic, researchers of intersectionality are often left with lackluster sample sizes for disaggregation. It will likely be the case that multidimensional identity sample sizes will continue to be small in the foreseeable future in these representative datasets, and intersectional research will always need to disaggregate. Therefore, different estimation tactics, such as Bayesian frameworks, need to be explored, which operate better with small sample sizes.

However, this sample size gain does come at a cost, as it requires careful attention to the prior distribution. As scholars such as McNeish (2016) and Smid et al. (2020) point out, estimates in some cases can be biased if certain software defaults or flat priors are casually used without checks. As outlined in the ANES application, I argue for empirical priors based on previous years of the ANES with some adjustments based on extant understandings of the intersectional literature in that given topic.

This use of priors can be leveraged by intersectional scholars to create estimates that take into account intersectional literature that would not be included in frequentist estimation. Bayesian methods with informative intersectional priors leveraging the spectrum of qualitative, quantitative, and interpretive work will better inform multidimensional group heterogeneities than frequentist frameworks. Critical race and feminist scholars have long acknowledged the persistent salience of racism, sexism, and classism's influence on political behavior and attitudes, but much of this work exists in qualitative and interpretive spaces.

Therefore, I argue that building these works into model specifications will lead to more realistic results, especially in a data-scarce environment where it is logical to lean on decades of previous research on a topic. This incorporation of literature into estimation better situates the model and subsequent estimates, making Bayesian methods potentially more compatible with feminist methodologies, which look to create situated knowledge (Stauffer and O'Brien, 2018).

Priors in this paper are garnered by running a comparable model in a previous year of the dataset or a dataset with analogous questions and using those estimates as the basis for the prior year in question. Then, I make adjustments based on the state of intersectional research on the topic. I also recommend utilizing a Lewandowski-Kurowicka-Joe (LKJ) prior on the correlation matrix to account for the inter-group correlation effects. Defining the LKJ prior (which allows for correlations between the levels of the grouping variable) helps build in the context of the interrelated nature of race, gender, and class as implied by multidimensional identity research. An LKJ prior of less than 1 as used by this piece denotes a prior which allows for higher between-group correlations, and those greater than 1 lead to less.[10] An LKJ prior of less than 1 might be desirable to a researcher because it can help account for the related structures between groups, like shared race or shared gender patterns within the grouping variable. A more technical account of these priors is explained in the ANES section and the Appendix.

Bayesian methods offer a more comprehensive perspective on uncertainty than traditional frequentist regression. Instead of providing a single point estimate for the "Truth," Bayesian methods estimate it as a distribution of values. This distribution, obtained through thousands of draws, not only yields a point estimate but also provides a range of uncertainty to assess other statistical moments. Consequently, Bayesian estimation enhances our understanding of the true relationship under investigation, presenting a nuanced alternative

[10]LKJ priors of 1 are the default and are uniform correlation priors.

to the frequentist paradigm (Gelman et al., 2013). By moving away from reliance on p-values, Bayesian methods articulate uncertainty through these distributions, avoiding the potential misinterpretations associated with p-values. This approach aligns with contemporary critiques of frequentist statistical significance, emphasizing using Bayesian alternatives that offer a more transparent representation of estimate uncertainty (Wasserstein and Lazar, 2016).

Lastly, Bayesian estimation is now more accessible to scholars than they have been in the past. Previously, they required lengthy package and syntax knowledge of (but not limited to): BUGS, JAGS, or Stan programming.[11] These skills were needed beyond learning Bayesian methods, which are not as widely accessible as frequentist pedagogy. The "brms" package is one of a few R-based programs that interface with R to create multilevel model Stan code for you without needing to learn Stan (Bürkner, 2017).[12] Brms allows more substantive researchers to fit appropriate Bayesian models for their research with greater ease by having robust default priors that influence the results as little as possible. Scholars of race, gender, class, and intersectionality broadly can utilize this step towards accessibility by using Bayesian methods.

2.2.2 Multilevel Benefits

Additionally, some benefits come from using a multilevel model alone in a frequentist setting. The gains that come from partial pooling are detailed below (Gelman and Hill, 2006). Partial pooling gives more precise results than other pooling methods (smaller error bars), particularly when a given group has a small sample size. The estimate garnered by partial pooling is more likely to see a significant result than the relatively noisier no pooling, and complete pooling (the most common method) ignores important patterns of group-based

[11] See MCMC Pack, RCPP, Bayes M.
[12] Also see "rstanarm".

heterogeneity. MMs allow for the researcher to prioritize heterogeneity, as needed for intersectionality and multidimensional identity research. The interwoven nature of race, gender, and class is a vital feature of the data and should not be "pooled" away or treated as an *ad hoc* correction with controls. This benefit to small sample size precision comes with a caveat: the within-group sample size can only be so small. Research has shown that group sizes smaller than 50, and sometimes smaller than 30, can have biased second-level standard errors and coefficient estimates, which is inherently problematic as intersectional effects are at the second level (Maas and Hox, 2005; Paccagnella, 2011). This drawback is part of the benefit of using a Bayesian approach, as scholars have shown the utility of Bayesian logic and estimation in ameliorating these small sample size concerns of groups (Maas and Hox, 2005).

Multilevel models also allow one to estimate new quantities such as the intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) or, in Bayesian contexts, variance partition coefficients (VPC), which are helpful to scholars who care about group-based heterogeneity, i.e., identity scholars.[13] The ICC/VPC is a percentage that shows how much of the total variation the model explains can be attributed to the grouping variable specification. It "ranges from 0 if the grouping conveys no information to 1 if all group members are identical"(Gelman and Hill, 2006). In the frequentist context, the ICC is the ratio of the between-cluster variance to the total variance. The VPC in the Bayesian context involves computing a variance decomposition using the posterior predictive distribution. Initially, it generates samples from the posterior predictive distribution without conditioning on group-level terms and also obtains samples conditioned on all random effects. Subsequently, it calculates variances for each of these samples. This can be thought of as analogous to the ICC (Lüdecke, 2024).[14]

This measure provides utility to intersectional scholars on how influential race and gender

[13]In Evans et al. (2018)'s body of work, they use a similar concept, the proportional change in variance (PCV), to study group-level variation and its impact.

[14]I recommend using the *performance* R package to compute VPC/ICC for *brms* models.

are in accounting for explained variation in the model. Researchers should care about explaining variation, as it reflects how well a model is performing in uncovering the underlying relationships. Below is a table overview of the conventional method and BMM.

Method	**Functional Form**	**Benefits**	**Drawbacks**
Single Regressions	$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$	- Accessibility to the academic community	- Intersectionality is not addressed - This will not be considered an intersectional approach
Indicator Variables	$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$	- Accessibility to the academic community - Race and gender are included in the model rather than obfuscated completely	- Promotes additive understanding of identity - Masks intersectional effects by ignoring differences within race and gender groups
Interaction Terms	$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i * \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$	- Allows for multiplicative/dependent relationship - Accessibility to the academic community	- Noisy (uncertain) estimate with small sample sizes (that are common in intersectional research) - Struggles with third order interactions and up
Sub-Group Regressions	Black Women: $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$ Latinas: $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$ White Women: $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \epsilon_i$	- Rectifies the separation of raced and gendered lived experience - Clearly shows subgroup differences in effects both for direction and magnitude	- Difficult to interpret - Does not allow for direct comparisons between groups - False discovery rate risks
Multilevel Modeling	Level 1: $Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij}$ Level 2 Intercept: $\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} Z_j + u_{oj}$ Level 2 Slope:$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} Z_j + u_{oj}$	- Proactively accounts group based heterogeneity -Reduces noisy small sample size estimates by partial pooling -Reduces risk of overfitting - Gains ICC/VPC	- Less accessible to the broader Social Science community - Minimal gains in data-rich environment

Table 2.1: Model Comparisons

2.3 Preface for Bayesian Interpretation

In this section, I will detail when MMs are expected to highlight intersectionality and the interpretation of BMM outputs in this paper. The BMMs will perform particularly well in instances where group-based heterogeneity exists, and there are small sample sizes within the groups. It will also perform better when there are more than two groups, such as race, gender, and class. This is, at minimum, three-way interaction terms which will often be imprecise Gelman and Hill (2006). Data limitations are pervasive for minority group analysis, so the combination of the salience of intersectionality in identity politics and the real constraints of subgroup analysis make the BMM a superior choice over conventional methods.

This heterogeneity in the context of intersectionality theory exists for Black women and WOC as a result of the uniqueness of those who experience multiple forms of oppression due to race, gender, and class. White women and WOC's lived experiences often differ drastically due to this unique positionality, so research of this manner will likely benefit from an intersectional method (Diamond and Hartsock, 1981; Matos, Greene and Sanbonmatsu, 2023). This logic can be extended to multidimensionality, as the modifying nature of race and gender exists when privilege is present, so group-based heterogeneity needs to be accounted for in many other research avenues, particularly for men of color (MOC) and White women.

Interpreting BMMs requires combining the principles of the multilevel model, garnering individual-level and group-level regression effects, and Bayesian methods, which give outputs in terms of a distribution of estimates for any specified covariate (β). Through Stan programming, which uses Hamiltonian Monte Carlo (HMC) sampling (a specific kind of MCMC sampling), the model estimates individual-level and group-level effects over many times (called iterations) to create a distribution of estimates for a covariate at each level.[15] These distributions of estimates are often displayed as density plots to show the median

[15]The complexities of Stan using MCMC sampling is beyond the scope of this paper. Further information can be found in Carpenter et al. (2017).

estimate over the many iterations, which can then be used as a point estimate in tables. BMM results can also be portrayed as credible intervals, as shown in the ANES section, where credible intervals reflect the percent of the posterior that falls within that range.[16]

In the case of this paper, I will feature density plots and credible interval plots as they are the closest comparison to dot and whisker plots often featured in political science. In instances where I feature density plots, I will use a combination of total iteration density plots for the group-level effect, where the plot shows all the estimates over the iterations and how often those estimates occur, and credible interval plots that are analogous to dot and whisker frequentist plots.[17] When intersectionality or multidimensionality shines in this modeling technique, the density plots for the different subgroups will be centered around different estimates from each other (shows be between group variation) and potentially have different shapes. The distributions will be centered away from zero for both the credible interval and density plots. Additionally, in instances where the BMM is performing well, and the substantive context is right, the VPC/ICC will demonstrate that the grouping variable contributes to the overall variance explained.

2.4 Data and Method

This section details a synthetic data simulation of BMM performance and a real-world example in the American National Election Study. The synthetic approach is meant to show first how BMM outperforms the next best method for capturing intersectionality, the interaction term approach, when we know what ground truth is. In this case, data was created to mimic a scenario in the ANES where a researcher analyzes a given year and models an outcome with race, gender, and class-based effects. Since the data was created with exact

[16]I feature both 95% and 89% credible intervals as both are appropriate for Bayesian methods, but it is important to note that 89% credible intervals are more stable than 95% (Kruschke, 2014).

[17]See Appendix for iteration, chain, and burn-in information.

parameters for the size and nature of the effects, we can compare the performance of each model in uncovering the truth built into the data. I compare the performance of a frequentist interaction approach and a BMM to demonstrate that the proposed tactic estimates more precisely and avoids a Type II error or a false negative from small sample size complications.

This is followed by an example from the 2020 ANES, which investigates a burgeoning area of partisanship research—the ideology/partisanship paradox (White and Laird, 2020; Jefferson, 2020)— to demonstrate the utility of the BMM. This area of literature reshapes the canonical finding that ideology consistently predicts and is correlated with partisanship and demonstrates that this finding only holds for White Americans and not Black Americans. I argue that this finding should be substantively extended to certain subsets of the Latino(a) population. More specifically, this phenomenon appears to also vary at the intersection of race, gender, and class for Latino(a) communities. Methodologically, I display findings that show the utility of the BMM in uncovering results that would be insignificant in an interaction framework because of the small sample size environment. These findings are bolstered by cross-validation and out-of-sample performance metrics to demonstrate BMM performance.

2.4.1 Synthetic Data Simulation

The synthetic simulation is meant to show the performance of different modeling choices in a situation where the researcher knows the true relationship between our inputs and output variables and can compare the results from each test. First, a synthetic dataset was created with an output that resembles a standard feeling thermometer (FT), as seen in surveys like the ANES, where attitudes towards a group or person are measured on a scale from 0-100, with 0 being cold/negative, and 100 being warm/positive. Variables were also created to mimic race, gender, and class in sample sizes that would be found in a representative

sample of the American public. Lastly, the output was created to have dependent effects on race, gender, and class for Black and White women in different class groups. The size of the effects is shown in Table 2.2. A model that does well will be able to uncover these values significantly, with optimized precision and accuracy. In this example, I chose not to specify informative priors to closely compare the estimates from the frequentist methods to the Bayesian ones.[18] Due to the data being generated solely using the influence of identity features, I will not feature the ICC/VPC because the utility is gained when we do not know the sources of variation.

Size of Effect		
Class	**White Women**	**Black Women**
Lowest	-16	16
Working	-12	12
Middle	-8	8
Highest	-4	4

Table 2.2: Synthetic FT Effects

Three different modeling approaches are presented. The first is a three-way interaction estimated in a frequentist paradigm, which is argued by Block, Golder and Golder (2023). The second is a frequentist multilevel model (FMM), and the third is the BMM. In comparing Figures 1-3, there are a few key takeaways. Figure 2.1 demonstrates that small sample size environments for these subgroups do create noisy estimates (large error bars) (Gelman and Hill, 2006).

For the interaction terms, we would expect that the point estimate for Black women in the lowest class should be 12, which is the difference between the set value for Black Women in that class group (16) and the estimate for the reference level, which is White women in the highest class (4). In this case, we can clearly see the drawback of these higher-order interaction terms. They generally are accurate (i.e. get close to the specified value of the group on average), but are not precise, and have large error bars that lead to "insignificant"

[18] *brms* was designed to have weakly default informative priors which sway the results as little as possible and account for the bias that can occur with naive uninformative priors as previously cited (Bürkner, 2017).

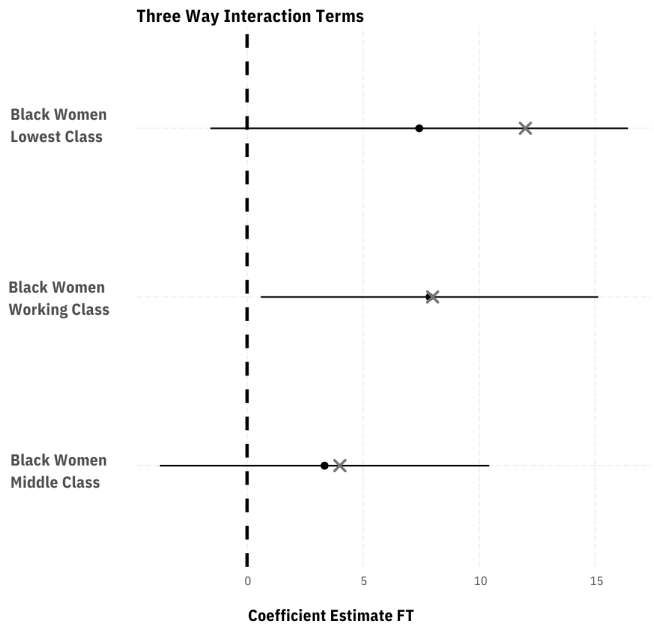


Figure 2.1: Interaction Terms Predicting Synthetic FT
The dependent variable is the synthetic feeling thermometer and these coefficients should be assessed as the group identity interaction term between race, gender, and class.

substantive takeaways. I think that this is a serious issue. Due to discipline-wide norms of interpreting frequentist p-values as direct evidence, a researcher could come away from this investigation and find that intersectionality does not "exist" in this case despite there being an intersectional pattern in the underlying data. This interpretation is based on a modeling issue under data-scarce environments rather than what is happening in reality. Below, I feature two MMs that demonstrate the leverage of moving to new modeling approaches.

In Figure 2.2, I feature a FMM. These models can be interpreted without a baseline, which is a clear benefit in terms of straightforward interpretation. We can directly look for the values featured in Table 2.2 in the results.[19] In this case, we can see that not only is the MM accurate, but it is also more precise than its interaction counterpart (smaller error bars). This is because the MM makes better use of sparse data than high-order interaction terms via partial pooling.

[19]These values are the random intercept effects because no random coefficients were specified in this model. These values can be interpreted as the estimated group-level impact on the DV.

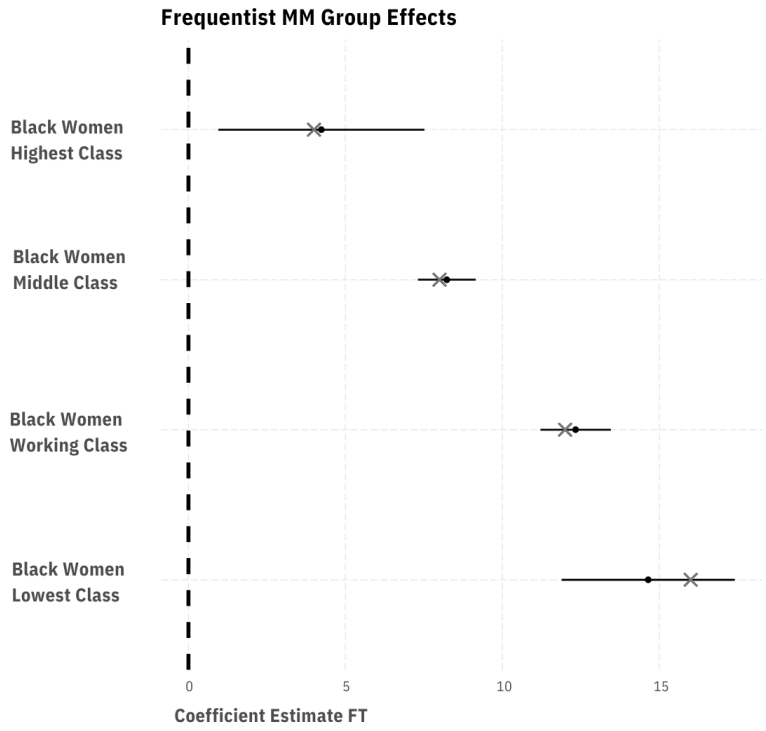


Figure 2.2: Frequentist Multilevel Model Predicting Synthetic FT
The dependent variable is the synthetic feeling thermometer and these coefficients should be assessed as the group level random slope.

Extending this to a BMM, the interpretation and gain remain similar regarding the visuals when comparing Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3. However, since the BMM uses an updated estimation technique, the group-level estimates now have a much clearer picture of uncertainty. From Figure 2.3, we can see that not only are the point estimates precise, but all the estimates over the many iterations were centered around that estimate, as we can see the full distribution of uncertainty's shape. For the smallest of subsamples (groups in the highest and lowest class categories), we can see concretely that the distribution of estimates is more spread out compared to the higher, more concentrated peaks of the middle and working class. However, all subgroups are squarely centered away from zero, showing that in either the case of the FMM or BMM, the researcher would not come away with an understanding that a pattern did not exist when it did. Comparing the root mean squared error (RMSE) (a metric for out-of-sample performance) supports the idea that the BMM has

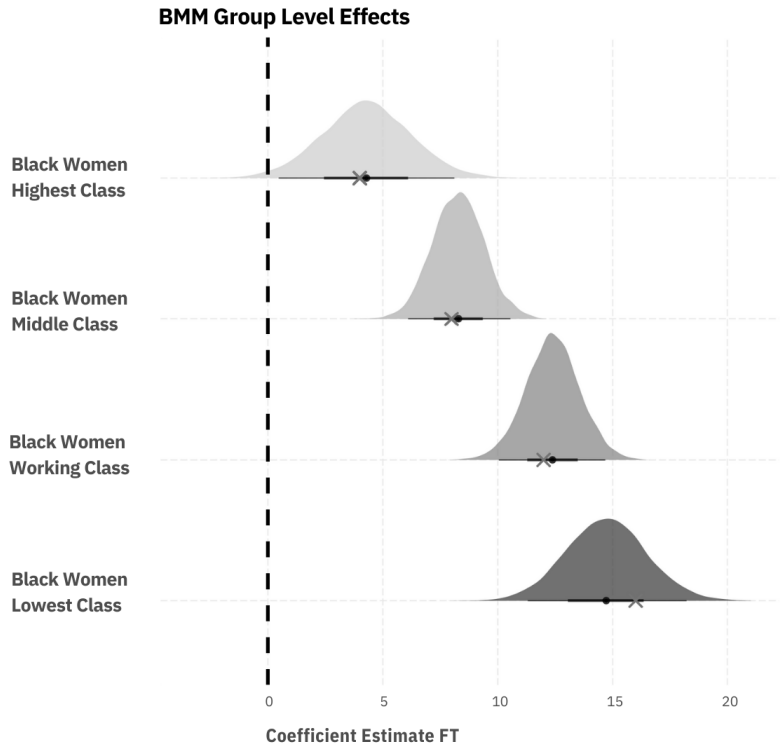


Figure 2.3: Bayesian Multilevel Model Predicting Synthetic FT
The dependent variable is the synthetic feeling thermometer and these coefficients should be assessed as the group level random slope.

more accurate findings than other methods, with the lowest RMSE at 4.70, which shows the best performance. This is compared to the equivalent RMSE for both frequentist MM and interaction terms at 5.79.[20] This finding for frequentist models, both FMM and interaction having the same RMSE, comes from the fact that both are fairly accurate. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the frequentist interaction term, as discussed in the literature, exhibits a lack of precision compared to the FMM. So, when interpreting the p-values or the analogous credible interval, the model chosen changes the substantive takeaway.

While not argued for by extant scholarship, calculations were made for a Bayesian interaction term model. Similarly, the BMM and the Bayesian interaction terms were close in their RMSE values. However, it is important to note that there are still several substantive

[20]Out of sample performance or OOS performance allows a researcher to see which model would best predict new data.

and technical benefits to using an MM compared to interaction terms, even in a Bayesian context. On the technical side, the BMM converged with less effort and tuning than the higher-order interaction model. In multiple iterations of testing, the high-order interaction term models had more divergent transitions and higher R-hat scores (standard convergence metric) even though the models were given identical information for estimation. This means that a substantive-oriented researcher would need to expend more time and resources to achieve similarly certain estimates than the MM could achieve from the start.

From an interpretation standpoint, MMs do not require interpreting values regarding a reference level, eliminating the problematic practice of privileging one group as the baseline. The MM's group-level effects are more straightforward to interpret. Lastly, a better intersectional model must be empirically sound and theoretically sound. Intersectionality is not just about identity intersections but capturing the structure of power dynamics that create these shared experiences. As stated earlier in this piece, the MM, which captures higher-order structural effects, more closely resembles what is theoretically described in the literature. A researcher could specify a Bayesian interaction term model and come up with reasonable findings, but if their priority is to both theoretically and empirically understand intersectionality, they would be better suited with a BMM.

2.5 The Ideology Partisanship Paradox - ANES Example

The synthetic simulation showed that, theoretically and empirically, a BMM is a logical choice for intersectional modeling. I show how the BMM performs in a practical example using the 2020 ANES to support this. This exercise demonstrates what is at risk if a researcher chooses an intersectional modeling approach that is ill-suited to the data context

and offers novel substantive findings to the partisanship literature. This research is vital to the field as this political moment is highly polarized and calcified around identity-based lines (Sides, Tausanovitch and Vavreck, 2023). Intersectional lenses on longstanding questions of American politics stand to illuminate further the heavily entrenched dividing lines of politics.

To motivate the data context, I feature Table 2.2, a weighted cross-tabulation for race, gender, and class categories in the ANES. In this case, we can see small subsamples, particularly for racial and ethnic groups in the highest and lowest class categories. While a BMM does not remedy all data scarcity issues, by combining partial pooling and HMC estimation techniques, researchers can make more efficient use of the data that are there.

2020 American National Election Survey - Weighted				
	Lower Class	**Working Class**	**Middle Class**	**Upper Class**
Asian Woman	3	14	52	8
Asian Man	1	30	67	11
Black Woman	43	112	92	11
Black Man	21	78	98	9
Hispanic Woman	22	142	95	7
Hispanic Man	10	125	122	6
Multiple Race Woman	18	29	64	1
Multiple Race Man	5	32	34	5
Native American Woman	5	14	14	2
Native American Man	3	41	43	10
White Woman	79	504	913	78
White Man	61	502	952	93

Table 2.3: 2020 American National Election Study Subgroup Sizes

An area ripe for academic interrogation is the relationship between partisanship and ideology. Scholarship has shown that the finding that ideology translates to a person's partisan

identification (PID) is driven largely by White Americans. Some scholarship leverages that group identity and the ties around race play a more central role in determining PID than ideology does (Abromowitz, 2010; Hajnal and Lee, 2011; White and Laird, 2020). Some scholars find that ideology has different meanings and underpinnings for Black Americans, and many will identify as ideologically conservative while voting for Democrats (Jefferson, 2020). Others, such as White and Laird (2020), demonstrate that this phenomenon is propelled by Black Americans through racialized social constraint. This suggests that, despite ideological differences, the shaping influence of race and oppression facilitates coalitions around the Democratic party. Their work also shows evidence that this divide could also be present for Latino(a) Americans (p. 12). There is not yet work that studies how this paradox varies by other group identities like gender and class, which may also constrain and mediate ideology. To study this phenomenon observationally, one must specify a four-way interaction between race, gender, class, and ideology. In this piece, I show that the ideology/partisanship paradox exists for certain Latino(a) community subsets. However, these findings would be obscured if one used an interaction term because of the small sample sizes across race, gender, class, and their interaction with ideology.

The concept of racial, social constraint from White and Laird (2020) motivates why there may also be this disconnect for other racial groups. This piece leverages White and Laird (2020) to explain why some subgroups of Latino(a) Americans show the ideology/partisanship paradox. Theoretically, we would expect some subsets of the Latino(a) community to have similar political attitudes as Black Americans. Recent research shows that there are coalition links between these groups as POC (Gershon et al., 2019; Jones and Brewer, 2020; Pérez, 2021) where POC broadly could take cues of racialized social constraint driven by Black Americans.

More likely though, subsets of the Latino(a) community will show this paradox, in particular, Latinas who are native-born and/or Afro-Latinas, will have similar attitudes to Black

American women because of shared experiences and the growing influence of the identity group WOC (Brown, 2014; Mallard, 2022; Matos, Greene and Sanbonmatsu, 2023). This concept dates back to some of the earliest iterations of Black feminism, and the Collective (1974) where activists connected the struggles and goals of women in minority communities. Increasingly since then, research has shown that there is a coalition between these groups that is a meaningful political marker for attitudes and participation (Matos, Greene and Sanbonmatsu, 2023). Research on political preferences of Black women and Latinas also shows that they vote similarly for Democratic candidates (Junn and Masuoka, 2020). Further, Latinas are more liberal than their men in the community (Bejarano, 2014). In addition, Afro-Latinidad taps into both Latino(a) experience and blackness due to their ties with both the ethnic experience and racial experience of Latino(a) and Black communities, so there are subsets of Latinas who share direct ties to other WOC. The culmination of these factors could create a climate where the shared racial constraints within the Black community translate directly to segments of the Latina community who share similar struggles and political goals. [21] Therefore, there are reasons to believe the ideology/partisanship paradox will exist for Latinas because of shared intersectional political experiences and consistent patterns of common political behavior between Black women and Latinas. It also motivates broader consideration of intersectionality and the inclusion of class, as Black and Latina feminism across the spectrum of interpretive, activist, and empirical work shows that these identities are often interwoven. This is the motivation for applying an intersectional lens to the ideology/partisanship paradox and why one might expect shared patterns between Latinas and Black women in this case.

I do not expect this phenomenon to be uniform across subsets of the Latino(a) community because it is an incredibly diverse pan-ethnic group (Licea, 2020). Certain segments, like

[21] In an ideal world, I could disaggregate to assess the influence of Afro-Latinas specifically, but this dataset does not allow it. In further work, assessing the role of which subsets of Latinas are most likely to show this phenomenon is vital. Afro-Latinas are included in this piece to recognize the multitude of theoretical reasons why Latinas might behave like Black women in the literature.

Latinas, are steady supporters of the Democratic party and are more liberal, and some national origin groups, like Cubans, are traditionally more conservative and Republican-leaning (Bejarano, 2014; Junn and Masuoka, 2020). Therefore, an intersectional lens that accounts for the diversity within racial groups is the ideal way to interrogate across and within group variation. The BMM, however, does not remedy all data scarcity issues in the ANES, and it is not feasible to disaggregate via national origin and other markers of diversity in the Latino(a) community. This work is meant to be an early step in interrogating this paradox for this community, and future work from intersectional scholars can disaggregate further.

As previously mentioned, to test for the paradox with an intersectional lens, one has to specify a four-way interaction with race, gender, class, and ideology. To test different modeling specifications, I show both the results from the four-way interaction model and a BMM. Both of these models utilize linear regression. Ideology is gauged using a zero-centered seven-point scale, with -3 being the most liberal and 3 being the most conservative. Party identification (PID) is predicted on the same scale, with a zero-centered variable with strong Democrat at -3 and strong Republican at 3. Class is measured as subjective social status (lowest class, working class, middle class, and highest class), and race and gender are measured as standard factor variables.[22] Racial groups included in the full model are Black, Latino(a), Asian American, Multiracial, and White.[23] Results and the discussion are centered around two sub-groups of interest in the ANES for intersectional purposes, Black and Latino(a) of different class groups. This choice was made to center WOC in the intersectional analyses, as argued by Nash in 2018, but to investigate if there is heterogeneity among Black Americans and heterogeneity for other POC.[24] In Figure 2.4, I show the results

[22]While there is noted bias of measuring class in this way as many overstate their presence in the middle class, this measurement is simple enough to reduce class down to four different categories.

[23]I fit a model to include all racial groups, but the results featured focus on Black and Latino(a) people because there is the most reason to believe there would be shared patterns.

[24]Ideally, Asian American and multiracial women will be included in future work on this issue, but it is beyond the scope of this methodology-oriented piece to fully disaggregate every intersectional angle.

for the four-way interaction fit with an ordinary least squares (OLS) model. The reference level is White men in the lowest class category.

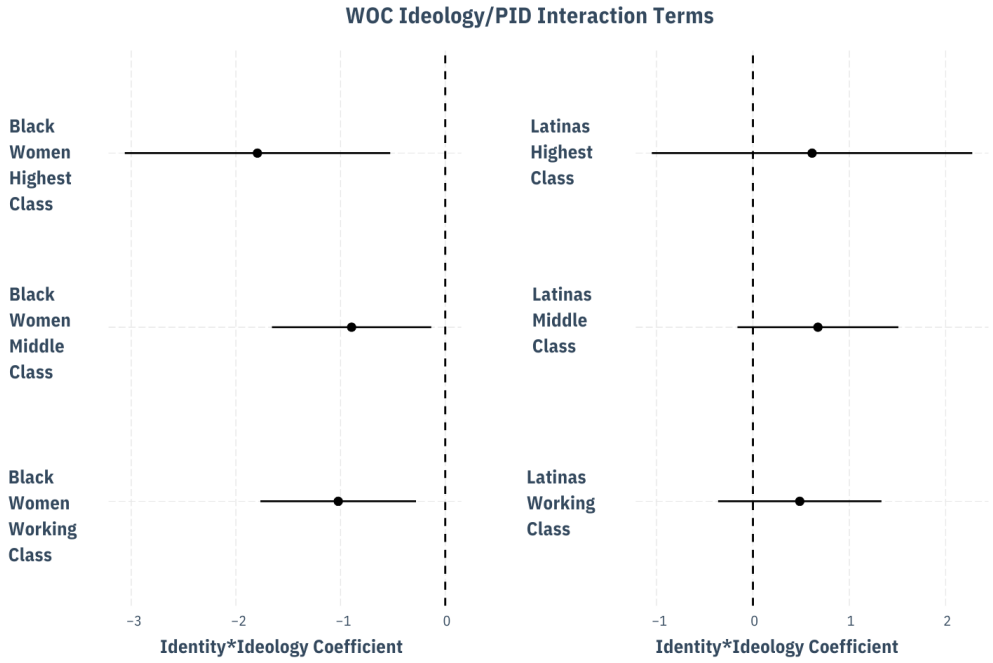


Figure 2.4: Four Way Interaction in the ANES Predicting PID
*The dependent variable is the seven-point partisanship scale, and the coefficients are the interaction estimate between race*gender*class*ideology.*

While we can uncover the ideology/partisan paradox for Black women (negative coefficients for the four-way interaction), it is not possible to determine the same for Latinas in this case. Each coefficient is insignificant, which we know from the synthetic example could be due to small subsample sizes rather than a lack of pattern in the data. To follow the approach of the synthetic simulation, a BMM was fit with an intersectional grouping variable, and ideology was allowed to vary by group. This allows us to determine the group-level impact of an identity and ideology on subsequent party ID. Similar to the four-way interaction, it allows us to understand the slope of how ideology relates to partisanship with identity mediation.

An important part of the Bayesian workflow is incorporating prior knowledge into the estimation process. In this case, priors were specified by modeling the same parameters

in the 2016 ANES. The results from the identity, ideology, and PID estimation were then used as the baseline priors for the model using the 2020 ANES. From there, I used my understanding of the intersectionality literature about how, for most of the grouping variables (all communities of color other than White), there might be more variation on how ideology impacts partisanship. I introduced stronger priors for intersectional groups by increasing the size of the group-level standard deviation for ideology. This increases the amount by which ideology can vary by group.[25]

This is an accessible approach to prior specification in a multilevel context. However, it is worthwhile to note that the benefit of an interaction term approach in the *brms* package is that it is easier to add specific group-level priors for the coefficients of each intersectional sub-group—for example, specific priors for Black women in a certain class. To do this in a Bayesian multilevel context would require programming directly in Stan and not using *brms*, which decreases the accessibility of the method. There is a tradeoff then between choosing a more complicated coding approach and more specific group-level priors or a simpler one with less specificity. Further, choosing to move into the Bayesian interaction framework loses the theoretical benefit of multilevel structure and the benefits of partial pooling. Therefore, it is largely up to the researcher; however, this piece recommends using the simpler coding strategy with broader informative priors, as these models can still teach us a lot about intersectional political life. It is always important to ensure that in any Bayesian context, the priors are not wholly driving results and should operate balanced. In this case, checks were done to ensure the results from the informative priors were not so starkly different from weakly informative defaults in *brms* or the baseline 2016 ANES priors that it is unreasonable. Figure 2.5 demonstrates the group-level coefficients for ideology fit with a BMM.

Substantively, a negative coefficient means that an increase in ideology (becoming less liberal or more conservative) does not mean a corresponding increase in the intensity of PID.

[25]The group-level parameters come from a multivariate normal distribution with a mean of zero, which can be considered adjustments to the population-level ideology coefficient.

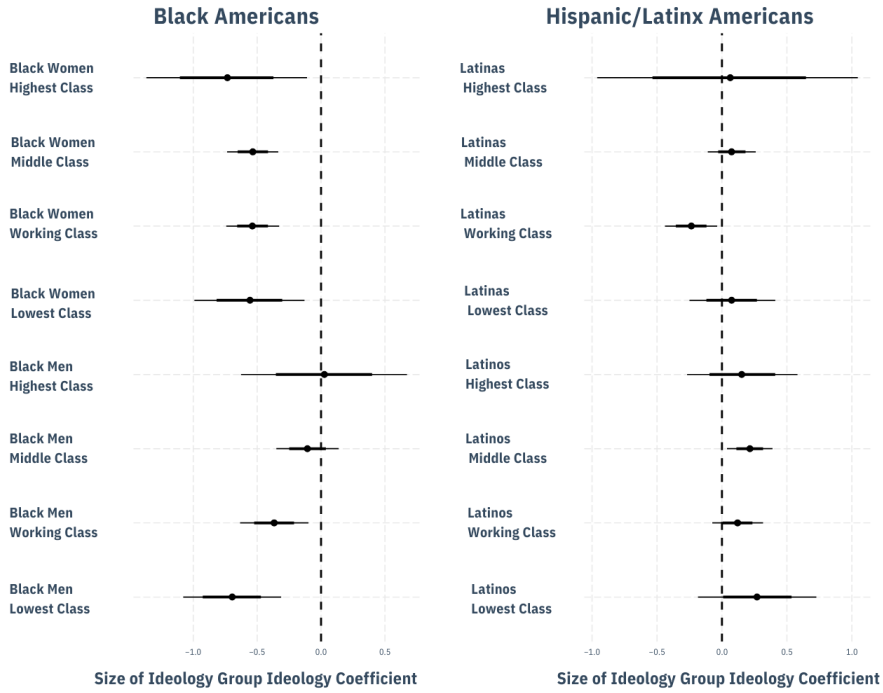


Figure 2.5: BMM Group Level Effects in ANES Predicting PID
The dependent variable is the seven-point partisanship scale, and these coefficients should be assessed as the group level deviation from the individual level fixed effect for ideology.

The most important finding is that Latinas in the working class—who, in the interaction framework (Figure 2.4), are not significantly different from White men in the lowest class category— also demonstrate the disconnect between ideology and PID. Substantively, a researcher fitting an interaction model would only come away thinking that Latinas are not different from White Americans. However, as demonstrated in Figure 2.5, there is indeed a negative coefficient in Latinas in the working class for ideology similar to what happens for Black Americans (shown by negative group level effect). The risk of an interaction approach is that it misses a finding for a key group of interest in American politics, especially in the context of intersectional research.

For Black Americans, the substantive takeaways are similar in both interaction and BMM frameworks. However, we can see the gains in precision (smaller overall error) in the BMM context. An intersectional lens also adds to the substantive literature on partisan-

ship and ideology, as this case provides some evidence of only certain class groups being associated with the paradox. Black women and men in the highest class and Black men in the middle class's group level estimates are not significantly different from zero, showing that this paradox may be driven by the two lower class categories within the racial group. Further, there seems to be a divide between Black men and women in the middle class, with Black women's ideology coefficient higher than for Black men, meaning the partisanship and ideology disconnect is larger. To solidify this finding, further investigation is needed in a more data-rich environment like in Barreto et al. (2018).

To directly compare the slopes, working-class women across different racial groups in the BMM context are featured in Figure 2.6. Negative coefficients from the previous plots reflect a flatter slope and positively reflect a steeper slope. This figure shows the effect of increasing ideology and how, for some groups, an increase in ideology does not mean an identical increase in PID. In this case, comparing women in the working class across these racial groups shows that for White women, their ideology accurately reflects their PID and that relationship weakens for other groups. The dampened effect for Latinas is clear here as their slope is significantly flatter than that of White women in this class group. Comporting with the extant literature, Black women, in this case, show the flattest slope, which substantively means that increases in the strength of conservatism do not perfectly translate to increasing strength of Republican identity.

Figure 2.7 comprehensively shows predictions for partisanship and how they vary by ideology across White, Black, Latina, and Latino Americans in the working class. Key findings here show that beyond -2 on the ideology scale (liberal), we see that the slope for Latina in the working class is significantly flatter than that of Latinos. This means that increases in ideology for Latinas lead to smaller increases in PID than for Latinos in the same class group. Latinos are closer in slope to White men and women than they are to their racial group counterparts. While their group-level credible interval was not largely different

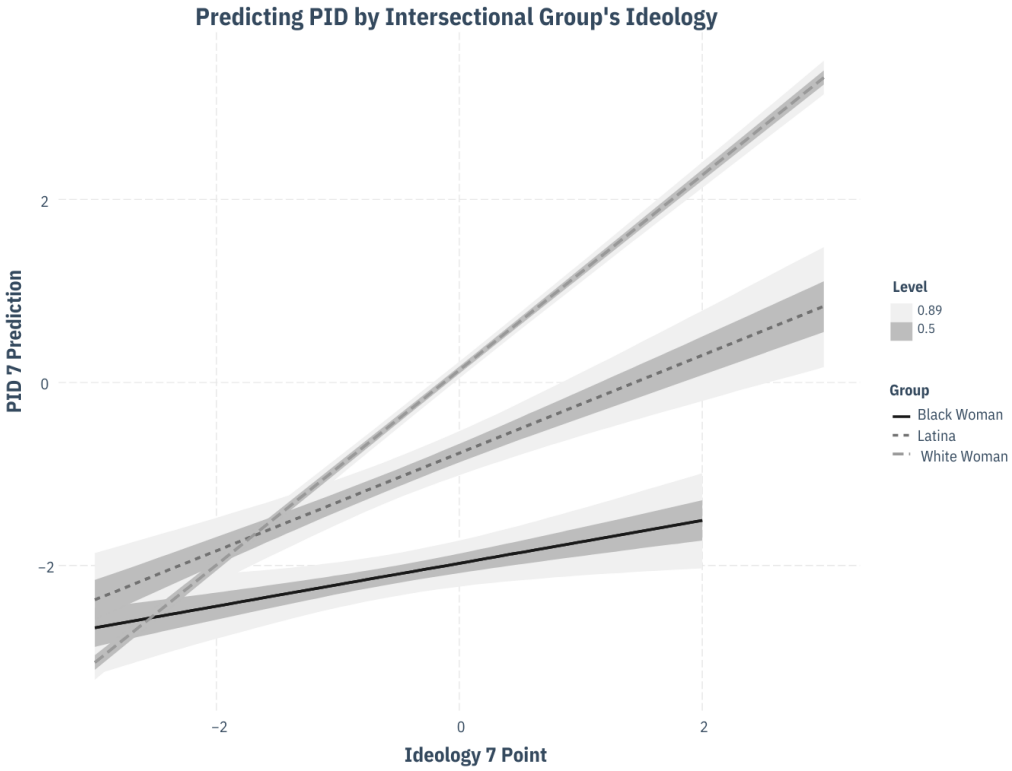


Figure 2.6: Working Class Women Predicted Intervals for PID
The y-axis is the seven-point partisanship scale, and the x-axis is the five-point ideology scale. The lines are the predicted PID by race, gender, and class group from the BMM looking at just women.

from zero, it is possible that this finding would become clearer under further investigation under more data-rich circumstances. The paradox for Black men and women in this case is stark, showing that becoming less liberal does not mean becoming a Republican. Figure 2.7 also shows some tentative evidence that as Black women become less liberal, their PID score goes up at a slower rate than it does for Black men in this class group.

Lastly, this BMM featured a VPC of 31% , which shows that 31% of the total variation explained by this model can be attributed to our grouping variable. This demonstrates the importance of identity in understanding partisanship and how ideology translates to partisanship. This work provides evidence that the racialized social constraint translates to other subsets of racial groups potentially through the coalitions between WOC. Furthermore, cross-validation (CV) approaches like leave-one-out CV (LOOCV) were used to compare



Figure 2.7: Working Class Racial Comparison Predicting PID
The y-axis is the seven-point partisanship scale, and the x-axis is the five-point ideology scale. The lines are the predicted PID by race, gender, and class group from the BMM, looking at all groups.

the two best applications of both approaches, a Bayesian interaction term and the BMM. In the synthetic simulation, it was clear that Bayesian methods outperformed frequentist approaches, so the two best methods were chosen for comparison, and frequentist models were omitted, assuming they would not predict as well in the real world. LOOCV holds out one data point and uses it to train predictions for the rest of the data. It does this for as many observations as are done in the data. Performance is assessed by how well the model predicts the "new" data. It is computationally expensive in larger datasets but more efficient and accurate in our small sample-size environment. In addition, LOOCV is built in to be compatible with *brms*.

The LOOCV comparison reveals that the BMM performs better than the Bayesian interaction model with the difference in expected log predicted density (ELPD) for the interaction

model at -95.2 with a standard error of 17.9, showing better predictions.[26] However, in both models, there were less than three observations in each case with a Pareto K diagnostic of over 0.7. This denotes that in both cases, observations could be skewing these results.[27] Therefore, I pose the CV results as only tentative empirical evidence for BMM performance, but combined with the theoretical benefits, it is still the ideal choice.

Some additional evidence is the Bayesian R^2 for the BMM was 64%, and the Bayesian interaction was 62% with no significant overlap in their errors, showing that the BMM better captured the variation in this ANES example. Overall, this section shows that many canonical findings in political science are reshaped by considering not just race but the intersectional lens of race, gender, and class. These social identities often mediate political processes in a way that changes substantive findings. In addition, this ANES application highlights the dangers of a higher-order interaction approach in small sample-size environments. Researchers could find obscured intersectional patterns due to a lack of precision in this challenging data environment even when there does appear to be found. A BMM is recommended as a best practice to fix this issue.

2.6 Conclusion

There is much work to be done to use and operationalize intersectionality methodologically. As Simien astutely observed in 2007, "Political scientists must construct new theories and methodological approaches that address the complex processes through which social categories shape and, in effect, determine political outcomes." This is a necessary and largely underserved part of the discipline. Research like this is particularly important for scholars of American politics who are interrogating U.S. democracy for those whose democratic promise

[26] ELPD is the conventional metric used to assess the predictive accuracy of a model in LOOCV. Larger ELPD corresponds to more accurate models, so the best model in the comparison will have an ELPD difference of zero, and the worst model will be the deviation from that.

[27] This comes from small group sub-sample sizes.

is unrealized.

It is important to acknowledge who this method is most salient for: the scholars who are incorporating intersectionality into their work quantitatively with often unsatisfactory results. These scholars are doing work vital to political science at a sociopolitical moment of heightened unrest in the United States, so they deserve methods tantamount to their task. This model is not meant to be a final solution or silver bullet (as Hancock (2007*b*) would say), but a step towards better methods for an important charge of the discipline.

In this piece, I have argued for BMMs to account for the heterogeneities produced by race, gender, and class intersections. The BMM was able to show the intersectionality effects more precisely than current methods. For both cases of intersectionality and multidimensionality, if the dataset has large sample sizes for each subgroup, the gained precision from the BMM is no better than the interaction term in frequentist regression Gelman and Hill (2006). Intersectional quantitative scholars face data limitations so consistently that these large datasets where the method performs poorly are less common. In addition, American politics will always need to explore historical data, such as the ANES, which will always have these issues. There may be contexts in which a Bayesian interaction term model is suited for a researcher who wants predictive accuracy gains and more granular group priors in *brms*. However, the MM will still estimate helpful terms such as the VPC/ICC and maintain the theoretical and empirical benefits of partial pooling and MM hierarchical structure.

Applying this model to the ideology/partisanship paradox illuminated the experience of working-class Latinas, which would be obscured if an interaction term approach were used. This shows that there are real substantive implications to political science knowledge production if the correct modeling choice is not used. In sum, this article aims to show this tool has utility in the study of political behavior and attitudes in the U.S., as intersectionality and multidimensional identities undergird the lived experience that shapes these areas of study. It is a methodologically rigorous and theoretically sound modeling tactic that builds

intersectional and multidimensional context into research practices.

Chapter 3

The Identity-Based Determinants of Voter Confidence

Claims of fraudulent electoral activity loomed large over the 2020 presidential election in the United States. Former President Trump claimed that votes were "dumped" in key states and attempted to undermine the mail-in voting system by claiming widespread fraud. This rhetoric continued in a campaign to *Stop the Steal* after Trump's eventual loss. This culminated in a rally where then-President Trump repeated election result denial and suggested that Vice President Mike Pence and his supporters should "Save America" by fighting for him to stay in office despite losing the election. The world then witnessed the January 6th insurrection, where Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol building to halt the confirmation of electoral votes in Congress.

Trump's *Stop the Steal* campaign was arguably the largest concerted effort to undermine individual voter confidence in the American electoral system. No evidence of widespread fraudulent voting was found despite these claims (Norris, 2020). The events surrounding the 2020 election have reinvigorated long-standing scholarly conversations on how best to mea-

sure electoral integrity as well as voter evaluations of election administration performance. The second component, voter evaluations of performance (also known as voter confidence), presents a pressing issue. Negative perceptions of electoral integrity from the Trump base led them to storm the capital, where individuals lost their lives, and the peaceful transition of power normally expected from American politics was unrealized for a time. In addition, perceptions of voter confidence have yet to be interrogated with the lens of political calcification (Sides, Tausanovitch and Vavreck, 2023). This concept, in part, details that American politics is entrenched and divided along identity lines because of Trump's rhetoric and the legacy of the Obama era. This means American politics are highly polarized around identity and are stuck that way for now. Calcification literature builds on work that shows that racial attitudes (like racial resentment) and identity politics dominate support for elites in the Trump era, even more so than traditional measures like ideology and perceptions of the economy (Tesler, 2016*a*; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, 2018). Group identity has shown to be a central cleavage in contemporary political attitudes and behaviors due to partisan social sorting and racialized social constraint (Mason and Wronski, 2018; Junn and Masuoka, 2020; White and Laird, 2020).

This work combines two central concepts of the post-2016 era of American politics, racial resentment (RR) and group identity, to understand the determinants of distrust of American election integrity in 2020. Racial resentment has already been linked to perceptions of the Congressional investigations and accountability around January 6th, satisfaction with democracy, and perceptions Joe Biden was not the legitimate winner (Enders and Thornton, 2022; Rhodes and Nteta, 2024; Jacobson, 2024). However, there has yet to be a comprehensive account of racial resentment by traditional measures of voter confidence, and none is disaggregated by group identity.

Scholars in the past have measured the degree to which citizens support the integrity of their democratic process through surveying voter confidence (Alvarez, Hall and Llewellyn,

2008; Alvarez, Bailey and Katz, 2008; Llewellyn, Hall and Alvarez, 2008). Voter confidence is defined as the belief that votes were counted accurately or as intended (Atkeson, Alvarez and Hall, 2015). It is an important metric, as studies have found that it predicts future turnout and represents a valid measure of public perception of problems with election administration. Additionally, voter confidence is a unique feature of system support or distrust of government and specifically targets experiences with the democratic process (King and Barnes, 2019). Understanding the determinants of voter confidence is paramount in the wake of January 6th as lower trust in the electoral system can lead to lower trust in other institutions, reticence to participate, and questioning the legitimacy of the government (Alvarez, Bailey and Katz, 2008; Atkeson, Alvarez and Hall, 2015). Elections are a vital safeguard to democracy, and these elections need to be open and responsive to channel community effectively needs into action (Dahl, 2005). The discipline of Political Science must continue to reinvigorate research on voter confidence and experiences in the wake of January 6th. This is increasingly important in a highly racialized context post-2016, as racial groups have already shown varied levels of voter confidence (Abrajano and Alvarez, 2010; King and Barnes, 2019).

Understanding these racial attitudes, group identity, and voter confidence is increasingly important with a shifting electorate, as shares of minority votes, specifically Black votes, have been rising for Donald Trump across the last two elections (Ostfeld and Garcia, 2020). Further, research suggests these voters might be additionally influential as many of the racially resentful voters of color who either support Trump or could feasibly reside in swing states (Sommer and Franco, 2023). Regarding voter confidence, while the crowd on January 6th was predominately White, it was not completely so with 8% non-white participants (Ricciardelli, 2023). Given many participants in the insurrection were "average" Americans rather than just political group extremists, it is important to understand how these subsets of the population (like conservative voters of color) could be vulnerable to the *Stop the Steal* rhetoric in the future. Further, there has been a notable rise of high-profile Black conservative figures who claim distrust of the Democratic party to handle Black issues and

policies that could further this divide. Candace Owens is a prime example of this—a Black women conservative commentator who has been cited as the voice of Black conservatives in the 2024 election by Forbes also espoused election denial rhetoric in 2020 (Tharpe, 2024).

We have also seen conservative Black presidential candidates like Ben Carson and record numbers of Black conservative GOP candidates in midterms, which suggests some movement in this portion of the electorate. Racial resentment is often a concept used to study racial attitudes with a focus on White Americans, but its racial resentment is also seen in minority populations and is a significant predictor of Trump support (Sommer and Franco, 2023). We also see elements of racial resentment style rhetoric in these high-profile conservatives because much of their platform is focused on bootstrap theories of success (that individuals, regardless of race, can make themselves successful) rather than recognizing racism and structural inequality. Given these pressures and the importance of racial resentment for all racial groups, this paper seeks to make progress in studying conservative minorities in the context of eroding public trust in electoral systems. I leverage models best suited to handle small sample size subsets of the population, Bayesian Multilevel Models (BMM), to articulate voter confidence when there are few racially resentful conservatives in the sample (Much, 2022).[1]

First, I lay the foundations on voter confidence measures, and why I expect heterogeneous effects between the major racial groups in the U.S., I then outline how the socialization of electoral trust and racial spillover has led to racial resentment being associated with perceptions of the U.S. election system. I follow this with an analysis of the 2016 and 2020 VOTER datasets to show findings on the interconnectedness of racial resentment and group identity in the context of voter confidence and discuss the implications on American democracy (Group, 2020).

[1]Information on the sample size is found in Appendix B.

3.1 Voter Confidence

There are a few areas in the study of voter confidence where researchers find consistent effects and are generally in agreement. A significant component of this literature relates partisanship to voter confidence. One of these areas addresses the context of winner effects (Berlinski et al., 2021; Sinclair, Smith and Tucker, 2018). These winner effects reflect the degree to which a person's confidence in their vote being counted accurately was whether or not their party's candidate won the election in question. This is the case in many studies on voter confidence (Sinclair, Smith and Tucker, 2018). Sinclair, Smith and Tucker (2018)'s findings also note beyond the existence of a winner effect, cues from elites, both Trump and Clinton in 2016 either suppressed or bolstered voter confidence, respectively. Other studies of voter confidence also agree on the fact that self-categorized Republicans are more confident that their vote was counted accurately compared to either Democrats or Independents, likely stemming from conservative support for institutions (Alvarez, Hall and Llewellyn, 2008; Alvarez, Bailey and Katz, 2008; Atkeson and Saunders, 2007; Bullock, Hood and Clark, 2005; Hall, Quin Monson and Patterson, 2009; Magleby, Monson and Patterson, 2007). More broadly regarding government trust, the sitting president's party shows higher levels of trust in government (Citrin (1974); Citrin and Green (1986); Anderson and LoTempio (2002); Craig et al. (2006); Singh, Lago and Blais (2011); Resarch (2020).

3.1.1 Group Identity and Voter Confidence

In the literature, identity, specifically race, has been consistently linked to voter confidence. There are consistent findings that show that Black Americans show less voter confidence than White Americans because of discriminatory experiences voting (Tomz and Houweling, 2003; Bullock, Hood and Clark, 2005; Sinclair and Alvarez, 2004; Alvarez, Hall and Llewellyn, 2008). Some research also posits there is no difference between the Anglo voting experience

and the Latinx experience (Atkeson and Saunders, 2007). Work by Abrajano and Alvarez (2010), on the other hand, shows that Latinx people have more voter confidence, citing that first-generation Latinx voters have higher government trust. This effect shifts when looking at later generations and those who had more overt experiences of discrimination. More recently, there is evidence that Latinx voters overall had lower voter confidence because of increases in discrimination and implementation of voter ID laws (King and Barnes, 2019).

King and Barnes (2019) also investigated the impact of descriptively representative poll workers, showing that Latinx and African American voters with same-race poll workers have increased voter confidence. Literature on descriptive representation must also be considered as a component of government trust because of Kamala Harris's presence as the vice president on Biden's ticket and the 2018 election, where a record number of Black women ran for Congress. This literature shows evidence of empowerment, where visible political leadership from one's own group enhances trust in government as well as efficacy, pride, and turnout (Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura, 2001; Sanchez and Morin, 2011; Schildkraut, 2013). Barreto (2007) finds similar effects for Latinx individuals: government trust is bolstered when Latinx people are on the ballot. Resarch (2020) also found that during Republican presidencies (Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, and Trump), White Americans were more likely to trust that the government would do the right thing than Obama's two terms. During the Biden administration, Black and Latinx trust in government was higher than it was for Whites. Overall, there is significant evidence of heterogeneity in race and voter confidence.

It is important to note the differing makeup of these racial groups, as the Latinx community (as well as Asian Americans) are pan-ethnic, meaning the group lumps together many countries of origin. This means that for these groups, there are likely heterogeneous effects by country of origin in certain contexts, and in other contexts, there may be cohesive patterns. In the context of voter confidence, though, there likely are cohesive pan-ethnic effects because

of the unequal implementation of voting laws that span across the experiences of minorities regardless of country of origin. In a study done by Ansolabehere and Persily (2007) and Cobb et al. (2012), there was evidence that minorities, both Black and Hispanic Americans, were more likely than White Americans to be asked for their ID on election day, showing they are held to higher levels of scrutiny at the ballot box. Additionally, precincts' higher concentrations of minorities and low-income people have been found to have lower quality poll workers who incorrectly state that ID is required when it wasn't (Barreto, Cohen-Marks and Woods, 2009). These impact Latinx communities at the same rate that they impact Black communities and are starkly more than their White counterparts. Despite the group identity of Latinx people being made up differently than for Black Americans' different historical backgrounds, they share inequitable experiences with the electoral system in the U.S.

Unequal electoral experiences in the context of an increasingly diverse electorate motivate the interrogation of group identity, racial attitudes, and voter confidence. Further, non-Hispanic whites are decreasing in share of the electorate, and Hispanic communities are increasing in share of the electorate in all states. Notably, there are stark increases in racial diversity in battleground states like Florida and Arizona (Resarch, 2020); researchers must interrogate how race frames the electoral experience. Research on group identity and voter confidence has yet to be fully explored in the racialized and gendered contexts in the post-Obama and, at the time of this data collection, the Trump era.

Most research on gender and voter confidence lacks theoretical reasoning to believe there is a gender-based difference or finds null results. Or as McDermott and Jones (2022) pose, *sex* has been interrogated for its relationship to trust in the binary ascriptive sense, and little attention has been paid to gender as a social construct. McDermott and Jones (2022) posit that feminine aspects of gender identity are more communal, thus leading to higher levels of government trust.

However, I leverage existing literature on race and descriptive representation to make expectations across group identity. These results should show, based on previous findings, that Black Americans and Latinx individuals are less trusting of the electoral outcomes on average because of the literature, which indicates that these individuals are more likely to run into discrimination around the election. I argue that there may be some gender-based heterogeneity between men of color (MOC) and women of color (WOC) because a WOC descriptively representative candidate (Kamala Harris) was on the ballot. This increased trust will be most clear for Black women. I expect this association to present before accounting for racial attitudes. There may be increased trust for Latinas because of the growing solidarity between WOC; however, I expect the increase to moderate (Matos, Greene and Sanbonmatsu, 2023). For Whites, I expect that those who are most racially resentful will be the most distrustful in the aggregate, and their voter confidence, without accounting for racial resentment, will be fairly high. For the small but growing minority population that supports Trump, I will expect minorities who hold racially resentful attitudes to distrust electoral outcomes nationally in similar ways to White Americans.

After weighing the contradictory evidence about voter confidence and race and the small area of literature that investigates voter confidence and gender, I will, therefore, test the following hypotheses. Hypotheses for group identity and racial attitudes will follow in the next section.

H1: White Americans will show more voter confidence than their minority counterparts as a reflection of a lack of experience with voting discrimination.

H2: WOC (specifically Black women and Hispanic women) will be more trusting (before accounting for racial resentment) because of a descriptively representative candidate being on the ballot as vice president. The increase will be small through because of exposure to electoral discrimination.

H3: Latinx Americans (specifically Latinos) will be less trusting than Black Americans

because of the lack of a descriptively representative candidate and exposure to electoral discrimination.

3.1.2 Racial Attitudes and Voter Confidence

Beyond group identity itself, it is important to consider the centrality of race in American politics and that racial attitudes are robust predictors of many political attitudes and behaviors since the Obama administration (Tesler and Sears, 2010; Tesler, 2016*a*; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, 2019). Trust in government has been linked to racial attitudes, namely, racial resentment in past research (Filindra, Kaplan and Buyuker, 2022). Racial resentment is defined as a combination of anti-Black affect, belief in the idea that Black Americans have not conformed to the Protestant work ethic, and denial of ongoing discrimination against Black Americans. These beliefs about race and racial policy are shown to be linked psychologically for White Americans and, in turn, impact how people perceive government performance (Tesler and Sears, 2010). Using racial resentment and prejudiced attitudes have also played an important role in recent American elections, particularly as a determinant for vote choice and political participation (Tesler, 2016*a*; Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, 2019; Banda and Cassese, 2021). Racial attitudes and prejudice affect such a wide range of political outcomes because attitudes about government are racialized or connected in memory to beliefs about racial groups (Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Filindra, Kaplan and Buyuker, 2022).

In addition to racial prejudice being connected to memory, it is constantly primed with the historic rise of people of color into major political offices, as with the Obama presidency and Kamala Harris's Vice Presidential win (Mendelberg, 2001; Tesler and Sears, 2010). I argue that the priming effects of race and Trump's rhetoric mobilizing racial attitudes alongside his erosion of voter confidence contribute to racial resentment being linked to voter confidence. This research aims to extend the literature on government trust and racial

attitudes, showing that racial attitudes extend beyond vote choice to a broader distrust of the electoral system. Overall, racial attitudes can help explain the constellation of political beliefs that led people to believe in *Stop the Steal* and participate in January 6th. Additionally, given the primary demographic in the insurrection was White men, I expect that the White men highest in racial resentment will be those lowest in voter confidence.

While minority groups have lower levels of racial resentment, I will show the minority Trump voters that do have internalized racial resentment also believe in *Stop the Steal* ideas. This builds on work by Sommer and Franco (2023), which shows that racial resentment is not just a driver for White support for Trump but also recent minority support for Trump. Much attention has been paid to the growing subset of voters of color who are voting Republican. This is not just because of their seemingly surprising rise in support for Trump but also based on findings that ideologically conservative Black voters still vote Democrat because of racialized social constraint (White and Laird, 2020). While this group still constitutes a minority of voters of color, it is a notable shift in a usually stable portion of the electorate.

Additionally, most of the crowd on January 6th was White and male; it was not exclusively so. The second half of this paper seeks to support the literature that shows that support for Trump in voters of color is often a function of internalized symbolic racism, i.e., racial resentment, and this translates to other democratic attitudes like voter confidence. I outline how, for Trump voters of color, racial resentment often predicts their distrust of electoral outcomes in starkly similar ways to White Trump voters. Focusing on voters of color is crucial because while they currently represent a minority within Trump's base, their numbers are seemingly growing. Racial resentment matters for a constellation of political behaviors and attitudes not just for White Americans but minorities as well. I will test the following hypotheses regarding racial attitude determinants of voter confidence:

H4: Increases in racial resentment will be associated with increased distrust in election integrity (or decreased trust) independent of other metrics conventionally associated with

decreased trust.

H5: Whites with more racial resentment will distrust electoral integrity most (lowest voter confidence).

H6: Minority groups, racially resentful Trump supporters, will also have increased distrust of electoral integrity (lower levels of voter confidence).

In a separate vein from group identity, I also expect these findings to be specific to the national level of voter confidence. Voter confidence survey batteries also account for whether or not people felt that votes were counted accurately in their community and if they believed their own vote was counted as intended. Trump's *Stop the Steal* language did focus on allegations of states and cities; however, the likelihood of an individual experiencing issues in their own communities or with their votes was highly unlikely. Therefore, it was considered an "elsewhere" problem, or a national problem, rather than a community or individual problem. Those with tangible issues at the ballot box will likely have less trust in electoral outcomes, but not due to racial resentment.

H7: Racial resentment will be associated with less confidence in national election integrity than community or individual levels.

3.2 Data and Methods for Racial Attitudes and Voter Confidence

Using the 2020 VOTER dataset, a representative sample of 5,900 Americans, I operationalize voter confidence by asking, "How confident are you that votes across the United States were counted as voters intended in the elections this November?" (Group, 2020). This uses a scale from 1-4, from very confident (4) to not at all confident (1). Additionally, I address voter confidence in votes being accounted for accurately at the community level and

if the individual believes their own vote was counted as intended. I will use lack of trust synonymously with distrust in the election. These scales were collapsed into binary indicators where 1 encapsulated a lack of confidence in the election and 0 being confident in the election for all measures. For further metrics to understand the *Stop the Steal* movement's impact, I assess the degree to which people support Republican legislators in states won by Joe Biden trying to assign their state's electoral votes to Donald Trump, perceptions of increased vote by mail fraud, and the necessity of Trump to accept election results. In each of these cases, a 1 indicates agreement with *Stop the Steal* logic, and a 0 corresponds to confidence in electoral integrity. I also leveraged the VOTER 2016 panel to compare changes in trust from 2016 to 2020.

I used a combined measure of racial resentment, taking the average racial resentment score from questions such as: "Here are a few statements about race in America. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each statement. - It is 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." These questions use a scale from 1-4 from strongly agree (4) to disagree (1) strongly, and I take the average across these after recoding to account for the direction of racist versus non-racist attitudes in each question. I also control issues faced at the ballot box, party identification, gender, race, college attendance, and being a Trump voter. Partisanship is measured on a seven-point scale, with 1 being the strongest Democrat and 7 being the strongest Republican. College attendance is a binary indicator of four-year completion or more. Race is operationalized as White (1) and people of color (POC) 0. Gender is operationalized through the variable Man, where man is 1 and woman is 0. Trump voter is also binary, 1 for voting for Trump, 0 for voting for Biden.[2]

[2]Technically, this addresses the winner effect even if I am coding for 1 being the loser. It makes more substantive sense to measure *Stop the Steal* ideas in relation to Trump voters.

3.3 Findings

In the plot below, I briefly use the untransformed variables on their original 1-4 scales to show the descriptive relationship between voter confidence and racial resentment. Overall, respondents are more confident that national votes were counted as intended than not, but those with the highest racial resentment are the least confident. This finding is supported by the findings in Table 3.1.[3]

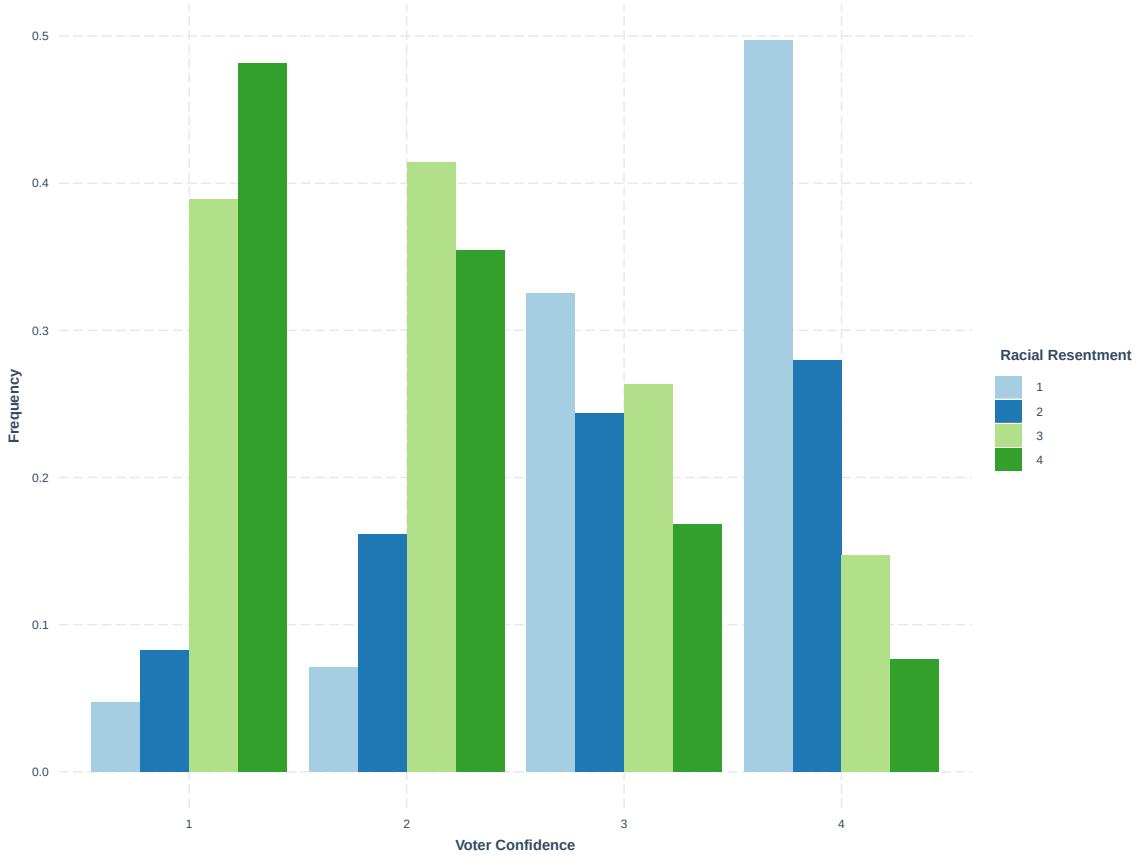


Figure 3.1: Plot of Racial Resentment and Voter Confidence

Table 1 shows frequentist logistic fixed effects regression results for lack of confidence/ distrust in votes being counted as intended at the national, community, and individual levels. Results are reported as odds ratios. An odds ratio of larger than 1 can be interpreted as an increase in the odds that a person distrusts election integrity, and less than 1 is a decrease

[3]These are weighted frequencies.

in the odds that they trust the election. One can also directly interpret the magnitude, and for example, say the odds of distrusting the election at the national level increase by 1.76 as a result of an increase in racial resentment.

Lack of Trust In Election Integrity

Logit Regression Predicting Lack of Confidence (1) vs. Confidence (0)

	National Vote			Community Vote			Own Vote		
Characteristic	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**
Education	0.83	0.66, 1.04	0.11	0.79	0.65, 0.96	**0.015**	0.66	0.54, 0.79	**<0.001**
PID 7 Point	1.16	1.08, 1.24	**<0.001**	1.00	0.94, 1.08	0.9	1.10	1.03, 1.17	**0.003**
Ideology 5 Point	1.27	1.11, 1.45	**<0.001**	1.17	1.03, 1.32	**0.017**	1.05	0.94, 1.18	0.4
RR Average Score	1.76	1.44, 2.16	**<0.001**	1.54	1.22, 1.97	**<0.001**	1.66	1.37, 2.03	**<0.001**
White	0.19	0.09, 0.42	**<0.001**	0.35	0.14, 0.87	**0.023**	0.38	0.18, 0.79	**0.010**
Man	0.80	0.65, 0.98	**0.030**	0.91	0.76, 1.09	0.3	0.96	0.81, 1.14	0.6
Trump Voter	15.0	11.4, 19.8	**<0.001**	20.2	13.5, 30.6	**<0.001**	6.18	4.60, 8.38	**<0.001**
Issue Voting	1.77	1.27, 2.46	**<0.001**	2.41	1.72, 3.38	**<0.001**	3.61	2.73, 4.79	**<0.001**
RR Average Score*White	1.68	1.30, 2.18	**<0.001**	1.24	0.94, 1.63	0.13	1.18	0.93, 1.48	0.2
AIC	2,772			3,111			3,563		

[1] OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

Table 3.1: National Voter Confidence 2020 Logistic Regressions

These findings show that racial resentment does increase the odds of distrusting election integrity at national, community, and individual levels. Racial resentment on its own has just as much of an impact as having an issue voting at the ballot box and a larger impact than ideology and partisanship. The largest predictor was being a Trump voter, but the racial resentment findings hold when Trump support is controlled. White racial identity on its own is not a significant predictor of distrust. White Americans were actually more likely to trust the election results, controlling for all relevant factors as predicted in H1. An additional interaction term was used between racial resentment and White identity to understand the dynamics of most participants in the January 6th insurrection. We see

that there are additional increased odds of distrusting the election integrity for those who are White and higher on racial resentment. This provides support for H5. This finding about White identifiers and racial resentment does not hold for community or individual votes and provides support for H7. This is likely due to the increased importance of having an issue trying to vote in those models. Intuitively, individuals were much less likely to trust community or individual votes if they faced ballot box issues. This could also be compounded by the *Stop the Steal* rhetoric being fairly nationalized. The lowest AIC (lower AIC is associated with a more powerful model) is found in the national vote model, which comports with the story that nationalized rhetoric around voter fraud led to distrust of the 2020 election at the broadest level.

Reports of January 6th stated participants were predominantly White and predominantly male Ricciardelli (2023). This finding of increased odds for racially resentful whites was investigated further by interacting with gender and is shown in Figure 3.2.[4]

In Figure 3.2, it becomes clear that White men are the most distrusting of the election results as racial resentment increases. This may seem obvious based on the presence of Proud Boys and other alt-right predominantly male organizations on January 6th; however, this representative survey shows that the coalescing of these political attitudes is widespread in the American public and not just on the fringe right. I further investigate measures of *Stop the Steal* ideology through dependent variables that assess support for Republican legislators in states won by Joe Biden trying to assign their state's electoral votes to Donald Trump and perceptions of increased vote-by-mail fraud. These help paint the picture of the sorts of democratic erosion that was a part of the effort to tamper with the 2020 election. These results are also reported in odds ratios.

In Table 3.2, racial resentment is associated with increased odds of thinking it is appro-

[4]This is an identical model to the previous in Table 3.1, but I added the interaction racial resentment*White*Man.

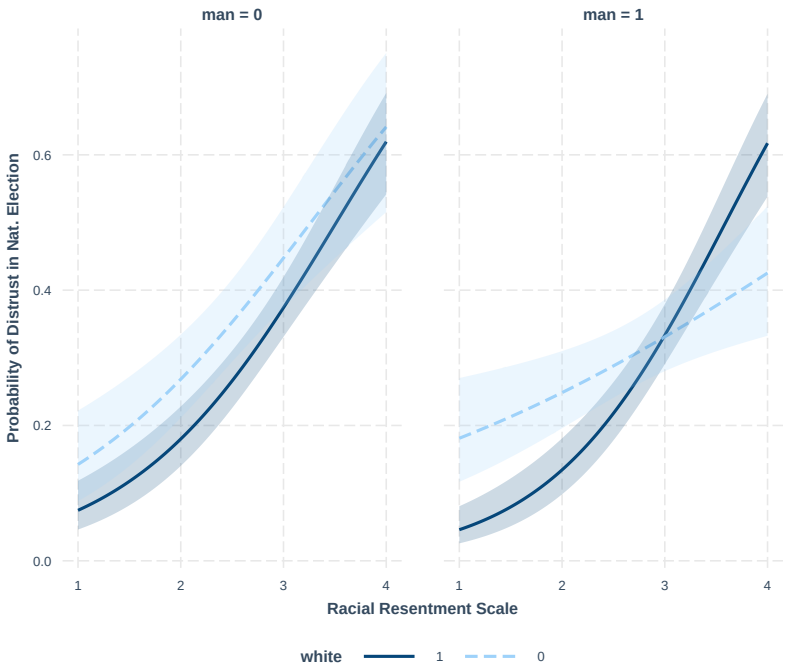


Figure 3.2: Interaction Between Gender, Whiteness, and RR on Distrust in Election Outcomes

priate for state legislators to reassign votes to Trump and that there was an increase in fraud because of voting by mail (VBM).[5] There is a consistent pattern of racially resentful whites having increased odds across these metrics measuring *Stop the Steal* concepts. Similar to voter distrust, we also see that racial resentment is a larger predictor of trust in the electoral process than partisanship and ideology. Further, the same interaction effect exists between whiteness, gender, and racial resentment in this case. As shown in Figure 3.3, White men are more likely to believe VBM increases fraud than their POC counterparts as racial resentment increases.

Racial resentment playing a role in Trump's strategy is not new, and one can look to evidence from the 2016 VOTER dataset to see that the underpinnings of these findings still hold in Table 3.4. In 2016, the winner effect holds true, and those who voted for Trump are

[5] "Vote By Mail Fraud" column should be interpreted as > 1 increase in fraud because of vote by mail, and < 1 either decrease or no change in fraud. "Reassign Votes" should be interpreted as > 1; it is appropriate for state legislators to reassign, and < 1 is inappropriate.

Democractic Integrity and Fraud Measures

Logit Regression Predicting Stop the Steal Ideas

	Reassign Votes			Vote By Mail Fraud		
Characteristic	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**
Education	0.64	0.51, 0.79	**<0.001**	1.15	0.92, 1.44	0.2
PID 7 Point	1.13	1.05, 1.21	**<0.001**	1.22	1.14, 1.31	**<0.001**
Ideology 5 Point	1.32	1.16, 1.51	**<0.001**	1.23	1.08, 1.40	**0.002**
RR Average Score	1.54	1.24, 1.91	**<0.001**	1.79	1.49, 2.16	**<0.001**
White	0.16	0.07, 0.37	**<0.001**	0.25	0.13, 0.48	**<0.001**
Man	1.10	0.90, 1.34	0.4	1.17	0.96, 1.43	0.13
Trump Voter	7.65	5.56, 10.6	**<0.001**	12.4	9.51, 16.2	**<0.001**
Issue Voting	3.43	2.45, 4.80	**<0.001**	2.08	1.51, 2.86	**<0.001**
RR Average Score*White	1.75	1.34, 2.29	**<0.001**	1.56	1.23, 1.99	**<0.001**
AIC	2,729			2,823		

[1] OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval

Table 3.2: Additional Measures of *Stop the Steal* and Democracy Integrity

more trusting of the election because he won, and those who are more racially resentful are less likely to doubt the integrity of the election. This mirrors work from Sinclair, Smith and Tucker (2018), which shows that the winner effect mediated Trump's rhetoric before 2016 that the election would be "rigged." However, we see that racially resentful White Americans still have greater odds of doubting election integrity even when Trump was the winner. This points to Trump's ability to leverage this population subset to his benefit with the *Stop the Steal* movement. We also see a noticeable decrease in AIC, which shows that these same predictors in 2020 explain much more variation in voter confidence than they did in 2016.

Overall, these findings show that there is a clear connection between racial attitudes and elements of democracy that Trump has contented with during the *Stop the Steal* movement. This includes more extreme attitudes, such as believing it is appropriate for state legislators

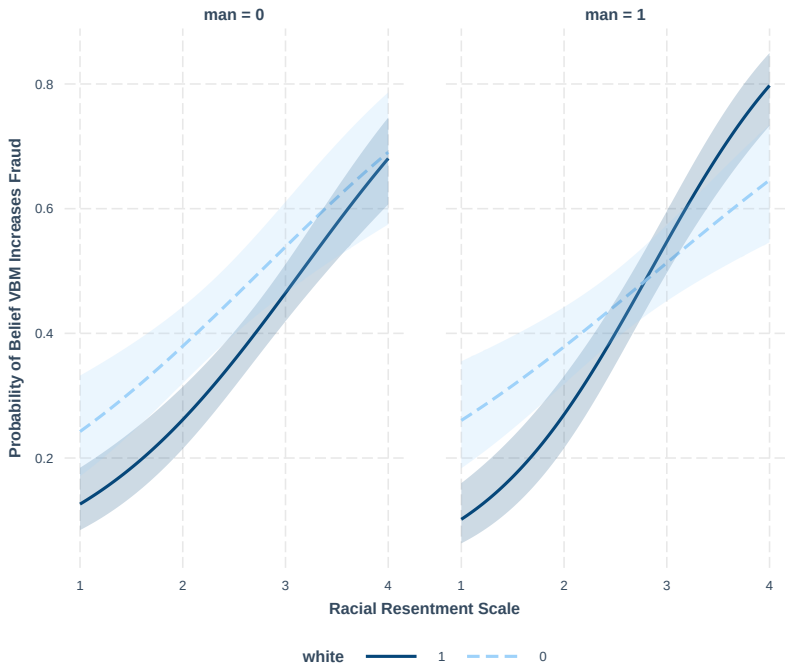


Figure 3.3: Interaction Between Gender, Whiteness, and RR on VBM Increasing Fraud

to reassign electoral votes that went from Biden to Trump. We also see some evidence across the models that White men have higher odds of believing *Stop the Steal* ideals more so than women and POC; however, further disaggregation is needed to accurately understand the variation in racial attitude's impact by group identity. The following subsection will specifically look at the spectrum of group identity and how this plays out for minority Trump voters.

Lack of Trust In Election Integrity 2016			
Characteristic	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**
Education	0.62	0.54, 0.71	**<0.001**
PID 7 Point	0.76	0.73, 0.79	**<0.001**
Ideology 5 Point	1.05	0.98, 1.14	0.2
RR Average Score	0.81	0.72, 0.91	**<0.001**
White	0.37	0.26, 0.52	**<0.001**
Trump Voter	0.35	0.30, 0.42	**<0.001**
RR Average Score*White	1.35	1.18, 1.54	**<0.001**
AIC	6,046		
[1] OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval			

Lack of Trust In Election Integrity 2020			
Characteristic	**OR**[1]	**95% CI**[1]	**p-value**
Education	0.83	0.66, 1.03	0.093
PID 7 Point	1.15	1.08, 1.23	**<0.001**
Ideology 5 Point	1.26	1.10, 1.45	**<0.001**
RR Average Score	1.76	1.44, 2.15	**<0.001**
White	0.19	0.09, 0.42	**<0.001**
Trump Voter	14.7	11.2, 19.3	**<0.001**
RR Average Score*White	1.66	1.29, 2.15	**<0.001**
AIC	2,782		
[1] OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval			

Figure 3.4: Left: 2016 VOTER Model. x Right:2020 VOTER Model

3.3.1 Group Identity & Voter Confidence

To adequately address sample size concerns of Trump voting minorities, the models were refitted using Bayesian Multilevel Models (BMM) to predict Trump's support for racial and gender group combinations. I utilize a binomial logit link model to predict the dichotomous outcome of not being confident that votes were counted accurately nationally (1) and being confident (0). I will again use the language of voter confidence (because traditional voter confidence metrics were used) and distrust in election outcomes interchangeably because I transformed the voter confidence measures to capture distrust. I used a factor variable to express all race and gender combinations, and this is used as the second-level grouping variable for the multilevel model.[6] Weakly informative priors from the *brms* package are used to mimic frequentist estimation rather than leaning into a fully Bayesian approach with informative priors to keep continuity with previous analyses.[7] The other covariates, education, issue voting, party ID, ideology, racial resentment, and Trump voting, were modeled identically as the previous analyses. Effective sample size (ESS) is featured in all BMM tables to

[6]These groups are Black men and Women, Latinos, and Latinas, and White men and women.

[7]Brms default priors are built to address some of the perils often found in not informative enough default priors in software.

show what the model had to leverage to make that prediction for each group.[8]

The following plots and tables feature odds ratios and marginal effects to show the impact of identity and racial attitudes on the probability of distrusting election integrity.[9] In Table 3.3, I feature the group-level odds ratios, which should be interpreted as the deviation by racial and gender group on top of the fixed effect.[10]. Racial resentment fixed effects were associated with increased odds of distrusting election outcomes. In Table 3.3, odds for racial groups greater than one indicate an additional increase in odds of distrust based on increases in racial resentment.

While White men and women show the highest increase in odds of distrust based on increases in racial resentment, we also see increased odds for Black women and Latinos. This does comport partially with H6 that minorities with increased racial resentment will still be more likely to distrust election outcomes. Black men and Latinas show decreased odds of distrusting the election based on increases in racial resentment. This finding should be taken with a grain of salt; however, as the untransformed log-odds posterior intervals featured in the Appendix, their estimate was positive (increased RR leads to increased distrust), just not at a resoundingly significant rate. These intervals for Black men and Hispanic women were also noticeably smaller than their gender counterparts. However, there is overall evidence that even for racial and ethnic minorities, internalized symbolic racism shows greater association with believing ideals associated with *Stop the Steal*.

Table 3.3 also features baseline distrust, the random intercept, or the amount of distrust by the group holding all other controls at zero. It can be interpreted as the impact of group identity on the odds of distrust in the election. These findings suggest that the two groups

[8]ESS is used to measure the amount of information garnered despite auto-correlation that comes from using MCMC chain estimation (as opposed to using the true N), but in this case, we can use it in this case to see what our relative N is in a Bayesian inference context where we can utilize a prior in small sample size environments.

[9]Plots were created using the *brms*, *marginaleffects*, *modelsummary*, and *jtools*.

[10]The full fixed effects tables are featured in the Appendix. As in previous models

who did not have increased odds based on increases in racial resentment (Black men and Hispanic women) were the groups with the highest odds of distrust at the baseline. This suggests that Black men and Latinas, at the outset, are more distrusting of election results for reasons other than racial resentment and rhetoric around *Stop the Steal*. While their credible intervals are wide, the median of each of their intervals is starkly higher than their gender counterparts.

Group Level Odds Ratios							
Parameter	Median	CI	CI_low	CI_high	pd	Rhat	ESS
Racial Resentment							
Black Men	0.71	0.95	0.32	1.08	0.91	1.00	2,050.96
Black Women	1.09	0.95	0.67	2.27	0.66	1.00	3,380.80
Latinos	1.10	0.95	0.71	2.14	0.69	1.00	2,934.80
Latinas	0.80	0.95	0.42	1.21	0.84	1.00	2,588.27
White Men	1.23	0.95	0.84	2.17	0.84	1.00	2,006.41
White Women	1.12	0.95	0.76	1.92	0.74	1.00	2,629.27
Baseline Distrust							
Black Men	1.97	0.95	0.57	12.67	0.84	1.00	2,601.29
Black Women	1.16	0.95	0.25	4.37	0.61	1.00	4,191.04
Latinos	0.76	0.95	0.12	2.55	0.69	1.00	3,244.31
Latinas	2.04	0.95	0.65	11.79	0.86	1.00	2,728.33
White Men	0.42	0.95	0.08	1.12	0.95	1.00	1,860.56
White Women	0.65	0.95	0.15	1.69	0.82	1.00	2,958.31

Table 3.3: Group Level Deviations in Odd Ratios

Despite having a descriptively representative candidate, Black women are less likely to trust the election. Overall, the level of distrust by each racial and ethnic (before accounting for racial attitudes) group comports with previous understandings of racial voter confidence. Black Americans are less trusting of electoral integrity, along with Latinas. Interestingly, Latinos were less likely to distrust election results, similar to whites, showing gender-based

differences in the Latinx group.

In Figure 3.5, I break this out more specifically to show the marginal effect of racial resentment on Trump voters. I specifically highlight Trump voters to investigate the attitudes among POC who are the subject of increased media attention due to their break with traditional Democratic voting (Ostfeld and Garcia, 2020). The x-axis denotes the racial resentment combined scale, and the y-axis denotes the probability of distrusting election outcomes nationally. Among Trump voters across racial and ethnic groups, we see a clear increase in the probability of distrusting election outcomes (marginal effect) as racial resentment increases. For Black men and Hispanic/Latinx women, we see a similar lack of increase that we saw in Table 3.3, but for other groups, the increase in probability is robust. This result continues to suggest that symbolic racism, including internalized symbolic racism in POC, is an independent and additional factor in distrusting electoral outcomes for Trump voters.

This finding is supported further by Figure 3.6, which shows the marginal effect, or the probability of distrusting electoral outcomes at each level of racial resentment for Trump voters across the full posterior space (1 being strongly disagreed, 2 being disagreed, 3 agreeing, and 4 being strongly agreed). For most groups, we see that increases across each level of racial resentment correspond to a clear increase in the probability of distrust in electoral outcomes for Trump voters. These results are the most evident for White men and women; however, for Black women and Hispanic men, we still see posterior differentiation at the different levels of racial resentment. While Black men and Hispanic/Latinx women see that there is considerable posterior overlap, there are still clear peaks, especially at the highest levels of racial resentment.[11]

[11]Results for non-Trump (Biden voters) are in Appendix B.

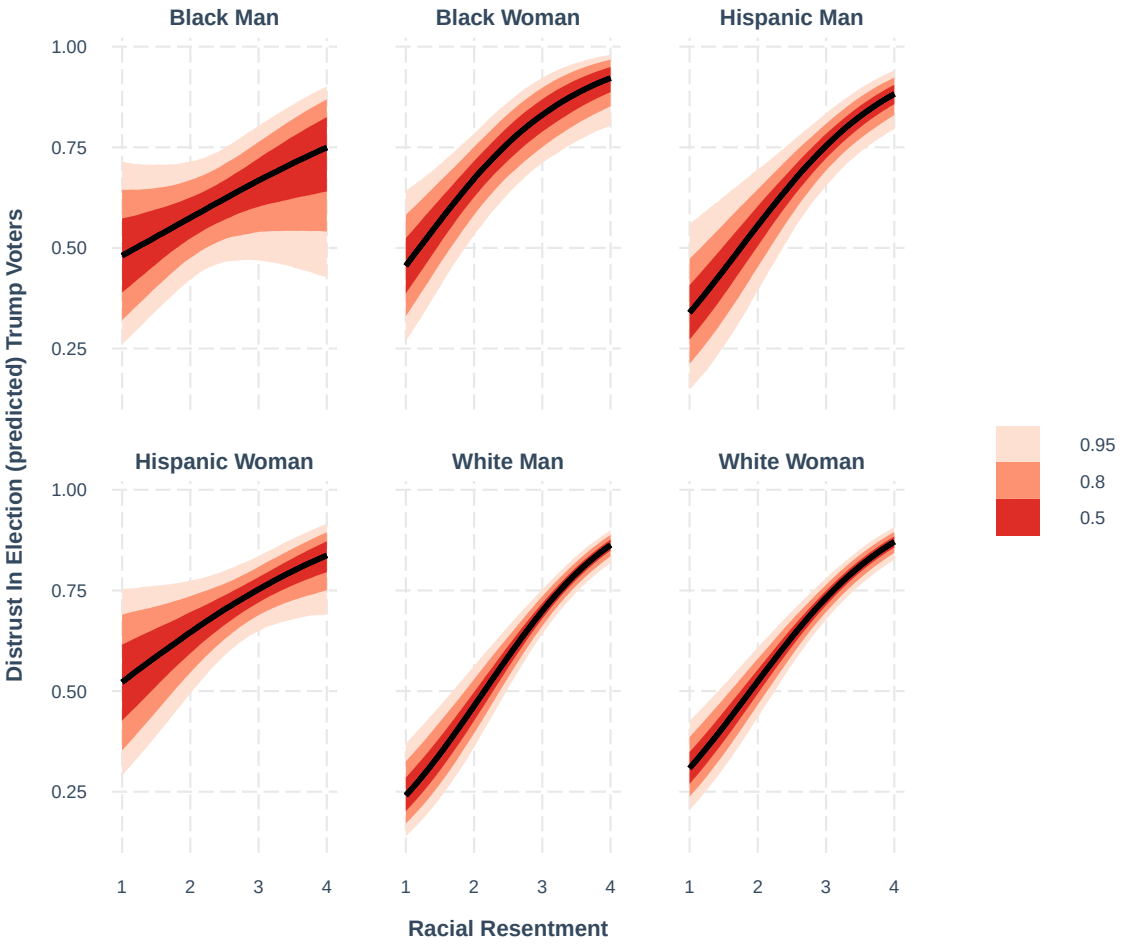


Figure 3.5: Impact of Racial Resentment Increase for Trump Voters Continuous

3.4 Discussion & Conclusion

How racial attitudes and group identity affect political choices beyond the vote are increasingly salient in the post-2016 and post-January 6th era. Lessons from the elections with Trump suggest that Political Scientists must devote attention to determinants of distrust in electoral integrity to safeguard American democracy from future insurrections during transitions of power. Further, determinants of distrust beyond conventional metrics like the winner effect, ideology, partisanship, and having an issue at the ballot box must be considered to understand the highly identity-oriented and calcified political environment in which the U.S. is currently situated.

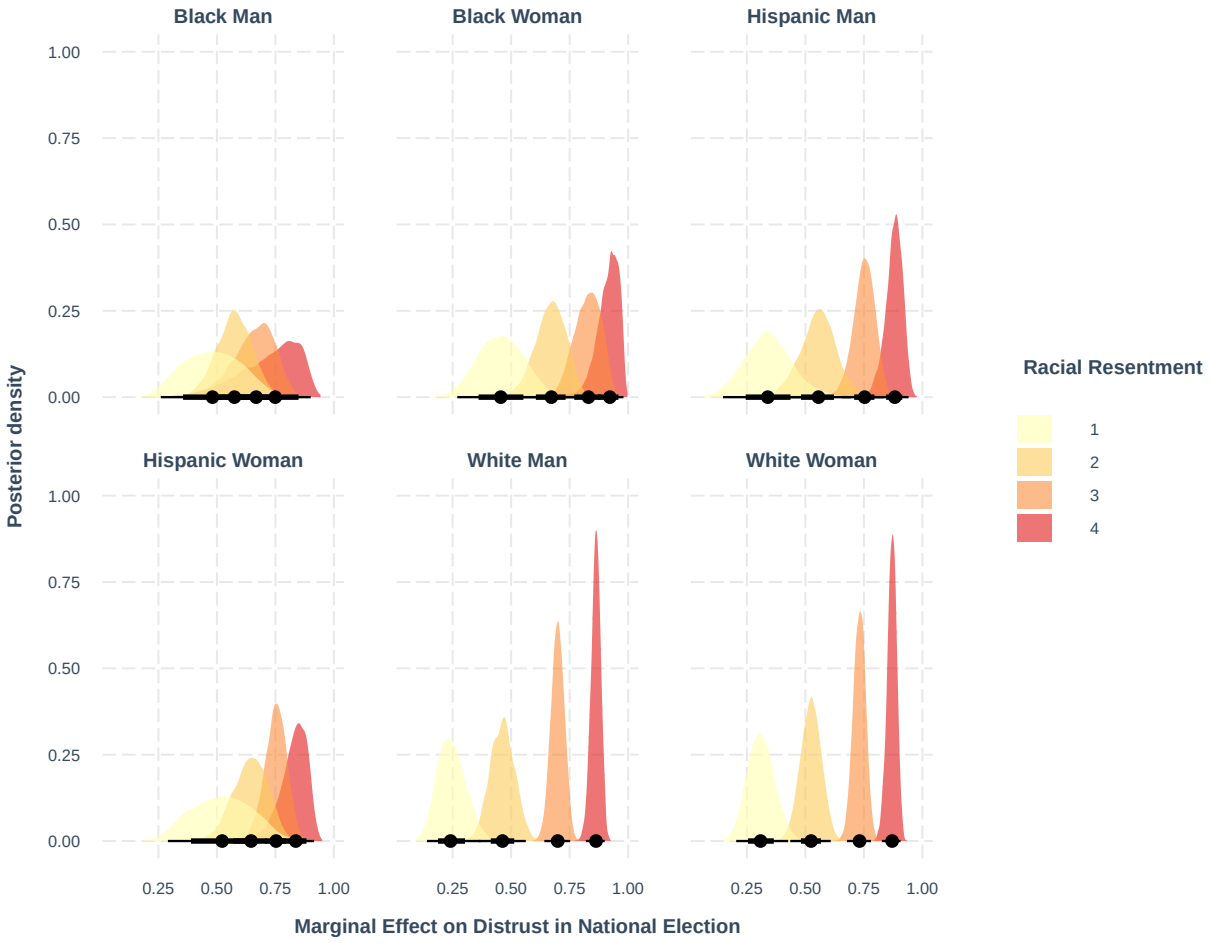


Figure 3.6: Impact of Racial Resentment Increase for Trump Voters By Racial Resentment Categories

The results of the 2020 VOTER survey indicate that racial resentment is an independent predictor of voter confidence and is often stronger than metrics like ideology and partisanship. This was particularly true for White men, who showed the sharpest increases in distrust in election outcomes with increases in racial resentment. However, the shifting contours of the electorate based on group identity suggest that further investigation is necessary for conservative subsets of minority populations. Deeper disaggregation of group identity showed that while Black men and Latinas were, from the outset, distrusting of electoral outcomes, Black women and Latinos were responsive to increases in racial resentment, leading to further distrust of electoral integrity.

All of these results indicate that continued research is needed to understand how both racism and, especially, internalized racism from POC inform people's political preferences. These findings indicate that just focusing on the electoral system as a solution to the events of January 6th will fall short, and the U.S. needs to look to address the underlying current racial attitudes to safeguard the U.S. democracy.

Chapter 4

The Nature of Gender Consciousness in the Dobbs v. Jackson Era

4.1 Introduction

Fifty years of precedent on abortion rights were overturned on June 24, 2022, in the United States, marking a stark shift in the country's status on gender and human rights. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* marked the loss of abortion rights at the federal level, overturning the precedent set by *Roe v. Wade* in 1974. By way of a series of trigger laws and state legislation, abortion became illegal and sometimes criminalized in many places. This landmark decision also was shrouded in a dark moment for the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) as the draft opinion was leaked months before the decision, a first in the nation's history (Cole, Sneed and de Vogue, 2023). *Dobbs v. Jackson* represents a new era for the women's movement that has a renewed focus on reproductive rights as nearly 22 million women of reproductive age residing in states that now either heavily limit or prohibit abortion.

This decision comes after almost a decade of events and advancements in the women's movement. From the Women's March on Washington to the #MeToo movement, women have made major inroads in gender inequality through collective action. In Congress, we saw record numbers of women and women of color running and winning in 2018. These represent major victories for women and represent successful mass mobilization around gender identity. However, the reduction of abortion rights provides a stark contrast to these gains. This paradox of wins and losses in the women's movement can partly be explained by the role of gender consciousness and the successful strategies of pro-life organizations using progressive playbooks around group identity. We explain how gender consciousness, namely feminist consciousness, is deeply complicated in the abortion policy space, as both sides of the spectrum claim similar language of speaking for empowered women and what helps them maximize their rights. We explain how a nuanced understanding of feminist and gender consciousness helps unpack the language found on social media after *Dobbs* and the strategies used by both sides. This allows us to extrapolate some of the challenges mobilized gender groups will likely face.

Gender consciousness, a gendered version of group consciousness, was developed to understand how women politicize their identity. It is defined as a connectedness to gender as identity, a perception of the relative political standing of women as subjugated, and an awareness that collective action is necessary (Gurin, 1985; Mansbridge, 1999; McClain et al., 2010). Group consciousness is often described as the necessary precursor to political action for subjugated groups and a precursor to mass mobilization (Klein, 1984; Dawson, 1994). This consciousness is "raised" through the process called "consciousness-raising," which entails exposure to testimonials and information about group-based inequality. The study of American political behavior is measured by questions on surveys inquiring about degrees of closeness to the group level of understanding of inequality that the group faces and collective action engagement.

Gender consciousness is often expanded to a spectrum to provide nuance between gender-based movements and feminist identifiers, as not all gender-based collective action is feminist. One spectrum garnered from lessons from other scholars has three parts and ranges from gender consciousness to feminist identity (Aronson, 2017). Gender consciousness entails an awareness of women's political and social interests as women—conservative women are often placed in this category. Feminist consciousness is an awareness and critique of gender inequalities and patriarchy and can encompass people who understand gender inequality but do not identify with feminism. Feminist identification is the most developed portion of this spectrum and contains all previous parts plus identification with feminism as a collective identity.

Conservative women were often treated as the lowest form, which is gender consciousness. However, evidence from Ziegler (2013), Rose (2011) and Roberti (2021), popular media sources, and this paper show that there is a clear move by pro-life organizations to be seen as pro-women even concretely as feminists. This is born out in the language used by the masses on social media in the wake of *Dobbs*. This comes alongside a surge in prominent conservative women in American politics such as Sarah Palin, Carly Fiorina, and Ivanka Trump identifying with feminism (Gibson and Heyse, 2014; Topaz, 2015; Kelly and Gurr, 2019; Schreiber, 2018). Fiorina even claimed the Republican party should reclaim the term feminism. While not all conservative women are feminists, there is a concrete presence of conservative women who recognize gender inequality in language, similar to feminists. Many scholars consider conservative feminism to be either pseudo-feminism or anti-feminism; however, almost all acknowledge that it is a strategy that has been adopted to be more successful in certain political realms. Abortion is one of those spaces.

We do not claim whether or not conservative feminism is indeed feminism or anti-feminism. Still, this feminist identity and, at minimum, gender-focused lens likely permeates to the public. The presence of conservative feminism has the potential to impact mass beliefs,

which has implications for how women in the public identify and differentiate what feminism is. This paper shows that we see evidence of developed conservative forms of gender consciousness in the public, not always fairly categorized as the lowest form of gender consciousness, which We argue will present challenges to mainstream feminism in organizations for abortion rights.

In this paper, we document and provide context for the nuanced forms of gender consciousness in the wake of the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. Using descriptive analysis of user-generated content (UGC) on Twitter (now X) by way of Joint Sentiment Topic Modeling (JST) on Twitter before and after the *Dobbs v. Jackson*. Through a mixed-method approach of discourse and content analysis of the emblematic tweets and words from the JST topics, we grouped the kinds of gender consciousness found predominantly in each group. Using flexible dictionaries in JST, we can articulate topics for (conservative), against (mainstream feminist), or neutral to the decision. We show that pro-life groups and users regularly use language very similar to feminist frames (Lin and He, 2009). Additionally, we find evidence that this conservative leverage of progressive feminist rhetoric goes deeper than gender but also touches on race and anti-racist language.

We show that politicized gender identity is central to the success of pro-life conservative activists and the response from feminist pro-choice users. We provide evidence that what it means to be pro-woman is complicated in the context of abortion attitudes, as both ends of the spectrum claim to speak for what is best for women with an empowered frame that used to be unique to feminist mobilization. We do not claim to extrapolate individual Twitter user's levels of group consciousness; however, we focusing on aggregate trends on Twitter that capture gender consciousness rhetoric at the mass level.

Using these categorizations of gender consciousness topics around mainstream feminism and conservative gender consciousness, we then use Impulse Response Functions (IRF) from a Vector Auto-regressive Model (VAR) to understand how the conservative shock of the

overturning of *Roe* impacted feminist discourse. We additionally recognize that a shocking moment like the overturning of 50 years of SCOTUS precedent is likely a moment of reckoning for mainstream feminist identifiers, and it will likely be a moment of consciousness-raising for the movement. Our research maps the immediate impact of consciousness-raising techniques on Twitter (testimonials and information on the reversal's impact on women's inequality) and how it translates to calls to action and activated identity through these same IRF models.

Gender consciousness is primarily operationalized through survey data asking about relative closeness to the group and collective action ideas about the group identity. This is standard practice within the social sciences to operationalize political psychology measures. However, user-generated content on social media and advances in text analysis present a novel opportunity to understand these elements of political psychology at scale and in a format where the user is engaging without researcher intervention (Klašnja et al., 2018). While we do not predict survey-level public opinion, we can asses mass beliefs through natural language processing (NLP done at scale). This paper provides a mixed method approach of quantitative topic modeling, time series modeling, and qualitative discourse analysis to provide a comprehensive description of the spectrum of gender consciousness on social media around the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision to asses real-time opinions rather than retroactive surveys. The original dataset contains around 1,000,000 unique tweets between June 23 and June 25, 2022, to capture the days before and after the decision. We show that social media continues to be a viable source of political psychology data to asses the factors which underpin mobilization.

4.2 The Women's Movement and Fourth Wave Feminism on Social Media

To understand this movement of women's collective action, it is important to situate it in the context of the broader mainstream feminist movement. Scholars have identified four distinct waves of activity within the women's movement in the United States, characterized by increased engagement and evolving strategies with each phase. We focus on social media data because it is central to women's activism during the current fourth wave of feminism. The emergence of the #MeToo movement signifies this transition as it centered digital activism and mobilization (Soucie, Parry and Cousineau, 2018; Phillips and Cree, 2014). This wave is also said to be more intersectional and have more men present. Additionally, in terms of abortion rights, these groups often focus on reproductive justice and the expansion of women's healthcare.

The fourth wave of the women's movement has embraced effective consciousness-raising methods previously utilized by movements such as "'Take Back the Night" during the late 1970s and 1980s, adapting them to the digital realm, specifically on platforms like Twitter. The *Dobbs* era uses strategies employed by the #MeToo movement for mobilization within social media spaces. However, it has a renewed focus on reproductive rights advocacy similar to earlier waves of feminism pre-*Roe*. Consciousness-raising is a precursor to feminist consciousness and identity in its most basic sense. Still, many have complicated what it means to have a feminist consciousness, especially given the rise of conservative feminists. For this paper, we consider feminist consciousness to be a mainstream feminist one described by the fourth wave of feminism. We then categorize a conservative gender consciousness, which is both pro-woman frames that are at the forefront of pro-life rhetoric and often also have feminist language or identifiers.

We will use the #Metoo movement on Twitter as a baseline for our expectations for

how women respond on social media to the *Dobbs* decision. This allows comparison with another major event in fourth-wave feminism to capture the contours of gender consciousness rhetoric. This also shows that while women's digital activism during #MeToo was largely mainstream feminist, *Dobbs* had a clear amount of conservative oppositional forces to mainstream feminist pro-choice advocates who appeared to have feminist and/or pro-woman ideas. What it meant to be pro-women in #MeToo was being against sexual violence and bringing a reckoning to perpetrators. The opposition centered on men's experiences in addition to the impacts on men in the future. The *Dobbs* era complicates that because oppositional groups and individuals to the mainstream feminist movement that drove #MeToo also center women's empowerment. This work is meant to explain the diversity in feminist language around women's rights in a digital space to show the vastly different responses to women's issues like abortion compared to sexual violence.

We justify the focus on UGC as social movements as a whole have turned to social platforms not only for sharing information and coordinating actions but also as a means of protest in their own right. Research indicates that online activism carries similar significance to traditional protests and is increasingly recognized as a distinct and costly form of political engagement. This contrasts ideas that it is "slacktivism" or lazy activism (Lee and Murdie, 2021; Gleeson and Turner, 2019). Online activism comes with its own set of challenges, including the users' identities and profiles being publicly accessible, leading to various forms of hostility such as verbal abuse and threats of violence (Lee and Murdie, 2021; Williams, Singh and Mezey, 2019).

Lessons from research on #Metoo show that it had influential consciousness-raising periods because it leveraged digital spaces' far reach to spread awareness of the issues of sexual violence (Gleeson and Turner, 2019; Brunner and Partlow-Lefevre, 2020). "Consciousness-raising entails reinterpreting one's individual experiences, seeing them as shaped by social forces and identifying as part of a group with shared experiences (Whittier, 2017)."

Consciousness-raising leads to internalizing the issues a group faces and realizing that these grievances can be remedied through political action (Gleeson and Turner, 2019). This consciousness-raising component is historically central to feminist activism, and social media is increasingly a place where these strategies can take place (Martin and Valenti, 2013; Clark, 2015). Digital spaces like Twitter facilitate mass engagement with consciousness-raising tactics through the use of hashtags, retweets, and likes, which are an efficient way of engaging the larger group, in addition to the fact they are searchable, quantifiable, and contagious (Williams, Singh and Mezey, 2019; Gleeson and Turner, 2019).

This phenomenon of mobilization on Twitter can be seen first with movements like the Black Lives Matter movement, which effectively utilized their viral hashtag #Blacklivesmatter to revolutionize social justice organizing for subsequent identity-based movements in the U.S. (Crowder, 2020). Understanding consciousness-raising as a precursor to "activation," or politicized identity primed for engagement, is necessary to unpack how women talk about the loss of abortion rights in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision. We use consciousness-raising to help categorize kinds of discourse related to raising awareness of abortion issues and see it as the stage before politicized identity that contains calls to political action to remedy gender inequality. This happens on both sides. We see this as necessary to fully understand how gender consciousness plays out in the abortion discourse on Twitter. This leads us to our first hypothesis.

H1: Topics on consciousness-raising will be followed by increased activated topics.

4.2.1 Group Consciousness

Fully understanding gender consciousness requires delving into where women's studies intersect with the study of political behavior and psychology. Initially conceptualized by Miller Miller et al. (1981), group consciousness was developed to explain why minority groups ex-

hibit higher levels of political participation in the United States than resource theories alone would predict. The concept comprises four key components: identification with a specific group or social stratum, political awareness of the group's societal position relative to others, a degree of polarized affect favoring the in-group over the out-group, and a commitment to collective action aimed at advancing the group's interests (Miller et al., 1981). It differs from mere group identity or membership due to its politicized nature, wherein individuals possess an activated sense of urgency for change regarding a group grievance (McClain et al., 2010). This framework applies to any identity mobilized or activated within the political sphere, including race, gender, class, and sexuality. Group consciousness remains a consistent and significant predictor of political attitudes and behavior.

Scholars have shown that group consciousness increases political mobilization, particularly for racial groups such as Black Americans (Dawson, 1994). However, applying group consciousness as a mobilizer for political behavior to other racial minorities and identity groups is less straightforward. Linked fate has been posed as one way to address and contextualize racial group consciousness (Dawson, 1994; McClain et al., 2010). This concept is explained as the feeling that an individual's fate is dependent on the overall fate of the group someone belongs to. It is often born from the anger of mistreatment. This is most often used talk about the ties that mobilize racial groups together, originating with Black Americans, but has been shown to meaningfully impact gender and intersectionality (Stout, Kretschmer and Ruppanner, 2017; Ruppanner et al., 2019). Linked fate has been known also to cross gender, i.e., men can be mobilized because they feel that the status of women and their inequality affects their lives.

Within group consciousness, gender consciousness was specifically developed to understand how women politicize their identities. Research shows that gender consciousness is relatively weak compared to racial group consciousness (Gurin, 1985). These scholars explain it is because women do not overwhelmingly express a distinctly subordinate consciousness

because of their relative privilege in some areas (usually related to other identities held). Additionally, some men express feminist ideals, and therefore, in certain groups, there are no stark differences between men and women in their levels of gender progressive views. However, gender consciousness remains an important mediator in understanding why the women's movement presents in waves and frames when women's identity is activated. Common indicators of gender consciousness include a feeling of dissatisfaction with the political position of women, especially of inequalities relative to men (Gurin, 1985; Conover, 1984; Miller et al., 1981).

We use the spectrum developed by (Aronson, 2017) to help explain how gender consciousness differs from feminist consciousness and feminist identifiers. Feminist consciousness is distinct from gender consciousness because it critiques power differences between men and women and doesn't just mobilize around women's identity (Aronson, 2017). Feminist consciousness under this frame can include those who do not overtly identify as feminists but recognize gender-based inequality. Scholars such as Schreiber (2018) show that conservative women's movements and organizations also espouse gender consciousness in a way that aligns with the behavioral politicized group identity definition but may also fit within feminist consciousness by certain typologies like Aronson (2017). Feminist identifiers are the highest or most developed form of gender consciousness, and they are people who mobilize as women, recognize structural inequality, and also identify with the feminist movement. In this spectrum, many conservative women can still be feminist identifiers based on the language used to restrict abortion (Ziegler, 2013). We do not claim to evaluate whether conservative feminism is or is not feminism as others have done. Still, we provide evidence that this rhetoric is permeating the public, which has downstream effects on mobilization and consciousness-raising efforts for both movements.

Pro-Life Gender Consciousness & Feminism

As shown in the images below from the March for Life protests, young women in the pro-life movement show identification with feminism. This contrasts with previous understandings of conservative gender consciousness as different from feminism. Throughout images and rhetoric from pro-life organizations and activists, there is a consistent push for pro-woman frames. These focus the pro-life movement as not just advocates for women as mothers, but women *as women*.



Figure 4.1: Left: March for Life Protester - WTOP news; Right: March for Life Protester - MFL Instagram

This represents the strategic positioning of the conservative pro-life movement to combat feminist rhetoric of standing for women. The pro-life frame centers on the harm abortion causes to women and provides a woman-centered approach to advocating for abortion restrictions rather than a fetus-centered approach (Roberti, 2021). Specifically, this strategy uses women's-rights language (often mostly seen in feminist spaces) and scientific language to state that abortion is bad for women Rose (2011). It has been essential to the pro-life strategy to succeed in passing anti-abortion legislature at the state level (Roberti, 2021). The use of this language was initiated after former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader

Ginsburg's dissenting opinion in *Gonzales v. Carhart (2006)*, which said that the equal protection clause would be a stronger protection for abortion rights than privacy would be (Ziegler, 2013). This opened the door further for pro-life feminists to use equality-based justifications for abortion restrictions that are more amenable to working and professional women. Equal rights language has been used to successfully limit abortion access for almost two decades (Legislature, 2006; Roberti, 2021).

Clear examples in the current context can be seen in an *amicus curie brief* filed in the *Dobbs* decision titled a "BRIEF OF 240 WOMEN SCHOLARS AND PROFESSIONALS, AND PROLIFE FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS." This piece, in detail, explained major tenets of pro-life feminism and opened with the idea that there is no causal link between women's advancement in society and abortion access and that the decision in *Roe* oppressed rather than liberated women. The brief goes on to detail the alleged flaws in mainstream feminist ideas on abortion and that their read of the science shows abortion does not help women meet full liberation. As stated in one of their key points, "Indeed, even a cursory review of history reveals that the expansion of opportunities for women—as well as their increased participation in political, social, and economic spheres—predated Roe." This brief comes alongside another "BRIEF FOR WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND THE SUSAN B. ANTHONY LIST AS AMICI CURIAE SUPPORTING PETITIONERS," which connects early feminists like Susan B. Anthony to the modern pro-life movement. Conservative feminism was clearly present in the surrounding *Dobbs* decision. Other clear examples cited by scholars are from prominent pro-life organizations like the Americans United for Life (AUL), which have promoted events like "Women Speak 2018: A Symposium on Life Without Roe" and were marketed explicitly towards a younger and empowered crowd, with images of women tossing up graduation caps in the solicitations (Ziegler, 2013). This pro-woman frame has certainly made inroads across the abortion activism space and likely has translated to the way the public talks about abortion.

Therefore, the intersection of gender consciousness and feminist consciousness on the mass level must be explored for conservative women, especially in social media spaces, which, on average, are younger. In this project, we expect to see JST topics that contain conservative gender consciousness that are partially dominated by this pro-woman or pro-life feminist frame. This helps support research that shows the impact of elite and organizational rhetoric on conservative feminism that permeates into the public.

H2: Conservative gender topics will contain pro-woman and/or feminist language and framing efforts.

The fourth wave of feminism has more intersectional aims or aims that focus on the intersection of marginalization of race, gender, and class (Crenshaw, 1989). This is being mirrored alongside the women's rights language by pro-life organizations—they also have notably increased their degree of addressing issues of race.

Intersectional Solidarity & Race in Pro-Life Language

From the mainstream feminist lens, Crowder 2020 interjects in group consciousness literature, noting that the women's movement often lacks awareness of the impacts of identities that intersect gender that create unique experiences. Gender consciousness in this research is considered a single-axis consciousness where early women's movements largely operated off of the conception that fighting for women's issues under a single banner captured all interests, disappearing the influence of race and class. Similarly, racial group consciousness has been conceptualized as a single-axis identity, as early Civil Rights movements did not address the situated experiences of women and lower-income people in the movement.

Recent iterations of identity-based social movements have utilized intersectionality, a theory and research paradigm that addresses how people at the nexus of multiple marginalized identities face overlapping sites of oppression that create unique outcomes not articulated by

understanding just race or gender's influence. Crowder furthers this into group consciousness literature by showing that women of color are often the drivers for adopting intersectional solidarity, which is "being aware, appreciating, and seeking to address the specific barriers presented by the intersections of racism, classism, and sexism (Crowder and Smith, 2020)." Within the fourth wave of feminism, intersectional solidarity looks like adopting priorities that go beyond one's distinct identities, i.e., white women prioritizing Black women's experiences as much as their own. Despite the 2017 Women's March on Washington making explicit appeals to intersectionality, research has shown that the march was predominantly white, and qualitative research has shown mobilization rhetoric to be largely single axis (Crowder and Smith, 2020).

Conservative pro-life and pro-woman activists have adopted this language of addressing race (not as overtly as addressing intersectionality) by pointing out the controversial origins of Planned Parenthood, one of the most well-known abortion providers in the United States. One of the most famous examples of this was Dr. Ben Carson, a pediatric neurosurgeon and presidential candidate, in the lead-up to the 2016 election, stating:

> "Maybe I am not objective when it comes to Planned Parenthood, but, you know, I know who Margaret Sanger is, and I know that she believed in eugenics, and that she was not particularly enamored with black people.
>
> "And one of the reasons you find most of their clinics in black neighborhoods is so that you can find a way to control that population. I think people should go back and read about Margaret Sanger who founded this place — a woman Hillary Clinton by the way says that she admires. Look and see what many people in Nazi Germany thought about her."

While much of this was debunked, it was undoubtedly true that Sanger did believe in some eugenics principles. Fact-checkers, though, have since shown that her mission was not

to reduce the Black population as insinuated, and the quotes suggesting so are taken out of context (Amita, 2015). Further, 60% of Planned Parenthood's exist in white neighborhoods (Jones and Jerman, 2014). However, this rhetoric has proved to be a continued strategy against the pro-choice narrative that abortion plans are bad for Black and poor women. The narrative has stuck throughout the modern pro-life movement. Another high-profile example is Black conservative commentator Candace Owens, who consistently used this strategy to combat pro-choice rhetoric that access to abortion is necessary for marginalized communities (Focus on the Family, 2022).

Mainstream feminist movements have consistently argued that abortion is bad for women of color, so it would be natural to see these ideas in feminist topics, but we also expect to see some of this language being used by pro-lifers. We expect to see both JST topics that have tweets about race and abortion in the conservative topics, specifically as it relates to the status of Black women and relative inequality.

H3: We expect to see topics about anti-racism and the impacts abortion has on Black women in both mainstream feminist and conservative topics.

Overall, we expect to see topics on gender consciousness around feminism and conservative feminism and their intersection with race. We also expect to see complementary trends in consciousness-raising language right after the decision and subsequent increases in activated identities that contain calls to action. I test these expectations in the following section.

4.3 Data and Methods

The data was collected through the Twitter API and the *Twitter* package in Python. A stream was collected using keywords related to abortion in the wake of the leak in May.

The stream was started on June 18th, 2022, and was continued through November of 2022. This project narrows down this data to exclusively map the day directly before, the day of overturn, and the day after to explore the spectrum of gender consciousness when it is most salient. After pre-processing and removing retweets, 1,000,000 unique tweets were analyzed using the mixed method approach.

This paper utilizes Joint Sentiment Topic (JST) Modeling created by Lin and He (2009), which provides both sentiment and topic classification in an unsupervised setting. JST takes priors for sentiment the researcher sets rather than a pre-set dictionary about the positive, negative, or neutral valence. In this case, we edited the sentiments and used negative rhetoric to capture pro-choice feminist abortion attitudes. We used negative sentiments because we expected mainstream feminist sentiments to be the dominant theme after the decision. We used positive pro-life terms to capture abortion attitudes around victory and happiness of the decision.[1] Then JST uses a probabilistic approach to classify the sentiment, and further classify a topic based on the sentiment choice and use of a traditional method, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). This garners 45 sent topics, 15 topics with three sentiments each.

Once JST sent-topics are estimated, emblematic tweets are selected for each sent-topic to be analyzed for manual qualitative content and discourse analysis. By narrowing down the qualitative undertaking to the emblematic tweets from each topic, a researcher can adequately cover the entirety of a large corpus of texts due to the certainty one gains when using natural language processing methods to find the patterns in a set of tweets. This allows the researcher to circumvent doing this manually to devote time to focusing on a detailed analysis of the content. Using the content and discourse analysis, We will map the contours of gender consciousness in the aggregations of tweets. These thematic topics from the qualitative analysis then serve as labels for impulse response functions (IRF).

[1]Neutral is assumed to be set between these two preset categories and doesn't need to be outright specified

IRF is a variation of vector auto-regression models (VAR), a classic approach to time series modeling in the Social Sciences. IRF estimates the dynamic response of each classified theme in the system to a one-time shock or impulse in one of the themes, holding all other themes constant. The orthogonal portion of the IRF helps reduce the issues of confounding relationships between the themes and helps account for their likely interdependence in some ways. This allows us, for example, to understand how an increase in feminist consciousness topics impacts conservative gender topics during the data collection period. Substantive interpretations of the IRF function are then used to conclude the analysis of the Dobbs overturn on Twitter. A representation of the workflow is featured in Figure 4.2 below to demonstrate how researchers can replicate this mixed-method approach.

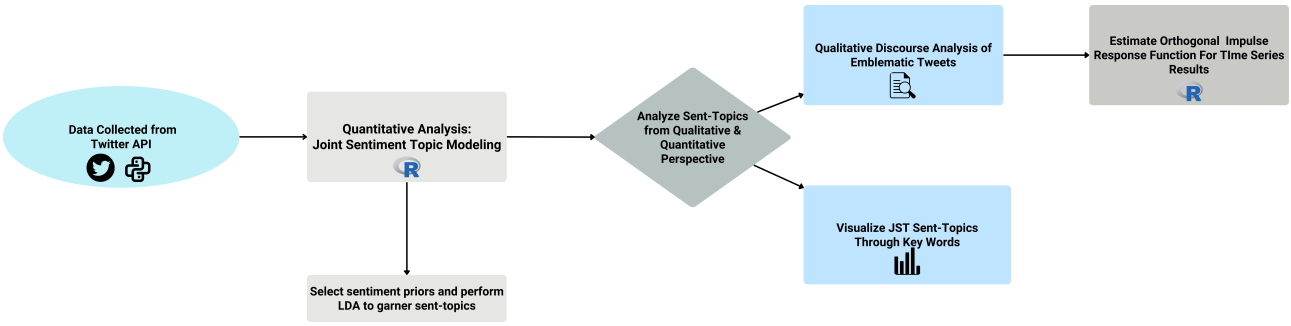


Figure 4.2: Data Sourcing and Mixed Method Approach

4.4 Content and Discourse Analysis of Tweets

Content and discourse analysis are used to provide detailed accounts of the themes of the time around the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision beyond what NLP methods can provide. Content analysis involves manual but systematic categorization of things like text and images for themes and patterns. Discourse analysis is meant to understand the meaning-making behind texts and understand language as it is situated in social contexts. Discourse analysis also allows for interpreting discursive elements such as phrases, metaphors, narratives, and rhetorical devices alongside the strategies employed, given the context of the pro-life and

pro-choice movements. A combination of qualitative methods is used not just to understand the content itself but the relative meaning of the content in the space of the *Dobbs* decision. We will first analyze the JST results and use content analysis to classify the themes of the topics into different categories. Then, discourse analysis will be used to fully understand the sorts of tweets found in each topic. Tweets used in discourse analysis will be anonymous for individual users, and public organizations or news outlets will not be anonymous.

4.4.1 Analysis of the JST Results

To fully understand the results of the JST model, we first delve into the classification of gender consciousness and consciousness-raising. Within classifying gender consciousness topics, we will be assessing the degree to which the topic captures tweets emulating feminist consciousness or conservative gender consciousness. The following section, containing content and discourse analysis, will fully delve into the nuances of conservative gender consciousness (including conservative feminism) as detailed in the literature review. Not all conservative gender rhetoric is feminist, so we use a broader umbrella term and tease out the nuance in the qualitative phase. There also is a category for neutral topics, which captures news or unbiased headlines about the landmark decision. Beyond gender consciousness, we categorize tweets based on where they fall within the spectrum of creating group and feminist consciousness. If a topic is centered around raising awareness about the issue of abortion, either for or against, it is considered a consciousness-raising topic. If the topic is centered around tweets encouraging protest, voting, and increasing political engagement, it is considered an activated topic. This helps us understand the transition from raising awareness about a group issue to creating active engagement and a politicized sense of identity.

In Figure 4.3, we see that most tweets are centered around a feminist gender consciousness. This means that in the context of the decision, these tweets spoke about the loss

of abortion rights as a major hit to women's rights and often advocated for political action to remedy the issue. We consider this to be mainstream feminism's response to the *Dobbs* decision, and, intuitively, it is the largest share of the topics. Feminist topics were followed by conservative gender topics and then neutral topics. The majority of all tweets were consciousness-raising topics. Interestingly and intuitively, the activated topics were only found in the feminist category of gender consciousness. This stems from those with feminist consciousness being outraged around the decision, and the group needs to mobilize change to re-solidify abortion rights.

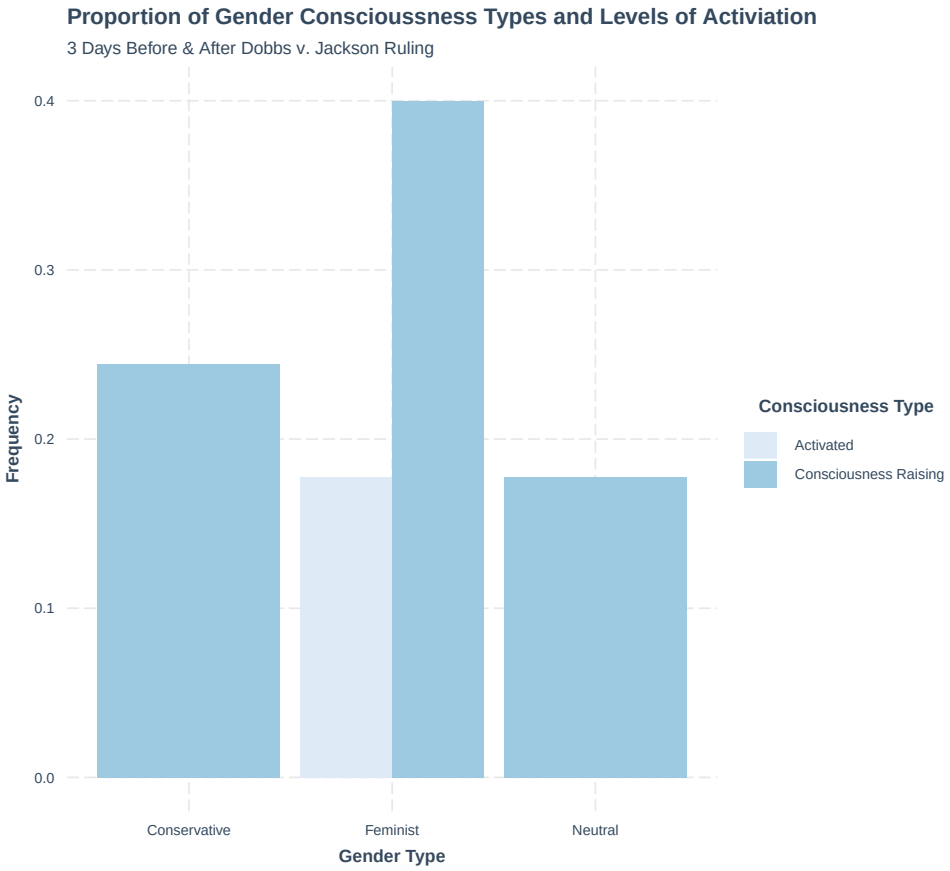


Figure 4.3: Example 2 of Race in Abortion Rhetoric

In Figure 4.4, we can see some of the most likely words to be featured in these topics to understand better the kinds of rhetoric used by feminist and conservative narratives. In the top left panel, we see Topic 7 Sentiment 3, a feminist-activated topic that espoused

feminist consciousness alongside calls to action. Words like vote, political parties, and subject pronouns like "we" indicate calls to political action. As shown in the following section in tweets from this sent-topic, these topics often detail the need for Democratic mobilization to pass legislation to codify abortion rights. We also see feminist activation in Topic 11 Sentiment 1 in a different way, with clear calls to support Planned Parenthood and abortion funds in the wake of the decision. These are considered activated because they call for tangible action and support of organizations supportive of women's rights to abortions. They often use subject pronouns like "I" and "your," which end up being situated as sentences asking folks to support their local clinics after testimonials that they have supported their own.

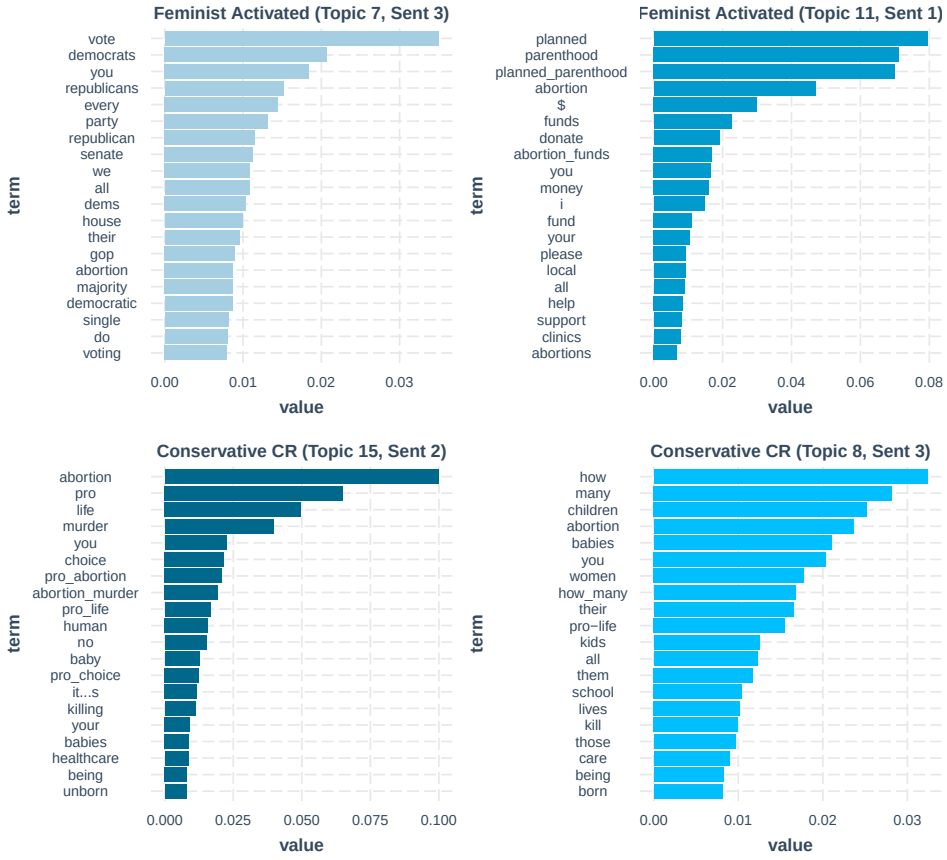


Figure 4.4: Example 2 of Race in Abortion Rhetoric

On the conservative end, we see exclusively consciousness-raising topics such as Topic 15

Sentiment 2 and Topic 8 Sentiment 3, mostly centered around standard pro-life rhetoric such as abortion being murder ("abortion_murder" n-gram) and words like "killing" and "babies." The often detail the scale "how_many" babies have been aborted, and some center women clearly like in Topic 8 Sent 3. In the following section, we use discourse and content analysis of tweets in these categorized topics to understand how differing gendered consciousness emerges after *Dobbs*. We will detail first how mainstream feminism responds to the decision and how conservative topics take on the language of women's empowerment and anti-racism more clearly.

4.4.2 Understanding the Pro-Choice Outrage

Most topics and tweets dealt with feminist outrage over the loss of *Roe v. Wade's* precedent. We see this in Figure 4.3, with most topics centered around feminist rhetoric and being a mix of consciousness-raising and activated ideas. These aggregations of tweets are categorized as mainstream feminist consciousness and feminist identity. This is the most developed form of gender consciousness as it takes feminist ideals about inequality and the adaptation of feminism as an identity. An example of that is shown below in Figure 4.5. This tweet quotes Senator Elizabeth Warren's exclamation that in a democratic system, the people have the right to fight for their preferred policies and that the SCOTUS does not have the final say in the matter. These sorts of calls to action were also found with calls to vote and engage in the democratic process to solidify abortion rights.

Further analysis of the feminist topics to provide nuance beyond the top words in Figure 4.4 also demonstrated the conjunction of anger and language about the loss of basic human rights and healthcare. This is exemplified below in Figure 4.6. This tweet concretely states a feminist position that choices over bodily healthcare are a fundamental human right and that people should be angry over the loss. In this paper, we hypothesize that these sorts of

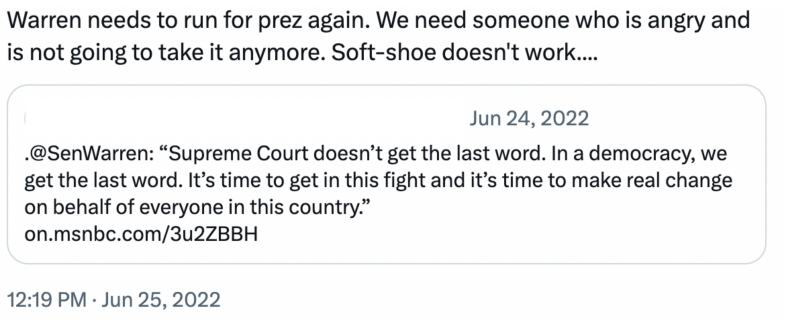


Figure 4.5: Quote about Sen. Warren

feminist consciousness-raising tweets will surge right after the decision, and then activated topics will take over, like 4.5, as people reckon with the gravity of the decision and look to find ways to reverse it. This will be tested with the IRF.

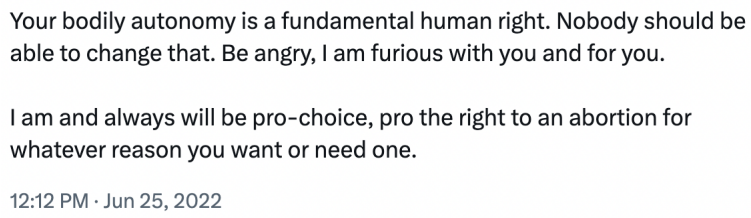


Figure 4.6: Feminist Anger Tweet

4.4.3 Understanding the Pro-Life Victory

Much of the rhetoric about the pro-life victory came from organizations like March for Life, which touted the decision as a victory for women. This encapsulates the pro-woman approach of many activists in the pro-life space. While activists like Phyllis Schlafly and previous conservative women's activists would have touted the failure of the ERA as a victory for women or the *Roe* decision as a failure, the rhetoric from earlier generations was much more family-centered. Pro-life advocates clearly state their desire to protect unborn babies; however, they also clearly state their desire to protect and push forward the status of women. They see abortion as bad for women, as women, not just as mothers or in terms of their relationship to a traditional family unit. This sort of thinking makes clear the paradox of

the images of young women in the pro-life movement in Figure 4.1 who describe themselves as feminist *and* pro-life. These women connect feminist empowerment with moving away from abortion and what is described as the abortion industry, as it has been strategically described as bad for the status of women. Rhetorically, these statements are starkly similar to those espoused by mainstream feminist pro-choice advocates, as they strategically say that abortion is anti-woman, a claim *frequently* used by mainstream feminists to argue against conservative groups.

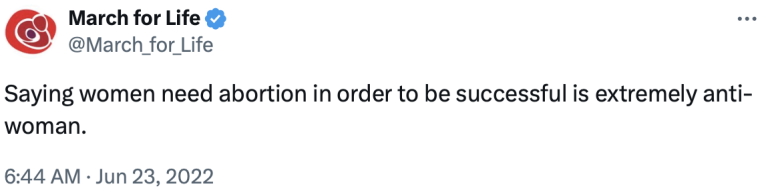


Figure 4.7: March for Life Pro-Woman Tweet

We also see this consciousness and policy beliefs at the individual level. Below, an emblematic tweet from a conservative topic is a user who believes that being pro-woman is anti-abortion and references an argument that abortion is a tactic by men to suppress women's choices. This rhetoric is not just at the organizational/elite level but also at the mass level. We propose that this strategy will continue to challenge mainstream feminist mobilization, as it splinters what feminism is and can stand for.

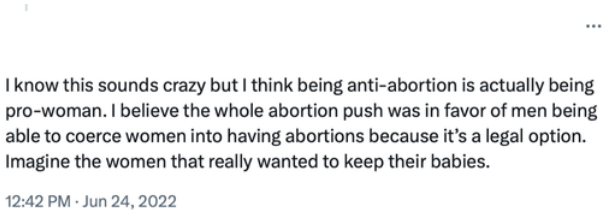


Figure 4.8: User Explaining Abortion is Anti-Woman

This was compounded by tweets from other users pointing out high-profile examples validating pro-life feminism. In the example below in Figure 4.9, we see a user referencing when Hillary Clinton in 2016 picked an anti-abortion running-mate for the election and stating

that one can concretely be both anti-abortion and a feminist. This is one of many examples of users pointing out the presence of pro-life feminism at the elite level and reiterating it across social media spaces. Given most of these tweets are considered consciousness-raising or informational about the abortion space, it has implications about how future mobilization and activation will occur across gender consciousness levels.



Figure 4.9: Examples of Elite Validation of Pro-life Feminism

The centrality of pro-woman frames is also coupled with connections to the centrality of race and where it intersects with gender for mainstream feminist discourses. Pro-life groups have also strategically used narratives that abortions are bad for Black and poor women. These narratives cite that these groups have the most abortions of any other group, and the founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, had eugenicist ideologies and used abortions to reduce the Black population.

Many scholars have debunked that Sanger was using Planned Parenthood to reduce the Black population, and many of the following quotes used to support these narratives are taken out of context; however, it is undoubtedly true that she did subscribe to some eugenic

ideologies. This has allowed the pro-life movement to adopt the language of intersectional feminism, tout that abortion is bad for Black women, and leverage the intersection of race and gender. An example of this is shown in Figures 4.10.[2] This user leverages the notions of eugenics to raise consciousness that the rhetoric pro-choice advocates use about abortion disproportionately affecting Black women has a more sinister motive.

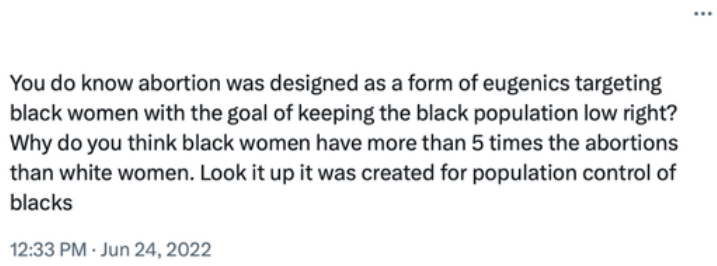


Figure 4.10: Example of Race in Abortion Rhetoric

4.5 Understanding Gender Consciousness Surges

To measure these thematic topics' impact on each other, we operationalize IRF to see the impact of a surge in one topic over the other over two days.[3] IRF operationalizes and uses a base VAR model and shows the impact of a shock to one of the variables on the rest. In this case, we use a shock to our thematic topics to see how one impacts the other. For the first VAR model, we look at the evolution of the gender consciousness sent-topics throughout the dataset. We then implement the IRF to understand the impact of a surge in conservative topics and what that does to feminist coded sent-topics over two days. The point estimates in the following plots are the probability of a given tweet falling into that topic with corresponding uncertainty given a stimulus to another topic after a set amount of days (one standard deviation size shock). The y-axis reflects the change in the probability of a tweet being categorized in the responding topic that day. The baseline probability of

[2]For more examples, see Appendix B.

[3]Two days were chosen to capture the number of days with the decision and the day after in the data.

any tweet falling into a category is 2.2%

Comporting with H1 detailed in the content analysis section, we see a significant initial surge in feminist topics with a shock to conservative ones, as they are likely rebutting and responding to *Dobbs* decision. This increase stabilizes after the first day but remains statistically significantly more than zero, meaning there is still a higher chance of being a feminist topic after the initial surge.

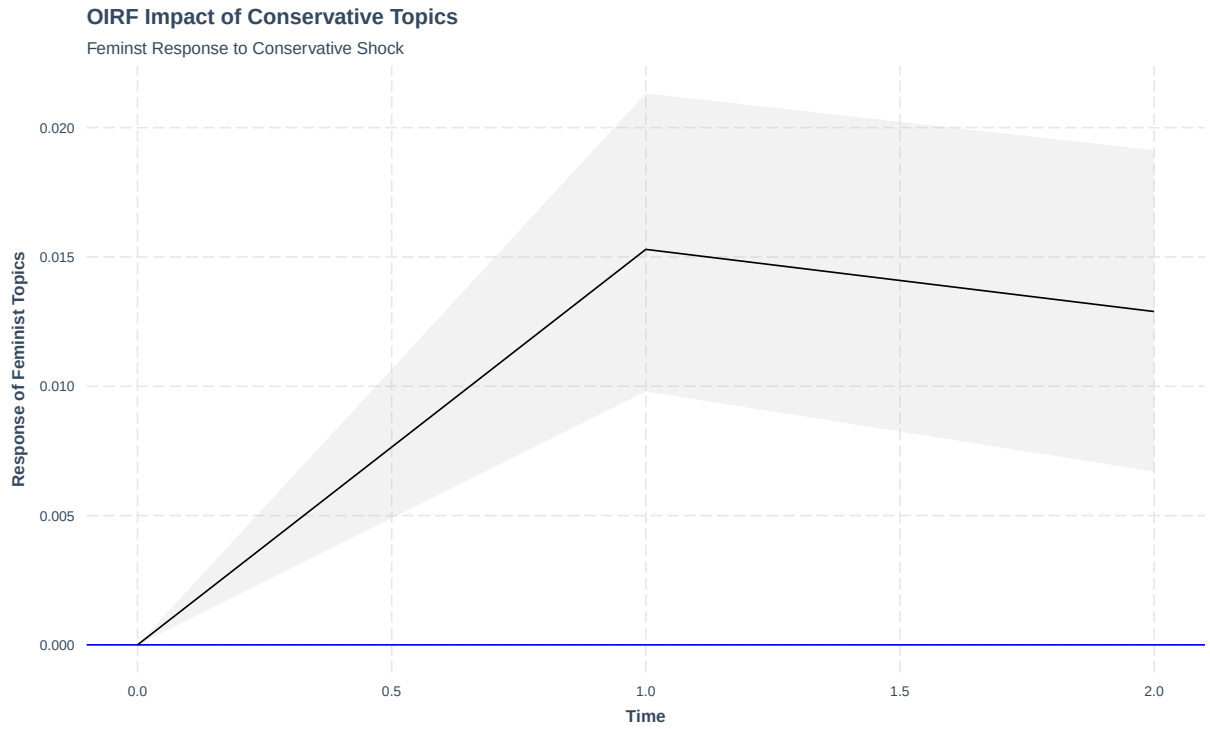


Figure 4.11: IRF Impact of Conservative Shock to Mainstream Feminist Topics
Coefficients should be interpreted as the probability of any given tweet being in the response group at that time. For example, the peak value at one day is around 1.5%, which represents a 1.5% increase in the probability of being in a feminist topic after this conservative shock.

This finding and results from the discourse and content analysis show that this significant increase in feminist rhetoric often conveyed outrage but also combatted both the pro-woman and race-forward claims of the conservative topics. Where conservative groups were touting the victory, they weren't just centering standard rhetoric of abortion killing babies, but they were centering the victory for women, and sometimes Black women. This is substantively

important as feminist mobilization around women's rights on abortion continues to ramp up, they will also likely be met with further discourses that women's rights and well-being includes abortion restrictions from conservative groups. Further, the fourth wave of feminism's intersectional aims of advocating and centering racial minorities like Black women in conversations of abortion will likely be met with strong conservative claims around racism in who abortion "targets." While many believe that abortion is a fundamental human right and a key indicator of a healthy democracy in terms of equal rights, the pro-life movement has strategically combatted many key components of the women's movement's rhetorical tactics, providing a large challenge for mass mobilization for pro-choice advocates in the future.

Pivoting to the mobilization frame, I operationalize IRF to understand how a surge in consciousness-raising (CR) impacts activated topics. This is meant to capture the space between raising awareness of an issue and a politicized sense of identity, prompting engagement. In H2, with an initial surge in CR topics, we expect to see a subsequent increase in activated topics over time. This follows the traditional story of feminist mobilization, where CR is used as a tactic to increase politicized senses of gender identity. In the IRF results in Figure 4.11, we see that with a shock to CR, there is an initial decrease in activated topics, followed by a very small increase after the first day. While this only partially comports with H2, a small increase in activated topics follows an increase in CR. With additional data, this finding would likely become more clear.

Substantively, CR is a vital portion of developing an activated sense of identity that helps facilitate collective mobilization in the face of adversity. In the context of the fight for abortion rights in the U.S., combined with the findings of the strategies being employed by pro-life groups that take on women's rights language, it is increasingly important for detailed feminist CR to take place at scale to mobilize on this issue adequately. This is vital to be able to differentiate what a feminist stance is from the conservative gender stance currently being taken by pro-life groups that are often either concretely called feminist or pro-woman,

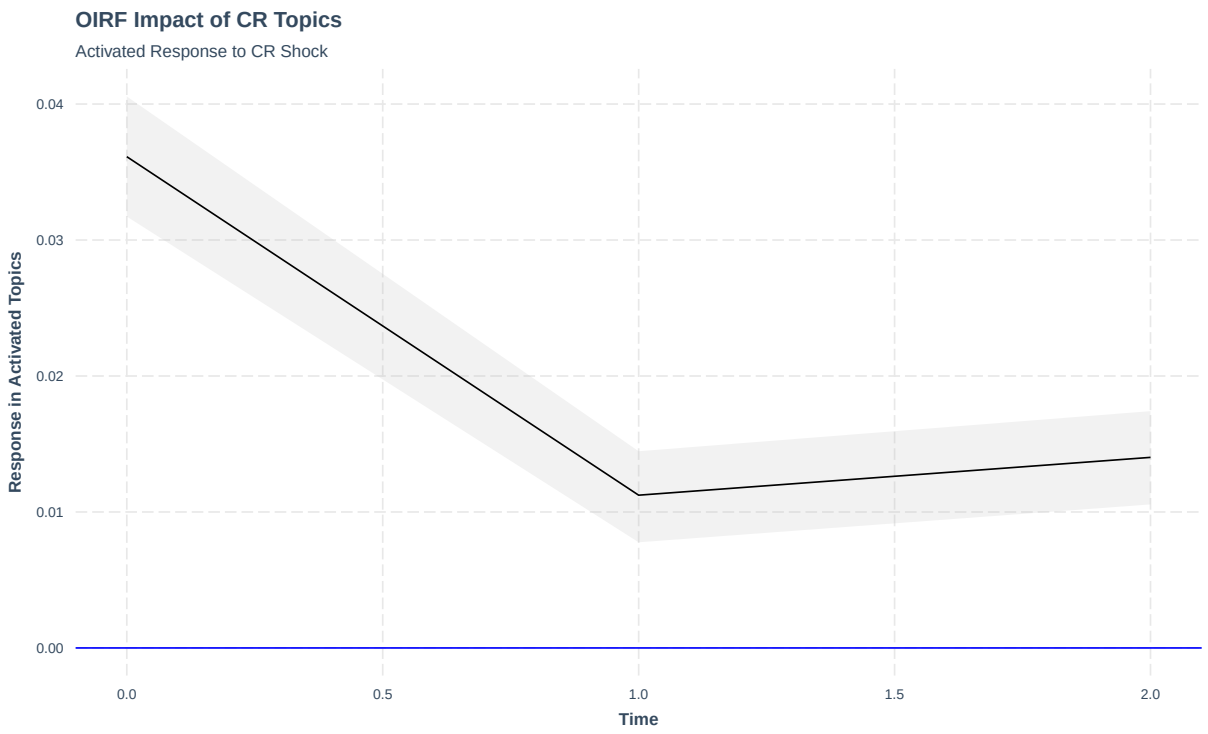


Figure 4.12: IRF Impact of CR Shock to Activated Topics

as seen in Figure 4.1.

4.6 Discussion & Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that conceptions of feminist and gender consciousness are deeply complicated in the wake of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision. As freedom to have abortions is often considered a key tenet of a healthy democracy, pro-life organizations and individuals adopting the language of women's rights present a problem to mobilizing around abortion. It becomes increasingly unclear who speaks "for" women from an empowered and progressive place. Both feminist organizations and pro-life organizations are centering women, whereas, in the past, pro-life groups centered on the rights of the unborn child. Findings from this research clearly support previous demonstrations of pro-life groups strategically using pro-woman and sometimes feminist frames to restrict abortion.

We further this by showing descriptive evidence that these conservative pro-woman narratives have spilled into anti-racism narratives to push that abortion rights target Black women and babies for eugenic purposes. These complicate our understandings of feminism and gender consciousness because these strategies are concretely stated as pro-woman, pro-Black women, and feminists, in certain cases, are inherently at odds with mainstream feminism's policy goals. These sorts of ideals were previously squarely situated in mainstream feminism, and they present a real challenge to future gender-based mobilization.

It requires that especially mainstream feminist pro-choice organizations differentiate what feminism means to them and how it is often incompatible with pro-life aims. It also represents a success in the pro-life strategies to center women in a way that garners support from a broader swath of Americans. This work descriptively asks what the landscape of women's rights movements looks like when feminist ideals are spread to both progressive and conservative ends. We show that the heterogeneity in the current landscape of gender consciousness that can be seen in UGC demands further work to be done to understand conservative gender consciousness and its impact on women's policy spaces.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This dissertation provided three substantive and methodological advances to the study of group identity in American politics. Overall, this dissertation shows the importance of group identity and intersectionality in the study of political behavior in the currently politically calcified climate.

In the first article, "Bayesian Multilevel Modeling for the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class," I demonstrated that Bayesian Multilevel Models (BMM) theoretically match the description of intersectionality's structure while also providing more robust estimates in small sample size environments common in the discipline. The article uses a synthetic example and a real-world example to show that the modeling choice for intersectionality affects the substantive results one can find. This work also contributed insights into the literature on how party identification, ideology, and group identity. The canonical literature suggests that increases in ideology translate to equal increases in partisanship in most cases; however, recent research shows that this finding does not hold for Black Americans. I provide further nuance by disaggregating intersectional identities along race, gender, and class, to show that the impact of ideology on partisanship is mediated by multiple group identities. Lessons from

this paper show that the mechanisms traditionally understood to structure partisanship only work for white Americans. This, in part, comes from polarization, calcification, and partisan social sorting. Findings suggest that other important political behavior concepts should be disaggregated to ensure that findings are not just being driven by the majority race in the sample.

In "The Identity-Based Determinants of Voter Confidence," I look at this method of disaggregation to study perceptions of electoral integrity in 2020 with the context of Trump's undermining of the national election. Looking at ideas of *Stop the Steal* movement, I concretely show that the racialized nature of contemporary American politics has spilled over into attitudes like trust in election accuracy. Racial resentment is consistently an independent and strong predictor of distrust in electoral integrity even more so than standard metrics of partisanship and ideology. Further, this finding exists for most minority groups, especially when singling out conservative subsets. While many minorities are more distrusting from the outset of election integrity, racial resentment shows an additional incremental decrease in trust beyond their baseline. Understanding that negative racial attitudes don't just impact white political behavior is crucial in an increasingly diverse electorate, and a shifting one in terms of minority populations. While they represent a minority of Trump supporters, research shows their share is growing, especially in swing states (Sommer and Franco, 2023).

The last article "The Duality of Gender Consciousness in the *Dobbs v. Jackson* Era" also looks at the ways in which conservative populations within a broader movement are often obscured by looking at mainstream stances. While gender-based movements are often dominated by feminist rhetoric in social media spaces like with #MeToo, evidence from Twitter after the *Dobbs v. Jackson* ruling in 2022 shows that feminist language is used both by mainstream pro-choice feminists and conservative pro-life feminists or pro-woman users. By using a mixed-method approach of NLP topic modeling and time series analysis, we show that there is a concrete presence of conservative users who use feminist and pro-woman

frames to talk about the *Dobbs* decision in a way that states it is good for women. This is in contrast to what we would expect feminist language to look like, which would be staunchly pro-choice. We also show that there were concrete consciousness-raising efforts by both mainstream feminists and conservative gender consciousness users and that consciousness-raising topics were followed by modest increases in politically activated call-to-action topics. Further, we see that the conservative shock of the *Dobbs* decision led to a decided increase in mainstream feminist topics in the immediate aftermath. Overall, this paper supports a growing body of literature that suggests conservative gender consciousness is successfully using the rhetoric of equal rights to push back abortion rights. This presents a challenge to future mainstream feminist mobilization.

Each of these papers shows advances in the study of group identity in novel and nuanced ways. I demonstrate that spending time carefully choosing the functional form and disaggregating by multiple identities often leads to fruitful results that would be missed otherwise. Additionally, I offer a look at social media data that applies political psychology concepts like gender consciousness to study the study of mass opinion differently than traditional survey data. My contributions are meant to solidify the centrality of race, gender, and class in the study of contemporary U.S. politics.

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Appendix A

RMSE and Bayes RMSE for Synthetic

Method	RMSE
Indicator Frequentist	7.03
Interaction Frequentist	5.79
Multilevel Frequentist	5.79
Bayesian Multilevel Model	4.71

LOOCV for ANES

Method	ELPD Difference	Standard Error
BMM	0.0	0.0
Bayes Interaction	-95.2	17.9

Priors from 2016 ANES

```
library(brms)

prior_mod <- brm(pid_zero ~ ideo_zero + (1 + ideo_zero | intersectional),
                 data = priors_2016,
                 control = list(adapt_delta = 0.95,
                                max_treedepth = 10),
                 warmup = 2000,
                 iter = 5000,
                  prior = priors_ideo,
                 seed = 1234,
                 chains = 4,
                 cores = 4)
summary(prior_mod)
```

Take results from the summary to build priors.

Priors from 2016 ANES Part 2

Adjust the standard deviation (sd) parameter for the coefficient ideology and add LKJ prior. If someone wants to run the defaults, skip this step and run the model on the next page. I allowed the SD parameter to be slightly more than a whole unit of the PID scale to capture the paradox for communities of color.

```
library(brms)

priors_ideo <- c(
  prior (normal(0.77, 0.07),  b,  coef = ideology_zero),
  prior(normal(-0.53 , 0.16), Intercept),
  prior(lkj_corr_cholesky(.5), grou = intersectional , class = cor),
  prior(normal(1.2, 0.07), sd, coef = ideology_zero, intersectional),
  prior(normal(0.82, 0.15), sd, coef = Intercept, intersectional),
  prior(normal(1.48, 0.02), sigma))
```

The ANES Model

The structure of the model remains the same for both the synthetic and ANES BMM, the only difference is there is a random slope for ideology denoted by 1+ ideology_zero where the synthetic only has 1. This also shows how to fit Bayes $R\hat{2}$ metric.

```
MM_stan_pid_mod <- brm(pid7_zero ~ ideology_zero +
                                   (1 + ideology_zero | intersectional),
                       data = anes_2020_x,
                       control = list(adapt_delta = 0.92,
                                      max_treedepth = 10),
                       warmup = 2000,
                       iter = 5000,
                       prior = priors_ideo,
                       seed = 1234,
                       chains = 4,
                       cores = 4)$


bayes_R2(MM_stan_pid_mod)


fit1 <- loo(MM_stan_pid_mod)
```

Appendix B

Below is the sample size information for Trump voters in the 2020 VOTER dataset.

	Trump		
	0	1	**Total**
Race/Gender Category			
Black Man	188	24	212
Black Woman	266	14	280
Hispanic Man	153	80	233
Hispanic Woman	203	53	256
White Man	897	789	1,686
White Woman	1,084	622	1,706
Unknown	238	118	356
Total	3,029	1,700	4,729

Table B.1: Sample Size of 2020 VOTER - Trump Voters

This is the untransformed BRMS logit results for baseline voter confidence (random intercept) for the intersectional groups. Random effects are the deviations by a group from the fixed effect. The plot should not be interpreted directly; however, relative magnitudes of effect sizes can be seen here. This plot further demonstrates the lack of heterogeneity along group identity lines.

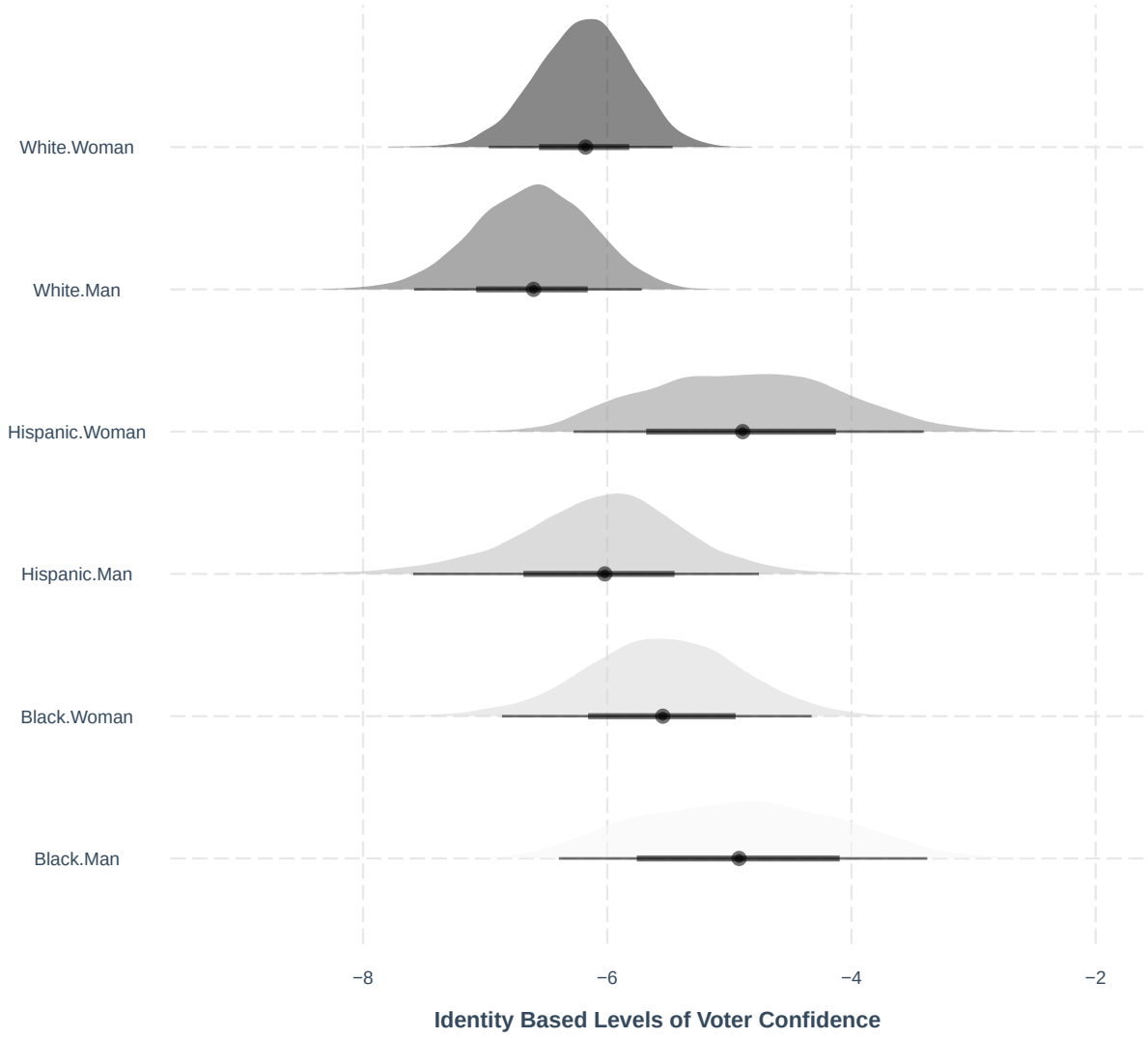


Figure B.1: Untransformed BRMS Logit Results

This is the untransformed BRMS logit results for group-level racial resentment impact on voter confidence (random slope) for the intersectional groups. Random effects are the deviations by a group from the fixed effect. This plot should not be interpreted directly; however, relative magnitudes of effect sizes can be seen here. It shows that racial resentment, on average, has a fairly consistent effect across group identity lines.

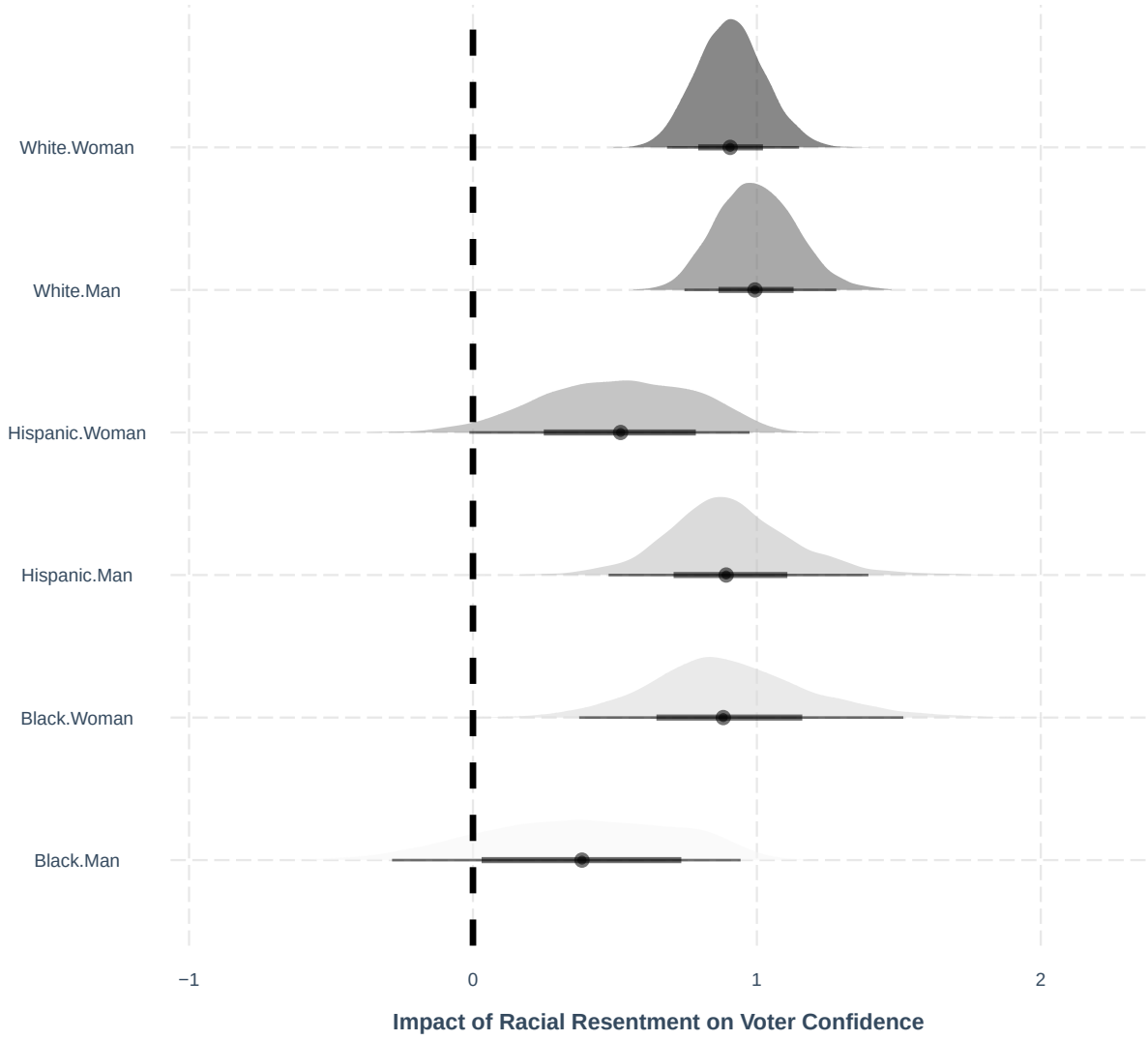


Figure B.2: Untransformed BRMS Logit Results

Below is the marginal effect of racial resentment across non-trump voters.

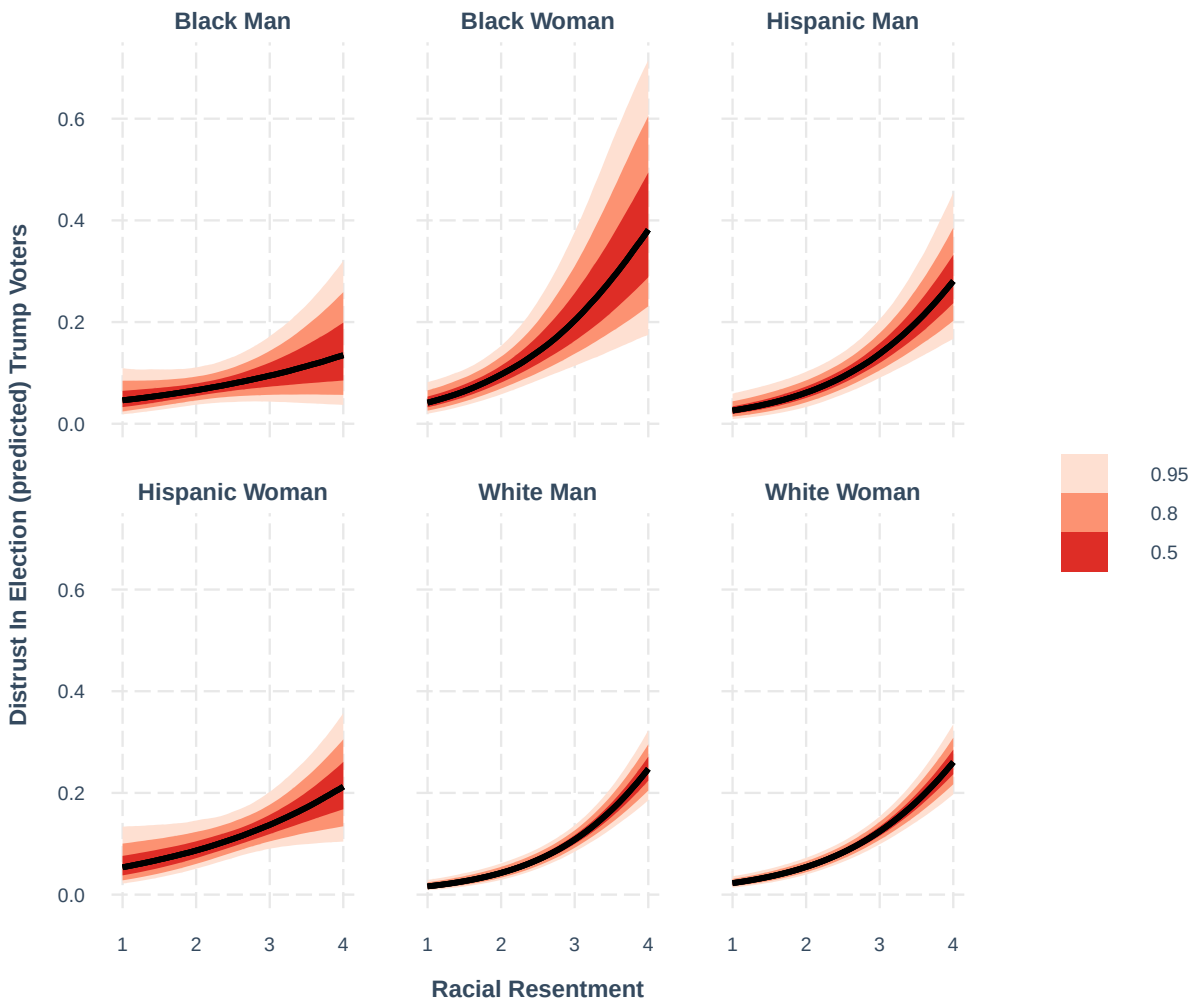


Figure B.3: Marginal Effect of RR Among Non-Trump Voters

Below is the marginal effect of racial resentment at each level across non-trump voters.

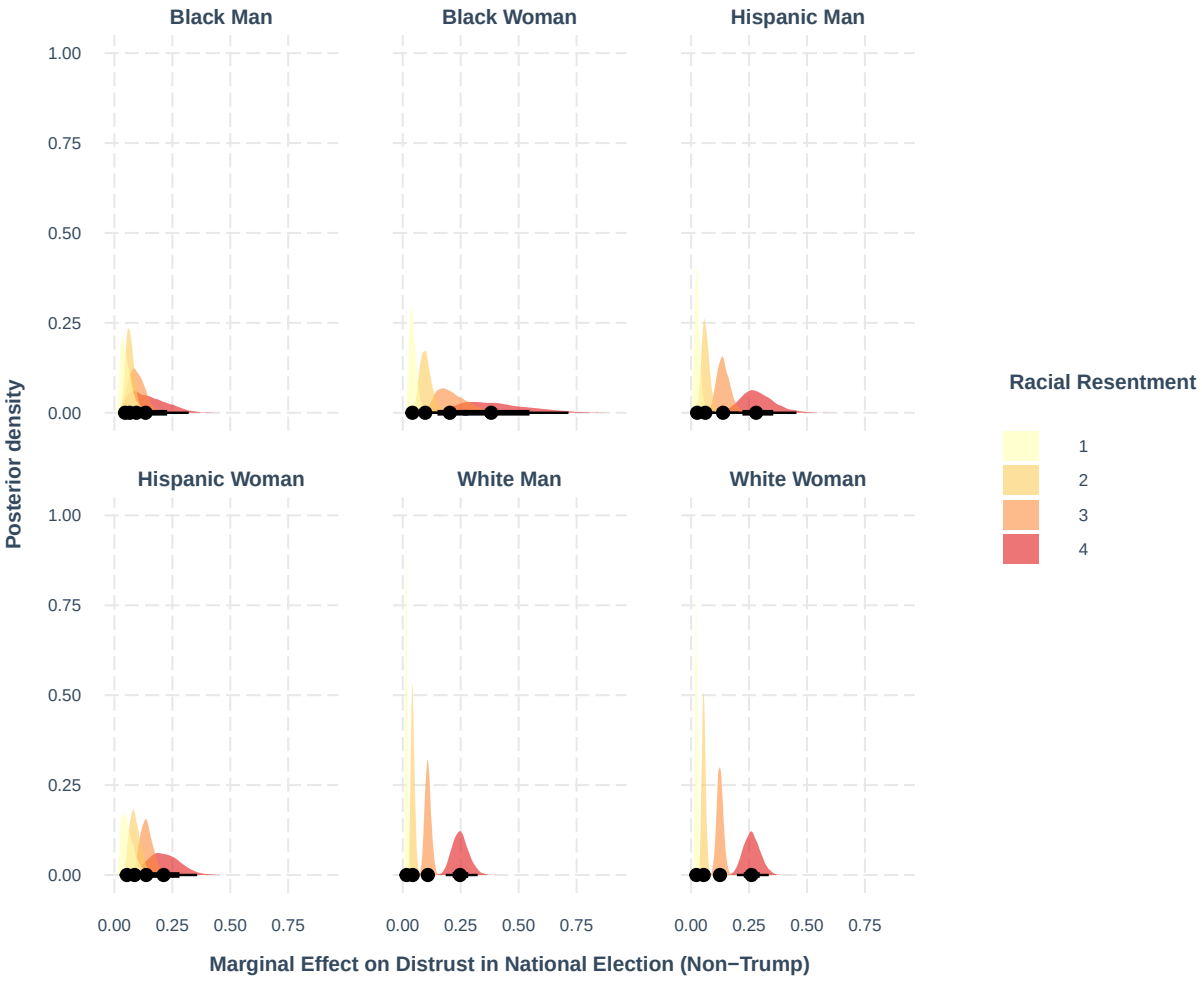


Figure B.4: Marginal Effect of RR Among Non-Trump Voters

Appendix C

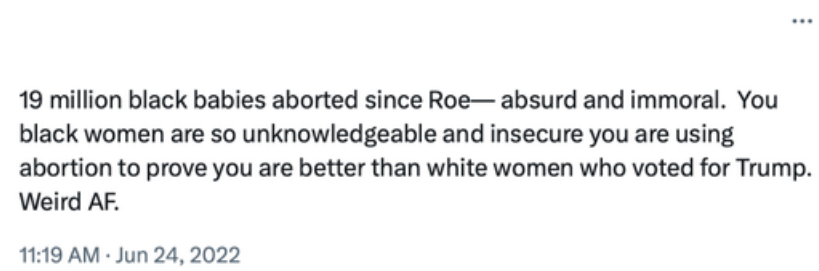
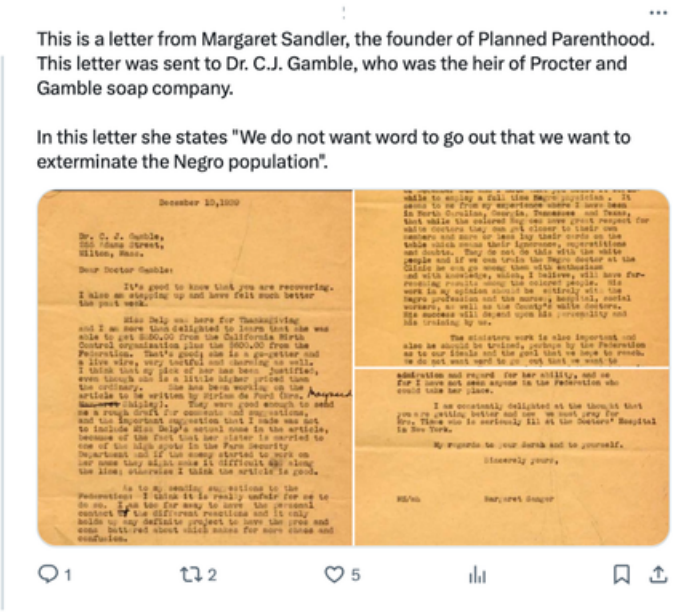


Figure C.1: Additional Example of Race in Abortion Rhetoric



According to the 2011 Abortion Surveillance Report issued by the CDC, black women make up 14% of the childbearing population, yet obtained 36.2% of reported abortions. Black women have the highest abortion ratio in the country, with 474 abortions per 1,000 live births.

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Figure C.2: Additional Example of Race in Abortion Rhetoric